

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES: October 19, 2022
LLOYD HOUSE, 7 P.M.
220 N. WASHINGTON STREET

Members Present:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)
Esther White, Planning District II (Vice Chair)
Elizabeth Vehmeyer, Member at Large, (Secretary)
Dylan Colligan, Area Business Community Representative
Nicholas (Nick) Dienna, Member at Large
John Oldfield, Member at Large
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) Representative
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation Representative
Scott Vierick, Alexandria Historical Society Representative
Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria Representative
Ann Greer, Member at Large
Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or equivalent organization
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Association Representative
Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large

Visitors/Public:

None

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist

Call to Order

- Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes

- AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, September 21 meeting minutes. Esther White moved to accept the minutes, as amended. Paula Whitacre seconded. Motion passed and minutes approved, as amended.

Chair Report – Ivy Whitlatch

- Ivy invited Paula to share about being part of the ACRP Pilgrimage to Montgomery, AL from October 6-10. Paula noted Michael Johnson was on the steering committee for the Pilgrimage and shared that she joined about 165 fellow Alexandrians in transporting soil from the City to the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in memory of Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas, two Alexandria men killed by lynch mobs in the 1890s.
- Membership
 - With the confirmation of Dylan Colligan’s new term and Scott Vierick’s first, Ivy noted that the AAC now has full membership for the first time in over 7 years. Cheers!
- Annual Budget Letter
 - Ivy proposed the idea of the AAC’s letter to the City to continue to advocate for the full staffing of Alexandria Archaeology and as the City’s 275th anniversary is coming up, to push to include the AAC’s 50th (2025) anniversary for recognition City wide.
 - Seth Tinkham suggested we also leverage the AAC’s 50th with the nation’s 250th.

Reminder: Your attendance at AAC meetings is mandatory as part of your appointment. For an excused absence, please call Alexandria Archaeology at 703.746.4399 or email eleanor.breen@alexandriava.gov ahead of time.

- Ivy, with Eleanor Breen's assistance, will take AAC's input and write the letter to the City Manager, noting the full time museum educator position can help with messaging around bottle diggers and submit it by the Nov. 4 deadline.

Nominations Committee and Voting - referred to November's meeting

AAC Representation Reports

- HARC Update - Ivy - Eleanor presented on the backyard bottle digger issue to last night's HARC meeting. HARC discussed building heights and affordable housing in the City.
- Waterfront Updates
 - a. Waterfront Commission – Esther White
 - i.2 King Street (parking lot area next to Mai Tai restaurant). A Waterfront Commission subcommittee came up with ideas for how to use this property: 1. If development were to happen on this property, development would not add to flood mitigation and it would include public restrooms. 2. Public art and public space for meetings. Esther advocated for considering history and archaeology in any recommendations.
 - b. African American Heritage Trail Committee – Ted Pulliam
 - i. Eleanor gave the report in Ted's absence: meeting next Thursday to review the trail StoryMap draft, talk about physical signage and potential locations along the southern half of the trail.
 - Samuel Madden Redevelopment – Seth Tinkham
 - Seth submitted comments to the developer this month, including possible mitigation measures of an endowment via the scholarship fund of Alexandria for ACHS students interested in architecture/history/archaeology. Plus, he suggested finding a way to elevate Samuel Madden as the person/Alfred Baptist Church minister the original development was named after.
 - Torpedo Factory Stakeholders Committee Representation – Ivy Whitlatch
 - Tour for stakeholders during October. Ivy will attend a stakeholders' tour of the Torpedo Factory next week.

Ben Brenman Awards

- Awards given out on October 11 at City Council Meeting, followed by reception at Lloyd House. Ivy gave thanks to Liz Vehmeyer and Nick Dienna's wife Rachel for their time in making the awards this year.
- Ivy talked to FOAA about doing a "Del Pepper Award" at its annual Volunteer party in January. AAC/FOAA will need to create the award.

Break Out Sessions (15 minutes) and Committee Reports

- AAC decided not to hold Break Out Sessions and instead discussed the Backyard Bottle Digging issue as a group. Discussion revolved around how to spread word on concerns of bottle digging - articles in publications, flyers/door hangers, at the annual George Washington's Birthday Parade in February.

Commissioner Reports

- FOAA Update - no report
- Visit Alexandria - no report
- Alexandria Association - no report

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- Alexandria Historical Society - Scott Veirick - AHS is reviving its awards program for Alexandria history related projects. Scott will share via Eleanor to share with AAC.
- Historic Alexandria Foundation - no report
- Business Community - no report
- Planning Districts - Ivy, District 1 - no report; Esther, District 2 - no report; Paula, District 3 - Planning continues for Fort Ward playground area.

Staff Reports – Eleanor Breen

- Code Updates: June 2022-Sept 2022
 - West End - Fort Ward - There are two potential locations for the relocation of the playground. It was determined that the locations have low impact on resources related to Native American, Civil War, and African American communities. RPCA will have another public meeting about these two potential locations. OHA is doing a pre-assessment for archeological potential for both of those locations. The ADA path to the picnic shelter is another project at Fort Ward.
 - Central Area - Simpson Park - the City will redo the existing dog park, along with a larger renovation of Simpson Field. The Archaeological Code is triggered and archeology will be recommended. The Alms house is in this area - stood until 1930s. Proposed renovations could affect any remains of the foundation of Alms house. Thunderbird Archaeology was hired to do the study of Simpson Field/dog park and Alexandria Archaeology will monitor the construction in the dog park.
 - Old Town Area - 517 Prince Street - City property where work is being done to rebuild a retaining wall. Archeology did hand excavation for trench before the rebuild of the wall. The original wall was probably built in the 1850s and rebuilt in the 1960s.
- Archeology Updates
 - Douglass Cemetery - This project is moving along to assess and study flooding issues. Project will also assess conditions of the gravestones.
 - The Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) received a Save America's Treasures grant for the Freedom House (\$500k).
 - OHA is prepping for the American Association of Museums re-accreditation process for all Museums and Historic Sites
 - A new exhibit at the Lyceum will open on October 27.
 - Collections Updates – Lee-Fendell House Collections will be accessioned by Alexandria Archaeology. Tatiana helped with Lee-Fendell staff on a new exhibit at the House.
- Social Media and Events
 - October is Archaeology Month - Join the last event being held on Wed. Oct. 26: Virtual presentation titled "A City Built on Ships" with Dr. Chris Dostal of Texas A&M.
 - Archaeology Along the Waterfront Event was held on Oct. 15 - Alexandria Archaeology staff gave tours and FOAA was there to do public interpretation as well.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next AAC Meeting will be held in person on Wednesday, November 16 at the Lloyd House.