

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
Lloyd House
220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 18, 2024

PRESENT:

Donna DeBlasio
Christopher Brownlowe
Shawn Eyer
David Kovalik
Laura Lieberman
Barbara Marvin
Deborah Osborne
Tim Rose
Lisa Schumaier
Steve Stuart
Ivy Whitlatch

REMOTE:

Mark Farkas
Gail Rothrock

EXCUSED:

Bailee Barfield
Carol Black
Mia Mulrennan
John Patrick
Rebecca Rose
Roberta Stevens

ABSENT:

Tom Schultz
Russell Simonaro

GUESTS:

Danny Smith

CITY STAFF:

Liz Williams, OHA Staff
William Conkey, BAR Staff

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shawn Eyer at 7:09 p.m. after a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes for April 16, 2024:

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Steve Stuart and seconded by Donna DeBlasio. The April 16, 2024 minutes were approved. No meeting was held in May.

Chairs Update:

Commissioner Updates:

Bailee Barfield – Volunteers at a Historic Property or Attraction

- Excused absence

Carol Black – Historic Houses of Worship

- Excused absence

Chris Brownlowe – Athenaeum/Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association

- Noted that the floors at the Athenaeum will be refinished the first two weeks of August.

Donna DeBlasio – Planning District 1

- No report

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic National Memorial

- No report

David Kovalik – Public Records Advisory Commission

- Excited to report that the restoration of the Archives and Records building is nearing completion, with only the upgrades to the freight elevator outstanding.
- Discussed PRAC's support of the Archive's staff digitization of Council records.

Mark Farkus – Planning District 3

- Expressed appreciation of the work of the HARC Naming Committee and is proud as he drives by the newly rededicated Earley Street.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

- In May, there was a reunion for volunteers/staff to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Lee Fendall House Museum.
- Restarted trivia nights in the garden with the Carlyle House.
 - It was suggested that HARC/AAC Trivia-off would be a fun activity.
- Exterior repainting and wood repairs will take place this summer.

- Shawn mentioned fundraising efforts including Spring2ACTion and a HAF grant.
- Paint analysis report will be used to decide what layer to use for color.

Barbara Marvin – Planning District 1

- No report

Mia Mulrennan – Tourism and Business Community

- Excused

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

- Excited they have a full commission now.
 - New Governor appointee – Ricardo Navarro
- Brought up dispute related to Prince Street and easement.
 - Not good options for recourse for our commission.
 - Still trying to figure out best path forward.
- Suggestion was made that easement holders could put a plaque on the house as indicator to be extra careful around this property.
- Easement training for commission members is underway. The bi-annual inspections are about to begin.
- Mentioned that they are recommending prospective easement holders shop their paperwork to an attorney.
- Ivy asked if there has been any financial analysis of easement vs. not easement when selling a property.
- Conversation about easement on the property next to Prince Street Fire Station.
- Ivy suggested that a topic HARC could explore: generating a list of prospective easement properties.
- Attended a Preservation Roundtable where L’Enfant Trust shared about their easement program and some things to consider for us.
- Daingerfield House easement underway and it will include an interior easement as well.

John Patrick – Planning District 2

- Excused

Rebecca Rose – Alexandria Historical Society

- Excused

Tim Rose – Community Representative

- Asked if an event will happen around the new Fairfax Resolves. Liz referenced the Fairfax Resolves flyer.

- Asked about where the Braddock Expedition interpretive sign with map had gone. He said it was a great educational tool for his tours and would love it back.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF)

- Grants awarded at annual garden party (thanks to HARC members who attended!)
 - Alexandria Elks Lodge #48 – to repair shingle roof at front - \$10,000
 - History Revealed - for Shopping Stories, Phase 2 - \$4,000
 - Lee-Fendall House Museum – for exterior repairs and painting - \$5,000
 - Office of Historic Alexandria – for dendrochronology at Murray-Dick-Fawcett House - \$7,500
 - Scholarship Fund of Alexandria – Fellowship for a graduating senior to study history, architecture or related subject - \$5,000
 - Tall Ship Foundation – for installation of replica historic bowsprit on tall ship *Providence* - \$10,000

Tom Schultz – Alexandria Civic Association

- Absent

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

- Planning is underway for 50th Anniversary Party to be held September 13-14.

Russell Simonaro – Tourism and Business Community

- Absent

Roberta Stevens – Alexandria Association

- Excused

Steven Stuart – Planning District 3

- No Report

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)

- Continuing to plan for Commission's 50th anniversary in Feb 2025
 - Working with Sen. Adam Ebbin for a Joint Resolution
 - Planning an event in conjunction with volunteer party at Torpedo Factory
- At the June AAC meeting, commissioners took a 2 hour tour of the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex
 - Good preparation work as they discuss nominating it for National Historic District which would also include National Cemetery.
 - Would be helpful so the cemeteries could secure grant funding for the few structures there.

- Spoke at the Visit Alexandria Board Meeting. They are a key member of the AAC commission. Emphasized Archaeology is at the heart of the history of Alexandria. Mentioned that we still do not have home for ship.

New Business:

- FY24 Annual Report
The Chair will draft the report, with input from commissioners.
- Section 106 for Waterfront Implementation Project
The City of Alexandria, along with the National Park Service, sent letters to potential interested parties, including HARC, the AAC, and the Waterfront Commission, in early June. These letters announce the initiation of consultation with interested people and groups as part of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation act. Section 106 gives the public the chance to weigh in on projects like the waterfront implementation before a final decision is made.

Multiple members requested a presentation from DPI. Some were concerned based on Old Town Civic presentation would like DPI to share about the alternatives and different options.

Ivy suggested commissioners attend a waterfront walk to get up to speed on this project. She also stated she is struggling with what role HARC should play in this.

Old Business:

- New Member onboarding
Since the May meeting was not held, a new member onboarding presentation will be held at a fall meeting. All members, regardless of their time on HARC, are welcome to attend.
- Election of HARC Vice-Chair
Christopher Brownlowe expressed interest.
Motion to appoint Christopher to be the Vice Chair was made by Steve Stuart and seconded by Donna DeBlasio. The motion passed.

Standing Committee Reports:

Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) – Mark Farkus, HARC Representative

- On May 22, the first two scholarships were awarded through the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria.
- The committee is planning the August 8 Benjamin Thomas Remembrance event.

Advocacy – Gail Rothrock and Donna DeBlasio, Co-Chairs

- No report.

OHA Support – Steve Stuart

- Steve is working with Laura Lieberman to clarify HARC terms and acronyms to assist with new member onboarding. They hope to provide a report next month.

Murray-Dick-Fawcett House Comprehensive Plan– Gail Rothrock, HARC Representative

- It was an impressive consultant team; about 30 people attending the meeting.
- Shared about the evolution of house and the large issues of its fragile state and need for accessibility
- Shared the tentative plans that were discussed.
- Overall a terrific afternoon!

Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Update: Bill Conkey

- 301 North Fairfax Street: A group of neighbors has appealed the BAR approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the multi-unit development at 301 N Fairfax Street. The appeal will be heard by City Council at their hearing on July 2, 2024.
- 699 Prince Street: The Heron hotel at the corner of S Washington Street and Prince Street is nearing completion. The building on the corner is scheduled to open this Thursday, 6/20/24, with the new construction portion next door set to open in two weeks. The building was originally built in 1926 as the George Mason Hotel. After many years as a commercial office building, it has returned to its original use.
- 309 Duke Street: The house at 309 Duke Street suffered a collapse of the exterior ell wall in December 2023. The building has been purchased by a new owner who is planning to restore the property. Improvements to the building will go to the BAR at the July 3 hearing.
- Design Guidelines: In our continuing effort to update the Parker Gray Design Guidelines, the Board will be presented with an update to the Window and Shutter chapter on June 20. This is one of our most complicated and technical chapters and the update will clarify the policies.

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

Mentioned and passed out flyers for the Fairfax Resolves event in July.

OHA has had a great year and Gretchen would like to highlight the following Top Ten Accomplishments for FY2024!

- The Virginia Association of Museums (VAM), awarded Historic Alexandria the ***Museum Innovation Award*** at this year's March VAM conference in Virginia Beach.
- The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) was honored by the Alexandria NAACP at their 90th Anniversary Freedom Fund Gala. On October 21, on behalf of all ACRP members, the ACRP Co-Chairs Gretchen Bulova and Audrey Davis

accepted the *Community Service Award* in appreciation for ACRP's outstanding dedicated service.

- By the conclusion of FY24, OHA staff will have opened four new exhibitions:
 - a. **Buried Ships of Robinson Landing**, a viewable exhibit morning to evening on Pioneer Mill Way, Opened April 6
 - b. **Lewis Cass White: Preserving the Legacy of Fort Stevens**, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, *Opening May 25*

To honor the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens, guests will learn more about Lewis Cass White and his large collection of almost 200 documents, objects, and photographs related to his Civil War service and post-war mission to preserve the Defenses of Washington.
 - c. **Mapping Alexandria: Stories of a Changing City**, Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, *Opening June 22*

Block by block, guests will explore the stories of Alexandria! This exhibition, which marks the 275th anniversary of the City's founding, delves into the evolution and history of Alexandria through the words of its residents.
 - d. **Moss H. Kendrix: Reframing the Black Image**, Alexandria Black History Museum, *Opening June 29*

This exhibition debuts the works of African American public relations pioneer Moss Kendrix. In the late 1940s he promoted a new approach in marketing – appealing to African American consumers with positive and aspirational advertising campaigns featuring African American models and stars. This exhibition is supported by an IMLS grant.
- Fully funded, received easement approvals, and awarded the **exterior rehabilitation of the Freedom House Museum contract** to Oak Grove Construction. The project will begin in June 2024 and wrap up by December 2025.
- Helped the City acquire partial ownership of **historic Douglass Cemetery** to begin the important stormwater mitigation project.
- Launched the annual *Alexandria Forum* (scholarly symposium) with the theme of Waterfront History, to promote the research and accomplishments of Historic Alexandria staff and partners.
- Finalized the **Comprehensive Plan for the Freedom House Museum** in partnership with SmithGroup and community stakeholders.
- Completed the **Historic Structures Report for the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House** in partnership with Glave&Holmes Architecture.
- Launched the **African American Waterfront Heritage Trail** as part of the City's Black History Month celebration with two orientation signs and eleven historic interpretation signs.
- Launched the newest Historic Alexandria publication, *Alexandria At War 1861-1865: African American Emancipation in an Occupied City*.

Public Comment

- Danny Smith, former commissioner and attending as a member of the public, expressed his appreciation for the updates on the latest HARC issues.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. The next meeting will take place on July 16, 2024, at the Lloyd House.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Williams, OHA