

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES: May 17, 2023
LLOYD HOUSE, 7 P.M.
220 N. WASHINGTON STREET

Members Present:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)
Elizabeth Vehmeyer, Member at Large
(Secretary)
Dylan Colligan, Area Business Community
Representative
Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria
Representative
Ann Greer, Member at Large
John Oldfield, Member at Large (via phone)
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria
Archaeology (FOAA) Representative
Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large
Robert (Scott) Vierick, Alexandria Historical
Society Representative
Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Esther White, Planning District II (Vice
Chair)
Nicholas (Nick) Dienna, Member at Large
Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation
of Black Heritage or equivalent
organization
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria
Association Representative
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria
Foundation Representative

Visitors/Public:

Tom Macia, President, Friends of Alexandria
Archaeology

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist
Abby Schreiber, Office of Historic Alexandria
Matthew Landes, Project Implementation,
City of Alexandria

Call to Order: Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes: AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, April 19 meeting minutes. Ralph Rosenbaum moved to accept the minutes, as amended. Scott Vierick seconded. Motion passed and minutes approved, as amended.

Chair Report – Ivy Whitlatch

- 45th Annual Volunteer Party will be held June 8th, 6:30pm at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center.
 - The inaugural Del Pepper Award will be given out. The Awards Committee needs to coordinate with Alexandria Archaeology to make the award in the next couple weeks.
- Congrats to AAC member Michael Johnson for winning the Alexandria Historical Society's T. Michael Miller Award.
- AAC annual report is due at the end of the City's fiscal year (June 30). AAC brainstormed topics to include in this year's report:
 - Full Membership of AAC
 - Establishment of Del Pepper Award
 - AAC participating in master planning for Freedom House

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.

- Participating in Torpedo Factory Task Force stakeholder group
- Reviewing new exhibit panels in Archaeology Museum
- Participating in Fort Ward Playground relocation project
- Advocating for Full time museum educator and it coming to fruition
- Establishment of 50th Anniversary subcommittee
- The two walk-about to the City Archives and Douglass Cemetery
- Sam Madden Redevelopment and participating in Section 106 review process as consulting party

Waterfront Documentary Study Update - Abby Schreiber, Waterfront Historian, OHA

- Abby presented her research on Alexandria's Waterfront History. She has been with the Office of Historic Alexandria since 2020.
 - Her study area included Duke Street north to Pendleton Street, including Founders Park and east of Union.
 - Research looked at chain of Title and documentary evidence for each parcel.
 - GIS database and Story map being produced will be a huge preservation tool for Alexandria Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management firms.
 - Gave highlights of certain properties along the waterfront.
 - Irwin's Wharf at the foot of King Street (and Union St.)
 - Researched Women & unfree labor on the waterfront at Irwin's Wharf

AAC Representation Reports

- HARC Update – Ivy Whitlatch
 - Meeting last night where HARC members voted on the new composition - 27 members. AAC retains its member seat.
 - HARC, AAC will write a joint letter to the City Manager about storage and needing to budget/plan for storage of City owned collections.
 - HARC released its first draft of proposed street name changes.
- Waterfront Updates
 - Waterfront Commission - Matt Landes for Esther White
 - Matt Landes, Project Manager for work under the Waterfront Implementation Plan (waterfront storm and flood water project from Duke Street north to Founders Park). He will use Abby's research in planning and design.
 - Matt gave an update on the procurement process for Design/Build progression. Allows for more flexibility and resource protection. He will give the same presentation to the City Council in June.
 - Alexandria Archaeology staff helped review scopes and archaeological and cultural resources teams and cultural resource planning during the project.
 - African American Heritage Trail Committee - Ted Pulliam
 - No report.
 - Samuel Madden Redevelopment – Seth Tinkham
 - No report.
 - Torpedo Factory Stakeholders Committee Representation – Ivy Whitlatch
 - Summary Report was released yesterday. Archaeology is only mentioned once. Send any comments you may have to Ivy.

Break Out Sessions (15 minutes) and Committee Reports

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- Awards Committee (Nick Dienna, Liz Vehmeyer, Paula Whitacre)
 - Will find time to meet to construct the Del Pepper award before the Thursday, June 8 Volunteer event.
- 50th Anniversary (Dylan Colligan, Rebecca Doser, Ivy Whitlatch, Ann Greer, Scott Vierick)
 - Decided to meet every other month at 6:30 p.m. before the AAC meeting.
 - Trying to decide to connect to the 275th Anniversary of Alexandria and/or the 250th Anniversary of America.
 - Working on goal development for the committee.
 - Elected Rebecca as chair.
- African American Initiatives (Ted Pulliam, Paula Whitacre, Esther White)
- Museum (Dick Owens, Ralph Rosenbaum, Michael Johnson, Scott Vierick)
- Waterfront (Ann Greer, Seth Tinkham, John Oldfield)
 - Send any comments on the Ships Report to Eleanor Breen by the end of May. OHA will finalize by the end of the City fiscal year (Friday, June 30).

Commissioner Reports

- FOAA Update (Richard Owens)
 - Working on finalizing plans for the Volunteer Party on June 8th.
- Visit Alexandria (Rebecca Doser)
 - ALX JazzFest, part of Portside Festival, will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 16 and 17, along the waterfront.
- Alexandria Association (Ted Pulliam)
 - No report
- Alexandria Historical Society (Scott Vierick)
 - Last month, AHS held its annual award ceremony where it honored a group of high school students. Also honored recipients of the T. Michael Miller Award. AAC member Michael Johnson was one of two recipients (Al Cox was the other recipient).
 - Next month's lecture will be on the Jewish community in Northern Virginia.
 - On Saturday, June 17, Eleanor will present on waterfront archaeology to AHS members.
- Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or Equivalent Organization (Michael Johnson)
 - No report
- Historic Alexandria Foundation (Seth Tinkham)
 - No report
- Business Community (Dylan Colligan)
 - BISD in Old Town effort has slowed down a bit but is still hoping to get needed numbers on petition by the end of May. Dylan has been voicing preservation needs/opportunities into the conversation with the business community, but BISD is looking to put funds back into marketing and events rather than preservation work.
- Planning District Updates (Paula Whitacre, Esther White, Ivy Whitlatch)
 - No report
- Members at Large (Nick Dienna, Ann Greer, John Oldfield, Liz Vehmeyer)
 - No report

Staff Reports – Eleanor Breen

- Archaeology Updates

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- Fort Ward Playground relocation project: Previous meeting was held Thursday, May 11, where the City recommended Option B for the location. Option B is uphill from the existing location.
- Alexandria Archaeology Staff visited the Revolutionary-era gunboat *Philadelphia* at the Smithsonian Museum of American History. The gunboat was recovered from Lake Champlain in 1935. Smithsonian staff are working on re-conserving the Gunboat and Alexandria Archaeology staff saw the conservation work in action in March.
- From Wednesday to Friday, June 7-9, the City will be conducting the first year condition monitoring of ship timbers at Ben Brennan Pond. Next milestone will be a five year condition monitoring in 2028.
- Social Media and Events Update
 - 45th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party reminder: It will be held on Thursday, June 8, at 6:30 p.m. Awards and remarks will be at 7 p.m. The new Museum Exhibit will be on showcase during the party. This exhibit is the single most impactful change in the museum in over 20 years:
 - 85 artifacts condition reports done.
 - Gives context to recent focus on free and enslaved African Americans and more clearly communicates what archaeologists do.
 - Focuses on a Lee Street site, excavated in the 1990s.
 - There will be a Douglass Cemetery Remembrance event on Saturday, June 17, at 10 a.m., as part of Juneteenth events being held throughout the city.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m. The next AAC Meeting will be held in person on Wednesday, June 21, at Douglass Cemetery, 1421 Wilkes Street. After walkabout at Cemetery, AAC will walk to Freedom House.