

**MINUTES – DRAFT**  
**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**AD HOC OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**Community Meeting – Virtual <sup>1</sup>**  
**Wednesday, November 10, 2021**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Open Space Steering Committee Members**

**Present:**

David Brown, Planning Commission Member  
Martha Harris, Historic Alexandria Resources Commission Member  
Kurt Moser, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) City of Alexandria Board Member,  
and Ad Hoc Open Space Committee Co-Chair  
Mike Olex, Environmental Policy Commission Member  
Micheline Smith, At-large member from the development community (Paradigm)  
Denise Tennant, Beautification Commission Member, and Co-Chair, Ad Hoc Open Space  
Committee

**Excused:**

Kaitlyn Blume, Member at-large  
Brian McPherson - Park and Recreation Commission Member  
Tatiana Gutierrez, Member at-large  
Brandon Pinette, Member at-large

**Vacancy:**

One at-large member from the business community

**City Staff**

Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner, Planning & Zoning, P&Z  
Judy Lo, Acting Principal Planner, Park Planning Division, RPCA  
Nathan Imm, Principal Planner, Planning & Zoning, P&Z  
Melanie Mason, Principal Planner, Stormwater Division, T&ES  
Ana Vicinanza, Urban Planner, Park Planning, Design & Capital Projects Division, RPCA

**Guests**

None

---

<sup>1</sup> **November 10, 2021 Meeting video posted to:**

[http://alexandria.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=29&coa\\_clip\\_id=5252&coa\\_view\\_id=29](http://alexandria.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=29&coa_clip_id=5252&coa_view_id=29)

**Call to Order**

Co-chair Tennant called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. Quorum was reached at 7:11 p.m.

**Administrative**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY**

Co-Chair Tennant read the electronic meeting policy.

**MINUTES APPROVAL – October 2021**

**Comment:** The minutes will be updated to add the Co-Chair title to Moser and Tennant.

**MOTION:** Olex moved, and Harris seconded that the October 2021 minutes be approved. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**DECEMBER MEETING**

Committee members discussed and agreed to hold the December meeting on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

**Committee Task Updates – Ana Vicinanza and Judy Lo (RPCA)**

**POS Zoning: Park Improvement Plan and Waterfront Park and Recreation Zone**

- Outlines how this zone differs – allows commercial uses whereas the POS zone does not

**Presentation posted to:**

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/Open%20Space%20Steering%20Committee%20Meeting%20-%2011.10.2021.pdf>

- Staff presented the process for Park Improvements Plan using the 2014 Hensley Park Improvements Plans as an example. Hensley Park is zoned Public Open Space (POS).
- Park improvements are developed from extensive community engagement including surveys, community meetings, and stakeholder participation.
- Hensley Park required amendments to the plan reconfiguring the athletic fields (ie. reducing the diamond fields to two regulation fields) due to easements and resource protection areas.
- The plan amendments/modifications were endorsed by the Park and Recreation Commission.
- The plan also required a Development Site Plan approved by Planning Commission. Many improvements are also subject to other City permits, such as Grading Plans and building permits.

- Departments and staff also weigh in on proposed improvements such as Transportation & Environmental Services Stormwater, Archaeology, City Arborist, and others
- The Waterfront Park and Recreation (WPR) zoning text was provided to the Committee as a comparison to the current Public Open Space (POS) zoning text. WPR has more by-right uses than POS, but also includes commercial/business uses. Brown suggested that WPR be reviewed separately at another time.

### **Proposed POS Zone Text Amendments discussion work session**

- The Committee discussed the proposed text amendments. The text amendment proposed changes to congregate recreation facilities, making them by-right.

### **Committee Discussion, Issues Raised:**

- **Park Planning/Process:** Question: Is the park planning process required?
  - Yes, this process is done for all plans and projects
- **Park Planning/Process:** “What if the public asks to build a skate park?”
  - Staff reviews the request for appropriateness and consistency with plans and will take public comment. Uses must meet criteria across several areas before a decision is adopted, such as City ordinances (tree removal), zoning, code, stormwater
- **What are the changes to the ordinance? Zoning Text:** Zone text amendment language right on POS to eliminate inconsistencies the POS should be the driving force
- **Zoning Text:** Section 6.102 (POS Zone permitted uses) seems to be a complete job including permitted use and its structures
- **Zoning Text:** Describe the proposed parameters of the POS zone uses are by right and which will require an SUP
- **Congregate Recreation Facilities:** What are examples of congregate facilities? A list of congregate facilities would be helpful to review.
- **Zoning text-Square Footage:** 6.105 B should stay in 6.102 where it’s called out it was intended to be defined by square footage?
- **Zoning text--Square Footage:** Should uses be defined by square footage? For example, not more than X square feet unless approved by Planning Commission. Figure out square footage maybe 3000 ft.<sup>2</sup> ?
- **Trees and Natural Areas:** Recreation facilities should not impact natural areas and be built over natural areas. What building size would be allowed to be built, compared to a single-family house?
- **Trees and Natural Areas:** Include language about protecting existing trees and vegetations
- **Trees and Natural Areas:** Evaluate building permit under modifications for open space

- **Lot coverage:** Does the current zoning say what is the lot coverage allowed or not allowed?
- **Community Gardens:** Where do community gardens fit in this policy? Do they require a SUP?
- **Permits/approval processes:** What is the process today that we are using? What will the process be before and after the amendments?
- **Permits/approval processes:** Compare the building code side-by-side with zoning code?
- **Permits/approval processes:** Land disturbance over 2500 ft.<sup>2</sup> requires site/grading plan review. Grading plan review includes archaeology.
- **Historical resources and archaeology:** Does the zoning ordinance cover historic resources and archaeology? What are the archaeology requirements. Archaeology reviews all active land use applications in the City

**FOLLOW UP:**

- *Clarify archaeology requirements in the zoning ordinance*
- *Identify types of congregate uses*
- *Clarify types of permits and processes that would be applicable*

**OPEN SPACE ANALYSIS**

- Staff presented an overview of the open space analysis that will help to inform the work in Task 2. Using GIS mapping and GIS data, open space was analyzed based on walksheds, park typology, park amenities, and small area plan boundaries. The maps presented during the meeting included five- and ten-minute walksheds, natural resources area walkshed, and Small Area Plan open space ratios.

**Committee Discussion:**

- Maps identify open space gaps within the system what the map is showing
- The walksheds begin at the park entrances (a point identified in the GIS mapping system)
- Sense of open space distribution geographically throughout the City
- Private versus open space not counted
- Gradient by area graphics heat map like - Will try to create gradient map
- Maps do not show planned open space on the map only current open space
- Maps will be sent over for review

**FOLLOW UP:**

- Staff will send the Committee the full set of maps for further comment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at XXX

DRAFT