

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES: January 18, 2023
LLOYD HOUSE, 7 P.M.
220 N. WASHINGTON STREET

Members Present:

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
Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria Representative
Ann Greer, Member at Large
Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or equivalent organization Representative
John Oldfield, Member at Large
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) Representative

Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation Representative
Robert (Scott) Vierick, Alexandria Historical Society Representative
Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Association Representative

Visitors/Public:

None

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist

Call to Order

Esther White, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, December 14 meeting minutes. Ralph Rosenbaum moved to accept the minutes, as amended. Nick Dienna seconded. Motion passed and minutes approved, as amended.

Chair Report – Esther White for Ivy Whitlatch

Freedom House Master Planning – Looking for a rep from AAC to be part of this - approx. 3 hours in March. Paula Whitacre volunteered.

George Washington Day Parade – The parade will be rerouted this year near the GW Masonic National Memorial to celebrate the 100th anniversary of laying the cornerstone of the Memorial. If you want to march with FOAA in the parade, stay tuned for more info.

Bottle digging in Old Town – Ivy sent a new 311 alert to the Mayor/City Council about a new instance of bottle digging on private property in Old Town. The Mayor asked Eleanor Breen for more information. Eleanor gave him three updates:

- Collaboration between the Office of Historic Alexandria and the Office of Communications and Public Information about the issue and doing possible public education campaigns.

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- Looking into possible permitting process with the Department of Code Administration, then send a plan to the City Council.
- Eleanor was invited to the Mid-Atlantic Archaeology Council (MAAC) conference to be on a panel about digging on private property. She hopes she can get some best practices/suggestions from other archaeologists.

AAC Representation Reports

HARC Update – Esther White for Ivy Whitlatch:

- HARC has been asked by the Mayor to present names to rename streets in Alexandria. A committee of four from HARC was created to come up with that list. Focus is on women and minorities.
 - Ivy suggested honoring Lillie Finklea, former AAC member integral to the memorialization and preservation of Freedman’s Cemetery.
 - Seth Tinkham motioned to have AAC send a letter of condolence to Lillie Finklea’s family on the passing of Lillie earlier this month. Seconded by Ralph Rosenbaum. Motion passed.
- HARC has a subcommittee working on writing a Torpedo Factory National Register of Historic Places Nomination. They are ready to submit the Preliminary Information Form (PIF) to VADHR. There was a PIF for Torpedo Factory in 2016 that did not go forward to a full nomination. HARC would like the AAC to provide a letter of support for the PIF when it would go to the City Manager for signature as property owner. Seth asked that HARC send a copy of the PIF to the AAC before we send a letter. Esther will ask Ivy to ask for that.

Waterfront Updates

Waterfront Commission – Esther White – Met yesterday - Eleanor reported on the most recent updates on the African American Heritage Trail.

African American Heritage Trail Committee – Ted Pulliam – No Report

Samuel Madden Redevelopment – Seth Tinkham

Developers/City owners Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority/consultant EHT Traceries. Section 106 consultation meeting was held on Monday, January 9. Consultants EHT Traceries reanalyzed the area of potential effect (APE), expanding it to the northeast. APE has been surveyed and it does not look like there will be any new National Register nominations out of that survey.

Seth did connect with Alfred Street Baptist Church about being a consulting party.

Seth shared some of the mitigation suggestions that are being discussed:

- Document the existing buildings before demo following Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)
- Documentation summary report, with possible oral histories of the growth of the Madden homes as a complex.
- Signage
- Agreed to establish an educational fund - for the benefit of students in Alexandria housing (ARHA) to attend a 4 four year program. AAC suggested that it applies to trade schools,

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community colleges, or similar, too. Plan is to fund at \$20,000 initially. The administration of this will be done by ARHA.

Eleanor shared that this redevelopment requires archaeology to be done. EHT Traceries/Stantec submitted archaeological scope of work, which proposes to do some Shovel Test Pits (STPs) to see how much disturbance the 1940s development did. Are there any resources to protect or remove? Lots of potential for Civil War resources. STP -> units -> trenches. Scope has been approved.

Michael Johnson was on the call, too. Suggests they looked at EYA/Thunderbird research that was done on the James Bland housing. It is all connected.

Send any other ideas to Seth by early February.

Developer would like to have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the City Council in March.

Break Out Sessions (15 minutes) and Committee Reports

Awards Committee (Nick Dienna, Liz Vehmeyer, Paula Whitacre) – Del Pepper Award set to be given out at FOAA/AAC Volunteer Party in April.

50th Anniversary (Dylan Colligan, Rebecca Doser, Ivy Whitlatch) – Continued to strategize about how best to integrate this AAC celebrations with those in the City.

African American Initiatives (Ted Pulliam, Paula Whitacre, Esther White) – Discussed African American Heritage Trail, Douglass Cemetery project, Fort Ward, and Freedom House.

Museum (Dick Owens, Ralph Rosenbaum, Michael Johnson, Scott Vierick) – Discussed how to market/promote the existence of the Archaeology Museum in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the roll out of new interpretative panels in April, and space limitations.

Waterfront (Ann Greer, Seth Tinkham, John Oldfield) – Discussed checking on status of Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study and Potomac River Generating Plant redevelopment.

Commissioner Reports

FOAA Update (Richard Owens) – Next board meeting is in March.

Visit Alexandria (Rebecca Doser)

- “What’s New” event at The Lyceum next week.
- Planning/details for GW Parade
- Planning for Black History Month events

Alexandria Association (Ted Pulliam) – Esther reported that Ted will be reappointed to AAC

Alexandria Historical Society (Scott Vierick)

- T. Michael Miller award nominations are still open. Due in March.
- Next meeting will be March 22
- 50th anniversary is next year, so AHS hopes to coordinate with AAC on that.

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- Looking for an editor and author for AHS Chronicle journal.
- Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or Equivalent Organization (Michael Johnson) – Friends of Douglass Cemetery - consultant work is going well - working on a February newsletter.

Historic Alexandria Foundation (Seth Tinkham) – No recent Board actions

Business Community (Dylan Colligan) - no report

Planning District Updates (Ann Greer, Esther White, Paula Whitacre) - no reports

Staff Reports – Eleanor Breen

Archaeology Updates

- Eleanor is currently doing a presentation circuit on the African American Waterfront Heritage Trail to other Commissions and Community Groups. She gave her presentation to AAC during this meeting: From Digital Resource to Interpretive Signage.
- Additional park signage will be installed at Simpson Park to interpret the history of baseball in the park.

Social Media and Events Update – Launch of the new south route of the African American Waterfront Heritage Trail will be held on Saturday, February 4 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at The Lyceum.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next AAC Meeting will be held in person on Wednesday, February 15, at the Lloyd House.

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