

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES: July 19, 2023
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
Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria Representative
Ann Greer, Member at Large
John Oldfield, Member at Large
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Association Representative
Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large
Robert (Scott) Vierick, Alexandria Historical

Society Representative

Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or equivalent organization
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) Representative
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation Representative

Visitors/Public:

None

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist

Call to Order

Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, May 19 meeting minutes. Ralph Rosenbaum moved to accept the minutes, as amended. Ann Greer seconded. Motion passed and minutes approved, as amended.

AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, June 21 meeting minutes. Ralph moved to accept the minutes, as amended. Dylan Colligan seconded. Motion passed and minutes approved, as amended.

Chair Report – Ivy Whitlatch

- Ivy recognized AAC member Rebecca Doser for being named as a “40 under 40” in Alexandria by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.
- Ivy recognized AAC member Liz Vehmeyer as she will be resigning from the AAC this fall to move to Ottawa, ON, Canada.
- AAC discussed items to include in its Annual Report due in August.
 - Full membership of AAC
 - Establishment of the Del Pepper Award and its inaugural presentation to its namesake.

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.

- Participation in master planning for the Freedom House, Torpedo Factory Task Force, Museum exhibit review, African American Heritage Trail, Fort Ward Playground Relocation, Section 106 review process for Samuel Madden housing redevelopment.
- Advocating for a full time museum educator.
- Creation of the AAC 50th anniversary committee.
- Heightened public and elected officials' awareness of risky backyard digging/privies.
- Walkabouts to the City Archives and Douglass Cemetery.
- Built a stronger relationship with FOAA through the Volunteer party and Trivia Night.
- Continued support of archaeology on the waterfront by reviewing the final report of ships' excavation; news clips of AA Heritage Trail.
- Set goals for next year: More collaboration with FOAA; 10th anniversary of commemoration of Contraband and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial; storage of collections and ships from Hotel Indigo Site; connect more with State Government (Senators and Reps)/SHPO by extending invitations to them as we do City Council.
- Ralph made a motion to let Ivy and Eleanor Breen finalize the Annual Report and submit it by Wednesday, August 30 without full review by AAC. Paula Whitacre seconded. Motion passed.
- Nominees for Ben Brenman Awards
 - Call for nominations went out at the end of May. No nominations were submitted.
 - In absence of nominations, AAC discussed possible projects, groups, individuals to nominate for Ben Brenman.
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- Annual Review of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act
 - AAC decided to put this off until after Ivy takes a related training.
- Select Nomination Committee to Develop a Slate for Election
 - Ted Pulliam agreed to be committee chair and set up nominations for the September meeting.

AAC Representation Reports

- HARC Update – Ivy Whitlatch
 - Ivy mentioned to HARC the possibility of creating a historic district for the Wilkes Street cemeteries (including Douglass Cemetery). AAC discussed if/how it could collaborate with HARC on such an effort. There was some interest from AAC, as it could bring recognition to these landscapes and open doors for different grant funding sources but acknowledged the buy-in needed from all the churches/property owners/family members.
- Waterfront Updates
 - Waterfront Commission – Esther White - no report/no meeting this past month
 - African American Heritage Trail Committee – Ted Pulliam
 - Committee had a briefing from the Black History Museum staff on research on a potential Civil Rights and Duke Street Corridor Trail in Alexandria.
- Samuel Madden Redevelopment – Seth Tinkham - no report

Break Out Sessions (15 minutes) and Committee Reports

- Awards Committee (Nick Dienna, Liz Vehmeyer, Paula Whitacre)
 - Discussed suggestions for Ben Brenman Award.
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- 50th Anniversary (Dylan Colligan, Rebecca Doser, Ivy Whitlatch, Ann Greer, Scott Vierick)
 - Working on setting goals and identify opportunities
 - African American Initiatives (Ted Pulliam, Paula Whitacre, Esther White) - No report
 - Museum (Dick Owens, Ralph Rosenbaum, Michael Johnson, Scott Vierick)
 - Committee asked about space accommodations for the waterfront ships - how can we exhibit it and what other collections/artifacts would be shown with it? What resources/funds would be needed?
 - Eleanor shared that this was the purpose of the Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study. There is money allocated for the feasibility study, but it has not started yet/contract has not been awarded yet.
 - Scott asked that the scope include outreach and engagement with stakeholders like the AAC.
 - Waterfront (Ann Greer, Seth Tinkham, John Oldfield)
 - Committee discussed what does AAC want to get out of the Ships Report? Once we know that better we can help tell more stories about the Waterfront and connect with more audiences.

Commissioner Reports

- FOAA Update (Richard Owens) - no report
- Visit Alexandria (Rebecca Doser)
 - Alexandria was named to *Travel and Leisure's* Best Places to Travel List for 2023.
 - Staycation series with ABC7 and highlighted new exhibit at the museum and African American Heritage Trail.
- Alexandria Association (Ted Pulliam) - no report
- Alexandria Historical Society (Scott Vierick)
 - Eleanor - was the featured speaker at last month's lecture. Highest attendance in recent memory. Very successful event.
 - New board members sworn in, including Paula.
- 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)
 - Initiative for the Old Town BISD (Business Improvement Service District) seems to have stalled; did not get enough signatures to move to the next phase.
- Planning District Updates (Paula Whitacre, Esther White, Ivy Whitlatch) - no report
- Members at Large (Nick Dienna, Ann Greer, Liz Vehmeyer) - no report

Staff Reports – Eleanor Breen

- Code Updates
- Collections Updates
 - Research on turtles in the Chesapeake Bay area including zooarchaeology by Dr. Ryan Kennedy of Indiana University Bloomington. Will include over 300 turtle and fish specimens from seven different Alexandria sites.
 - Research on rat arrival in Alexandria by Dr. Eric Guiry.

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- Results of year one monitoring of timbers ponded at Ben Brenman Park . Next inspection is spring 2028.
- Development Project Reviews
- Fifteen (15) were required to hire an archaeologist as a result of reviews.
- Eleanor shared info on select projects from the three planning districts.
- Archaeology Updates
- New silt trap in the archaeology lab in the museum!
- Social Media and Events Update
- Archaeology Day on Wednesday, July 26 from 1-3 p.m. at Samuel Madden Houses site. It is being put on by the developer of the site and Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA). Alexandria Archaeology will have a table there.
- Archaeology Summer Camp's camper open house at Shuter's Hill on Friday, July 21 from 3-3:30 p.m.
- Save the Date! Alexandria Forum - Friday, October 20. A day-long symposium held at Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum will explore the history of the waterfront. Keynote will be Dr. Abby Schreiber.

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
- The next AAC Meeting will be held in person on Wednesday, September 20 at 7 p.m. at the Lloyd House. August AAC Meeting is canceled.

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