

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
Lloyd House
220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 20, 2024

PRESENT: (in person)

Donna DeBlasio
Carol Black
Christopher Brownlowe
Shawn Eyer
Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell
Barbara Marvin
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond
Tim Rose
Gail Rothrock
Lisa Schumaier
Russell Simonaro
Roberta Stevens
Danny Smith
Ivy Whitlatch

REMOTE:

EXCUSED:

Bailee Barfield
Mark Farkus
Rebecca Rose
Steve Stuart

ABSENT:

Tom Schultz

GUESTS:

CITY STAFF:

Liz Williams, OHA
William Conkey, BAR Staff

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shawn Eyer at 7:01 p.m. after a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes for November 21, 2023:

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Danny Smith and seconded by Donna DeBlasio. The November 21, 2023, minutes were approved.

Chairs Update:

- No Report

Commissioner Updates:

Lisa Schumaier – Lease Holding Artist at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center

- No Report

Martha Raymond – Planning District 2

- Discussed potential HARC engagement on the Stadium. Said she discussed potential Section 106 triggers since it will be so close to the George Washington Parkway.

Chris Brownlowe – Athenaeum/Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association

- No report

Russell Simonaro – Tourism and Business Community

- No Report

Linda Lovell – OHA Friends Group

- Last meeting after 10 years!
- She noted that Friends Groups of OHA Museums will replace the Mortar & Pestle Society as a category of HARC Membership.

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)

- Two work groups are meeting as part of the regular AAC meeting. A Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex National Historic District planning committee and a 50th anniversary planning committee. This format worked very well.
- The 50th anniversary committee meeting included a presentation by former Archaeology Directors Fran Bromberg and Pam Cressey. David Heiby, with the Old Presbyterian Meeting House Cemetery, will be conducting a future walkabout of the Wilkes Street Cemetery complex to educate the cemetery nomination committee. More to report on that in future meetings.

Danny Smith – Tourism and Business Community

- No Report
- His 10 year term as a HARC member ends with the March meeting.

Roberta Stevens – Alexandria Association

- Encouraged HARC members to attend the March 18 Alexandria Association lecture with Jason Busch presenting on “The American Folk Art Museum in New York: Past, Present, and Future.”

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

- A range of public programs from walking tours to an Easter egg hunt will be taking place in the next few weeks. For additional information, visit <https://leefendallhouse.org/>.

Barbara Marvin – Planning District 1

- No report

Deborah Osborne – Alexandria Historical Restoration & Preservation Commission (AHRPC)

- Discussed how easements are not always recorded on a deed.
- Reported that several easements, including interior easements, are being negotiated.
- The Commission is working to update their donor documents and is planning to improve their documentation efforts on interior spaces.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF)

- No report

Carol Black – Historic Houses of Worship

- Discussed the Old Presbyterian Meeting House decision to remove a section of 1837 pews to allow for more space for musical performances.

Donna DeBlasio – Planning District 1

- No report

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic National Memorial

- George Washington Symposium is planned for Saturday, February 24th. All are welcome to attend.
- The road construction in front of the Memorial should be completed no later than May.

Bailee Barfield – Volunteer at a Historic Property

- Excused Absence

Mark Farkus – Planning District 3

- Excused Absence

Rebecca Rose – Alexandria Historical Society

- Excused Absence

Tim Rose – Community Representative

- No Report

Steven Stuart – Planning District 3

- Excused Absence

Tom Schultz – Alexandria Civic Association

- Absent

Flowers were presented to Linda Lovell on behalf of her 10 years on HARC. She said that participating in HARC had been a learning experience, especially since her expertise was as a scientist and not as a historian.

New Business:

- New member onboarding
 - Materials are forthcoming. Steve Stuart is leading this effort.
- Commission vacancies: Planning District 2, Carlyle House, Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC), Historic Houses of Worship, Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black History.
 - A suggestion was made to the Chair to reach out directly to PRAC for a Commissioner suggestion.
 - Discussion included outreach to OHA’s Audrey Davis for thoughts on representation from a Black History organization.

Old Business:

- None

Standing Committee Reports:

Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) – Mark Farkus

- Barbara Marvin has volunteered to take this slot since Mark will be rotating off the Commission. (It should be noted that Mark Farkus’ term does not expire until 2025 and he will continue as the ACRP representative)

Advocacy – Martha Raymond

- Beginning in March, the Advocacy Committee will be coordinated by Gail Rothrock and Donna DeBlasio.
- At the February meeting:
 - Follow-up discussion after Council's approval of the 301 N. Fairfax St. project. Gail Rothrock spoke at the hearing, representing the HARC Advocacy Committee. Scott Corzine wrote a follow-up letter to the editor of the Alexandria Times about flaws in Alexandria's public input process for development projects.
 - Discussed questions from Debbie Chalfie (Art Deco Society of DC) about follow-up to protect Alexandria historic districts after zoning changes. (Note after this meeting: Del Ray Citizens Association followed up with the City's Planning Office about this and is organizing a historical committee to address this issue.)
- Carol Black expressed a desire to work on items where HARC can make a difference.
 - Members suggested prioritizing the action items in their strategic plan and honoring the successes.
 - The Chair reminded the Commission of their role to advise the City Council.

OHA Support – Steve Stuart

- Excused Absence

Freedom House Master Plan – Donna DeBlasio

- The Master Plan, now referred to as the Comprehensive Plan, is in the final phase of editing. A public meeting for SmithGroup to present the report is planned for April.
- OHA staff are working to seek the approvals needed for the exterior renovation of the site that is planned for late Spring.
- Ben Skolnik's recent research on Freedom House is the feature article in the Alexandria Historical Society Chronicle (newsletter).

Ad-Hoc Proposed Street Naming Committee – Linda Lovell and Mark Farkas, Co-Chairs

- While technically the ad-hoc committee has concluded their task and is no longer meeting, Linda Lovell commented there might be research requests in future years.
- New chairs will need to be identified since Linda Lovell and Mark Farkas are rotating off HARC soon.
- City Council focused on District 3 for this first round and voted to rename and/or rededicate four street names: North Breckinridge Place was changed to Harriet Jacobs Place, North and South Jordan Street was rededicated in honor of Thomasina Jordan, North and South Early Street was changed Earley Street to honor Lt. Col. Charity Earley, and Forrest Street was changed to Forest Street.
- Signs will be changed beginning in June and events will be held with the Jordan and Earley neighbors.
- Linda Lovell mentioned a HARC win related to street renaming. She was contacted by Alyia Gaskins to talk with the Concerned Citizens Network and their work with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) at the Alexandria City Public

Schools (ACPS). She did a presentation on how HARC chose the names and then the 8th graders had to think about what names they would suggest!

- Additional information on the street renaming process can be found at: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/StreetRenaming>

Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Update: Bill Conkey

Robinson Terminal North

The Board will be holding a Concept Review for the Robinson Terminal North development project. The site is located at 500-501 North Union Street and was formally home to the Robinson Terminal warehouses. The proposal includes two buildings, one on either side of North Union Street. The west building will be five stories high with multi-unit residential above ground floor retail. The east building will be four floors of multi-unit residential units with a ground floor restaurant on the east side of the building. This is a unique case for the BAR because the site is actually not within the historic district. As a part of the Waterfront Plan, this development goes to the BAR in an advisory capacity only. There is no formal approval required. The same project with a different architect and design was reviewed by the BAR in 2014-2015.

1021-1025 King Street Appeal

On March 16 the City Council will hear an appeal of the Board decision to deny the use of composite windows on the Early buildings at 1021-1025 King Street. The current BAR Guidelines require the use of wood windows on buildings constructed prior to 1932 within the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) so the application could not be approved administratively. The proposed windows are a composite of wood and other materials and do not comply with the current policy. The Board found that there was not sufficient reason to vary from the current guidelines and therefore denied the application. The owner has appealed the decision to City Council.

301 North Fairfax

The Planning Commission and City Council recently approved the Development and Special Use Permit (DSUP) for the proposed multi-unit building at 301 North Fairfax Street. The design went to the Board for a Concept Review before going to the Planning Commission. At these reviews the Board provided feedback on the design and the applicant made design modifications in response. Now the applicant will be requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the design which was modified through the City Council review process. We do not have a current application for the proposal so we do not know exactly when the project will go to the BAR.

808 North Washington Street

The owner of the current construction site at 808 N Washington has been in discussions with a potential buyer who would take over the project and convert it to multi-unit residential instead of the previously approved hotel use. This will require some minor modifications to the exterior that will go to the BAR for approval.

Heritage

The demolition of the existing buildings at the Heritage site has been completed and the site has been secured. There is currently no projected date for the beginning of new construction.

Design Guidelines

The BAR will be reviewing three updated chapters at the hearing on 2/21. These updated chapters include Masonry, Siding and Trim, and Roofing.

A question was also raised about the Historic Rooming House at Pendleton and N. Henry. Bill shared that architectural drawings are underway, and it is a project partnering with the City's Office of Housing.

OHA Report: Gretchen Bulova, report given by Liz Williams on behalf of Ms. Bulova

- February has been filled with Black History Month and George Washington-related events. We hope that you have had the chance to participate in one or more of these activities!
- The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) survey launched today, February 20. Please take the survey and encourage our friends to do so as well.
- Initial archaeology has been conducted in Douglass Cemetery in the location where the drainage pipe is located and scheduled to be replaced. There is no evidence that graves are located in this area and the pipe replacement will proceed to help with water remediation from the site.
- An exhibit featuring the excavated ships at Robinson Landing will be on view at the former Robinson Landing sales office, beginning April 6th. The exhibit will be on view through December 2024.
- 2024 is the 275th anniversary of the City of Alexandria – with activities focused from April through September. The kickoff will align with this year's art installation debut at Waterfront Park.
- Staff have convened quarterly for Alexandria250 planning meetings with local attractions and stakeholders to plan events leading up to July 2026. Two key events – the Fairfax County Resolves and the 200th anniversary of Lafayette's 1824 visit – will be held in 2024.
- Staff have purchased a number of wonderful Alexandria-related objects that had recently gone up from auction. These range from a Stabler drop leaf table to Alexandria-made stoneware. Some of these items will be featured in upcoming issues of the new Historic Alexandria Quarterly.

Public Comment

- Tim Rose, newly appointed to HARC, introduced himself. He has his own tour guide business and loves all things George Washington and Revolutionary War. As a former Marine, he is very invested in veterans' history.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. The next meeting will take place on March 19, 2024, at the Lloyd House.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Williams, OHA