

Alexandria Archaeological Commission Meeting
Minutes of September 18, 2024

Members Present:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)
Esther White, Planning District II (Vice Chair)
John Oldfield, Member at Large (Secretary)
Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation
of Black Heritage or equivalent
organization
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Association
Representative
Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Representative
Robert (Scott) Vierick, Alexandria Historical
Society Representative (Acting Secretary)

Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Dylan Colligan, Area Business Community
Representative
Nicholas (Nick) Dienna, Member at Large
Ann Greer, Member at Large
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria
Archaeology (FOAA) Representative
Jason Roberts, Member at Large

City Staff:

Garrett Fesler, Deputy City Archaeologist

At 7:02 p.m., at the Lloyd House, Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order.

AAC members reviewed and amended the Wednesday, July 17 meeting minutes. Ralph Rosenbaum moved to accept the minutes as written; Ted Pulliam seconded. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

Chair Report:

- Ivy led a discussion of the AAC Annual Report. Paula Whitacre moved to accept the report as amended; Esther White seconded, and the report was approved.
- All AAC members have received the City's Electronic Participation Policy.

AAC Membership Reports:

- **Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC):** Ivy attended the HARC meeting on Tuesday, September 17.
- **Torpedo Factory Arts Center (TFAC):** Ivy published a Letter to the Editor in the Alexandria Times celebrating the Torpedo Factory Art Center's 50th anniversary.
- **Waterfront:** Esther attended the Waterfront Commission meeting on Tuesday, September 17. There was an update on the Robinson Terminal North Development Project, including a plan to incorporate some historic signage.
- **Nominations Committee and Elections:** AAC's Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary will carry on in their current capacities.
- **Ben Brenman Award:** The physical awards will be built, and the proclamation will be written, in preparation for the presentation of the award to Marian Van Landingham on Tuesday, October 8.

Break Out Sessions (30 minutes) and Committee Reports (15 minutes)

Cemetery Committee (Seth Tinkham leads; members are Ralph Rosenbaum, Michael Johnson, Dick Owens, Paula Whitacre, Jason Roberts, Nick Dienna, and Eleanor Breen)

- Over the coming months, the Committee will draft the Preliminary Information Form for the Department of Historic Resources of Virginia. This will then be reviewed by the State Review Board. During this time, the Committee will also reach out to the 13 cemetery stakeholders.

50th AAC Anniversary Committee (Scott Vierick leads; members are Dylan Colligan, John Oldfield, Ivy Whitlatch, Ann Greer, Ted Pulliam, and Esther White)

- Eleanor Breen and Scott produced and released a podcast on the history of the AAC and Alexandria Archaeology.
- The Committee is finalizing the “Dirty Dozen” list of the top AAC accomplishments since its founding.
- The Committee is organizing an event (early 2025) designed to honor former AAC Commissioners.

Advocacy Committee (Members are Scott, Esther, Ralph, Ivy, and Ted.)

Initial priorities of the Committee include:

- Exhibition and/or storage of the conserved ship hull remnant, due to return to Alexandria in Spring 2026.
- City Hall renovation: AAC members agreed that renovations to Alexandria’s City Hall need to acknowledge the history of the building, not just its purpose. This could include some historical exhibitions and related space for history. AAC members will suggest a Comprehensive Historical Report, and the requisite funding, of the entire block including Market Square.

Commissioner Reports

- Friends of Alexandria Archaeology Update (Richard Owens): No report. Note: the October meeting of AAC will be a joint meeting with FOAA.
- Visit Alexandria (position vacant): No report. AAC is in touch with Visit Alexandria regarding a potential appointment to the AAC.
- Alexandria Association (Ted Pulliam): No report.
- Alexandria Historical Society (Scott Vierick): The next AHS event will be on Wednesday, September 25. Local historian Madeline Feierstein will present on “Life in Alexandria’s Civil War Prisons.” The application deadline for AHS’ Golden Grants for the “study and interpretation of Alexandria and Northern Virginia history” has been extended to Monday, October 7.
- 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): No report.
- Planning District Updates: No report.
- Members at Large: No report.

Staff Reports: – Garrett Fesler

- Garrett provided an extensive quarterly “Code Update” on activities taking place under the City’s archaeological protection code.
- Concern was raised about the lack of storage or exhibition space for the ship hull remnant, soon to be returned to Alexandria.
- Alexandria Archaeology is participating in multiple upcoming events, including:
 - o Friday, October 4: Pop Up Archaeology: Buried Ships of Robinson Landing
 - o Tuesday, October 8: Ben Brenman Awards at City Council Meeting, City Hall
 - o Saturday, October 12: Fairfax Arctober Fest, Sully Historic Site
 - o Saturday, October 19: Slip Into the Past, Alexandria Archaeology

- Garrett also presented Alexandria Archaeology's Fiscal Year 2024 Year in Review, including a new Digital Map, a growing internship program, a new exhibit at Robinson Landing, advancing professional leadership (StoryMap, reports, conference presentations), and new African American Waterfront Heritage Trail signage.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m. The next AAC meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 16, at 7 p.m. at the Lloyd House.