

September 25, 2017

Mr. James B. Spengler
Director, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities
City of Alexandria
james.spengler@alexandriava.gov

Re: Request to Dedicate the Living Shoreline at Windmill Hill Park to the Memory of Captain Ryan Wojtanowski

Dear Jim:

In May of last year, Alexandria suddenly lost a treasure, a man who loved the City and its waterfront, a long-time citizen who shared his wit and wisdom through his service on multiple commissions. I am writing to request that the City of Alexandria remember this man, Captain Ryan Wojtanowski, by naming the natural shoreline component of the Windmill Hill Park rehabilitation in his honor.

Captain Ry – as he was affectionately known – served on Alexandria’s Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) from October 2010 until his death and was the EPC’s representative on the Waterfront Commission. He was a passionate advocate for our riverfront, aiming to protect it as a public amenity and to ensure its long-term environmental health. He supported innovative approaches for stormwater management and sought to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Commission members valued the constructive input he brought to deliberations as well as his unusual turns of phrase and quick sense of humor.

Commission correspondence benefited from Captain Ry’s careful eye, as he was a lover of the written word. Indeed, in 2016 he was appointed by the Commission for the Arts as Poet Laureate. His first activity in this role was, appropriately, to write and deliver a poem to open the City’s Earth Day festivities.

As you well know, a component of the Windmill Hill Park rehabilitation is the construction of a living shoreline. This would be a particularly appropriate memorial to Captain Ry, who spent so much of his life on the water. He was a Master Mariner in the U.S. Merchant Marine, head captain of the *Dandy* (moored in Old Town), an avid fisherman, and a riparian restoration consultant. And, in fact, he was directly involved in the planning of the living shoreline: as a member of the Waterfront and Environmental Policy Commissions, during the development of the Windmill Hill Park restoration plans, he advocated for solutions that provided public access and that were environmentally sound.

I should note that Steve Thayer, Chair of the Waterfront Commission, and Matthew Stensrud, Chair of the Arts Commission, are supportive of this memorial.

I do hope that you will give this your careful consideration and support. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-413-5277 or kapsisje@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Kapsis', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jim Kapsis
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

Cc Jack Browand
 Matthew Stensrud
 Steve Thayer