

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission
Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023
July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

I. SUMMARY

The mission of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) is to advise the City in the preservation of historic sites and buildings, artifacts, and records from loss or deterioration; and promote citizen and tourist use of historic sites and the Torpedo Factory Art Center.

During FY2023, HARC's meetings focused on a wide range of issues (as detailed below). Emphasis was placed on discussion of issues relevant to the HARC mission and goals. Deliberations consistently addressed (1) whether HARC positions should be communicated to other organizations relevant to historic preservation and other areas of concern and (2) whether actions should be taken.

II. OPERATING PROCESSES

Meetings began at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of every month. The meeting is generally limited to two hours. Election of officers for FY 2023 was held during the December 20, 2022 HARC meeting. Elected officers for FY 2023 were Chair Shawn Eyer, Vice Chair Sean Ferguson, and Secretary, Catherine Weinraub. The meeting agendas were prepared by the chairs and vice chair in consultation with the director of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) and were designed to promote efficient and effective deliberation. Meeting agendas and minutes were posted on the City Of Alexandria website, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/historic-alexandria-resources-commission-harc>.

III. COMMITTEES

The following committees were active in FY 2023:

A. Office of Historic Alexandria and Planning Support Committee

Stephen Stuart, Chair
Laura Lieberman

B. Advocacy Committee

Martha Harris and Martha Raymond, Co-Chairs
Gail Rothrock, Michael Hobbs, Sam Hoffman

C. HARC Composition

Richard Klungenmaier, Chair
Michael Hobbs, Linda Lovell, Danny Smith

D. HARC Bylaws

Sam Hoffman, Chair
Linda Lovell, Danny Smith, Michael Hobbs, Steve Stuart

E. Nominating Committee

Stephen Stuart, Chair

F. Ad-Hoc Street Name Research Committee

Co-chairs: Mark Farkus and Linda Lovell
Chris Brownlowe, Thomas Soule, Shawn Eyer

HARC members also participated on non-HARC committees related to historic preservation including the Open Space Committee (Martha Harris, later replaced by Sam Hoffman), and the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (Mark Farkas), Freedom House Master Plan (Donna DeBlasio), and the Torpedo Factory Stakeholder Group (Martha Raymond and alternate Linda Lovell).

IV. HARC ACTIVITIES

A. Torpedo Factory Arts Center – Recognizing the important role of the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria’s history, HARC supported moving forward with the effort to nominate the Torpedo Factory for the National Register of Historic Places by seeking BAR cooperation in encouraging the City Manager to submit the Preliminary Information File (PIF) that has already been prepared to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. HARC approved a formal letter to the City Manager’s officer regarding this, which was sent January 31, 2023.

B. Alexandria Community Remembrance Project – This project is a city-wide initiative dedicated to helping Alexandria understand its history of racial terror hate crimes and to working toward creating a welcoming community bound by equity and inclusion. A position on the steering committee is allocated to HARC. Commissioner Mark Farkas volunteered to take the position and was highly active in that capacity.

C. HARC Composition – Some positions on HARC have changed their names since the Commission was established in 1982, other positions are no longer active or have not nominated representatives for many years. HARC formed a subcommittee to re-examine the Commission’s composition. After much discussion, the Commission agreed upon a new composition and a report to that effect will go to City Council for review and potential adoption. The number of Commission

members remains the same, but offers opportunities for more participation by community organizations.

D. There were several special programs and guest speakers during FY2023.

1. HARC members met at and toured the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary in connection with the regular HARC meeting of July 19, 2022.
2. HARC members met at and toured the Archives and Records Center in connection with the regular HARC meeting of September 20, 2022.
3. A presentation was made on the vision for OHA's oral history center and program by Francesco De Salvatore, OHA's Oral History Manager, during the November 15, 2022, HARC meeting.
4. Ana Vicinanza and José Ayala of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities made a presentation on the Public Open Space Text Amendment Change during the April 18, 2022, HARC meeting.
5. At the June 20, 2022, HARC meeting, Rod Kuckro made a presentation on the Town of Potomac Historic District.

E. Open Space Policy – The City is in the process of revamping its open space policy and has identified HARC as a key participant on the steering committee for that process. The three focuses of the open space committee were: 1. Evaluate existing public open space in City, 2. Define the acquisition plan/criteria, and 3. Study how open space can be incorporated into new development. Martha Harris was selected to serve on the committee to represent HARC and keep HARC apprised of committee activities.

F. Support for Historic Easements. HARC member Danny Smith spoke at the AHRPC's Easement Seminar at the Lyceum April 19th.

G. Celebration of the Centennial of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The Memorial Association worked closely with the City's George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee and the City Manager's office to ensure that the parade leading up King Street (with over 1,000 marchers continuing up to the Memorial itself) would be successful. HARC Chair Shawn Eyer, in his private capacity, was deeply involved with the event and helped with fundraising to support the parade.

H. Curb Cut at 322-324 South Lee Street – HARC submitted a letter to the BZA opposing the curb cut. The Board of Zoning Appeals vote was 4 to 2 in favor of the applicant. Homeowners and the City of Alexandria petitioned the court to have the decision reversed. The neighbors at 326 South Lee have also filed suit, but the city's suit takes precedence. HARC issued a letter to Karl Moritz, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, extending HARC's gratitude for his staff's work on the curb cut issue.

I. Samuel Madden development. The Advocacy Committee met July 12 and focused on the Samuel Madden housing development. Michael Hobbs and Gail Rothrock wrote a statement for the Board of

Architectural Review, to be presented at the July 20 concept review meeting, and HARC reviewed and discussed the statement. City Staff recommends the BAR approve the height, mass, and scale of the proposal but have a fourth concept review to discuss the architectural character. The advocacy committee's statement endorses the proposal for a fourth concept review. On February 7, 2023, HARC sent a letter to Alexandria Planning Commission re: Samuel Madden Homes expressing concerns regarding the project.

K. Alexandria Community Remembrance Project – HARC Commissioner Mark Farkus participated in the ACRP activities that included an Essay Contest with Alexandria City and two Remembrance Events.

L. Height Limit Issue. HARC expressed concern about potential changes to building height limits in terms of the overall historic fabric of the community and especially impacts to the Old and Historic District.

M. Town of Potomac. HARC noted that the Town of Potomac Historic District was named to Preservation Virginia's 2023 Most Endangered Historic Places List in May 2023.

N. Street Names. In November, HARC Chair Danny Smith received a call from Mayor Justin Wilson who asked if HARC would develop a list of historical names related to the history of the City that could be used for future street name changes. A special Ad-Hoc Street Name Research Committee was formed and met monthly between March and August. The Committee produced the list of 50 potential street names to be considered by City Council.

O. OHA Storage Issue. In May 2023, HARC voted that HARC, AAC, and PRAC work together to advocate to the City Manager on behalf of OHA to fund a new collections off-site storage facility.

P. Strategic Retreat Planning. A retreat was planned for August 5, to take place at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

V. GOALS FOR FY2024

A. Support and advocate for the budget, preservation, and operational needs of the Office of Historic Alexandria.

B. Continue monitoring applications docketed for presentation to the BAR and providing input as appropriate.

C. Continue monitoring appeals of BAR decisions to the City Council and provide input to those deliberations as appropriate.

D. The approved report of the HARC Composition Committee will be presented to City Council for modification of the composition of HARC.

E. The proposal for bonus height to encourage incorporation of affordable housing units will be monitored and HARC will engage as appropriate.

F. The commission will pursue efforts with City staff to define better the appropriate role of historic preservation in the city's public policies, planning, and projects – especially in its relationship to the goal of preserving and enlarging Alexandria's stock of affordable housing.

G. As the Combined Sewer Outfall Project evolves, HARC will continue to monitor the plans and implementation to identify threats to historic preservation and will seek changes that eliminate the threats or mitigating actions to reduce the impacts.

H. Enforcement of easements protecting historic properties has precipitated some issues. HARC will continue to monitor developments and will seek to identify effective processes for enforcement of historic easements.

I. HARC will continue to monitor various threats to the integrity of historic areas including 5G networks and open space issues.

J. HARC will continue to advocate for and assist in creating a preservation masterplan, and a building/materials/streetscape inventory in collaboration with OHA staff and the Preservation Office of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

K. Many structures outside the historic districts qualify for listing as 100-year-old buildings. HARC will work with representatives from Planning and Zoning to advocate for additions to this list.

VI. FY 2023 COMMISSION OFFICERS, MEMBERS AND AFFILIATIONS

A. Officers

Chair: Shawn Eyer

Vice Chair: Sean Ferguson

Secretary: Catherine Weinraub

B. Members and Affiliations – During the fiscal year, the terms of some commissioners expired and the commissioners were reappointed or replaced. As a result, there are multiple commissioners listed below for some of the organizations and bodies represented on HARC.

Bailee Barfield – Volunteer (Historic Alexandria Docents)

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

Christopher Brownlowe – Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association

Donna DeBlasio – Planning District I

Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I (term ended September 2022)

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic National Memorial

Mark Farkas – Planning District II

Sean Ferguson – Public Records Advisory Commission

Martha Harris – Volunteer (Historic Alexandria Docents) (term ended January 2023)

Michael Hobbs – Civic Association At-Large

Sam Hoffman – Planning District I

Richard Klingensmaier – Alexandria Association (term ended February 2023)

Roberta Stevens – Alexandria Association

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

Linda Lovell – Mortar and Pestle Society (Alexandria Historic Landmark Society)
Deborah Osborne – Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission
Martha Raymond – Planning District II
Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation
Lisa Schumaier – Torpedo Factory Artists Association
Danny Smith – Business Representative
Tom Soule – Planning District III
Stephen Stuart – Planning District III
Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Catherine Weinraub – Alexandria Historical Society

C. Vacancies:

Business Representative
Planning District I
Planning District III
Christ Church Representative
Carlyle House Representative
Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage
ACVA Board Representative

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Eyer, Chair
Historic Alexandria Resources Commission
September 6, 2023