

Alexandria Archaeological Commission Meeting

Minutes of December 17, 2025

Members Present:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)
John Oldfield, Member at Large (Secretary)
Kim Abraham, Member at Large
Cindy Boren, Member at Large
Raymond (Chip) Eresman, Member at Large
Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) Representative
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Association Representative
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation Representative
Robert (Scott) Vierick, Alexandria Historical Society Representative
Paula Whitacre, Planning District III

Members Excused:

Dylan Colligan, Area Business Community Representative
Ann Greer, Member at Large
Michael Johnson, Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage (or equivalent organization)
Esther White, Planning District II (Vice Chair)

Members Unexcused:

N/A

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist

At 7:44 p.m., at the Lloyd House, Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order.

AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, November 19 meeting minutes. Seth Tinkham moved to accept the minutes as written. Chip Eresman seconded. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

Chair Report:

The Chair proposed two celebratory toasts. The first was to the AAC itself, for its first 50 years of service to the City. A toast was then offered to Seth Tinkham for his many years of service to AAC.

The Chair then led a discussion of the recent activities of two Committees:

Cemetery Committee: The Committee's near-term goal is to have a draft of the Preliminary Information Form (PIF) for the nomination of the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex to the National Register of Historic Places prepared by March 2026. The nomination process will focus on the cemetery complex as a whole, not on the individual cemeteries therein. The Committee will provide a draft to the AAC for reaction and discussion at the AAC meeting on Wednesday, January 21, 2026. This timeline is designed to give the various cemetery owners time to review and improve the PIF prior to its submission to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in May 2026.

Advocacy Committee: The Committee recently sent two letters to City Council. The first letter concerned the Committee's continuing interest in the development of the waterfront, and the request that archaeology remain part of the evolving waterfront discussions. A response was received from City Councilman John Chapman, and it was moved by Chip Eresman that the Chair of AAC reach out again to Councilman Chapman to ensure that the interests of Alexandria Archaeology be represented in discussions about the placement of the Archaeology Museum in particular. The motion was seconded by Scott Vierick and approved.

The Advocacy Committee also led a discussion about the forthcoming return to Alexandria of the conserved ship timbers, first taken out of the ground in January 2016, almost exactly ten years ago. Members deliberated about how to best educate the public on the story of the ship timbers and how to best advocate for appropriate display space upon their return to the City. Members also debated the pros and cons of Letters to the Editor, guest columns, and newspaper articles.

The second letter sent by AAC to the City concerned the Visit Alexandria representative on the AAC. Efforts will be made by AAC and Alexandria Archaeology to broaden the description of the representative from Visit Alexandria to "Visit Alexandria or equivalent representative of the tourism community" or similar language.

Commissioner Reports:

- Alexandria Historical Society (AHS): AHS is creating a new digital history museum to tell the story of Alexandria and is accepting idea submissions through Wednesday, December 31. Ideas can focus on "people, places, or events from Alexandria's past [that] have helped shape the city into what it is today."
- Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF): Discussions are underway regarding a replacement for Seth Tinkham on the AAC.

Eleanor Breen:

- Friends of Alexandria Archaeology with the AAC and Alexandria Archaeology will host its annual Volunteer Party on Friday, January 16, 2026.
- The ship hull remnants project was featured in a newly published history textbook called *The Virginia Adventure*.
- Alexandria Archaeology is remembering McArthur Myers this month, after his recent passing. He was a dedicated advocate for markers across the City to educate the public on the significant impacts of African Americans within Alexandria.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m. The next AAC Meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 21 at 7 p.m. at the Lloyd House.