



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2018

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration and Public Hearing to place a memorial plaque at the Windmill Hill Park shoreline commemorating Captain Ryan Wojtanowski's service to the community as an advocate for environmental stewardship.

ISSUE: Consideration and public hearing to place a memorial plaque at the Windmill Hill Park shoreline commemorating Captain Ryan Wojtanowski's service to the community as an advocate for environmental stewardship.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council hold a Public Hearing and after the public hearing closes, City Council approve the recommendation of the City Council Naming Committee to place a plaque at the Windmill Hill Park shoreline commemorating Captain Ryan Wojtanowski.

BACKGROUND: Ryan "Captain Ry" Wojtanowski was a dedicated and active member of Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission from October 2010 until his death in 2016 and served as its representative to the Alexandria Waterfront Commission. Captain Ry was a mariner, fisherman, and an advocate of Alexandria's riverfront, aiming to protect it as a public amenity and to ensure its long-term environmental health. As a recognized expert in riverbank construction, he was a valuable resource to City staff in the early planning of the City's flood mitigation project and strongly encouraged solutions that provided public access to the Potomac River that were environmentally sound, closely imitated natural conditions and included the use of appropriate native plants. Through his advocacy efforts, City staff successfully updated and received approval from City Council for the removal of the deteriorated concrete bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park and replacing it with a living shoreline nearing completion on the City's southern waterfront.

In addition to his environmental stewardship, Captain Ry was a poet. Shortly before his death, he was appointed by the Alexandria's Commission for the Arts as the City of Alexandria Poet Laureate. Fittingly, he delivered his first poem as Poet Laureate by officially opening the 2016 City of Alexandria Earth Day Festivities.

DISCUSSION: In response to a proposal from the City of Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (Attachment 1), the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) solicited public comment on the proposed plaque from February 27, 2018 through March 30, 2018 (Attachment 2). Community members received notifications of the public comment period by City eNews, neighborhood canvassing of the eNews release, the RPCA website, and through “word of mouth” assistance from the City of Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission.

On September 12, 2018, the City Council Naming Committee (Chair, Councilwoman Del Pepper, Councilman Timothy Lovain; and Jack Browand, Division Chief, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities) held a meeting to review the proposal, public comment received (Attachment 3) and proposed text for the memorial plaque (Attachment 4). The City Council Naming Committee voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve a memorial plaque be placed in Windmill Hill Park.

FISCAL IMPACT: None to the City. The memorial plaque will be purchased through community donations.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposal to Dedicate the Living Shoreline at Windmill Hill Park to the Memory of Captain Ryan Wojtanowski.
2. Community Announcement for Public Comment
3. Public Comments for the proposal to dedicate the living shoreline at Windmill Hill Park to the Memory of Captain Ryan Wojtanowski.
4. Proposed language for the plaque in memory of Captain Ryan Wojtanowski.

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Jack Browand, Division Chief, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities