

Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)
Minutes of April 21, 2021

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Public Registration URL: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DsZHf9pgTJG29cIEEDFmHg

Meeting/Webinar ID: 922 1607 7097

Meeting/Webinar Password: 431483

Dial-in number: 301-715-8592

Members Present:

Ivy Whitlatch, Planning District I (Chair)

Esther White, Planning District II (Vice
Chair)

Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria
Representative

Jacob (Jake) Hoogland, Member at Large

Mark Ludlow, Member at Large

Richard (Dick) Owens, Friends of
Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA)
Representative

Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria
Association Representative

Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large

Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria
Foundation Representative (Acting
Secretary)

Elizabeth Vehmeyer, Member at Large

Christopher (Chris) Warren, Alexandria
Historical Society Representative

Members Absent:

Ann Davin, Member at Large (Secretary)

Dylan Colligan, Business Community
Representative

City Staff:

Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist

Public:

Tammi Gillums

Christine Hines – FOAA President

Tom Macia – FOAA

Call to Order: Ivy Whitlatch, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Reading of Virtual meeting Notice for the City of Alexandria by Eleanor Breen and recorded by Eleanor Breen

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the April 21, 2021, meeting of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020, or Section 4-0.01(g) in HB29 and HB30, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly (Virginia Acts of Assembly Ch. 1283 and 1289), to undertake essential business. All of the members of the Board and staff are participating from remote locations through Zoom. This meeting is being held electronically, unless a determination is made that it is safe enough to be held in person at the Lloyd House at 220 N. Washington, Alexandria, VA. Electronic access will be provided in either event. The meeting can be accessed by the public through the link or phone number posted on the City calendar. Public comment will be received at the meeting by stating name and comment. Questions can be submitted to the committee through the Q&A feature on Zoom. This meeting will be recorded and posted on the alexandriava.gov/historic webpage. Zoom is compatible with assistive technologies such as screen readers and keyboard shortcuts.

Review and Approval of Minutes

AAC members reviewed the Wednesday, March 17, meeting minutes. Esther White moved to accept the minutes as amended; Ted Pulliam seconded, and all AAC members agreed.

FOAA President Report

Ivy introduced and welcomed Christine Hines, president of FOAA, as part of tonight's joint meeting of FOAA and the Alexandria Archaeological Commission. As an example of the partnership between these two groups, Ivy noted that the Commission and FOAA recently sent a letter to City Council supporting Alexandria Archaeology's budget request for the City's Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Christine thanked the commission for the opportunity to co-sign this letter. She then provided an update on current FOAA activities, including that she has enjoyed working with the FOAA board during the past year and acknowledged their contributions to public archaeology in the city during difficult times. She also said that the FOAA board is restarting their Alexandria After Dark series beginning next month and continuing in June 2021 as part of overall efforts to improving communication. The FOAA board is specifically looking to increase social media engagement. Paula Whitacre will continue to produce the quarterly FOAA newsletter.

FOAA is ready to work with AAC in the future and collaborate on new projects. Ivy supported this idea, particularly with promoting the ships, the potential of a waterfront museum feasibility study, and other activities where advocates for public archaeology will be more successful in work together as a united front than working separately.

There were no questions from the commission to FOAA. Tom Macia did add that he is encouraging Christine to plan FOAA's activities against the backdrop of the upcoming City fiscal year so that FOAA events and citywide events can overlap, as appropriate.

Chair Report

Ivy reported on three items from the most recent Historic Alexandria Resources Committee (HARC) meeting:

- Proposed subdivision of a Beverly Hills property
- Proposed work on the access road in front of the Masonic Temple
- Proposed evaluation of the composition of HARC

HARC discussed a few projects at their recent meeting and highlighted proposed work on North Overlook, a 100-year-old home in Beverly Hills that will be incorporated into a new subdivision. HARC is concerned about the impact of this development on the remaining portions of the property and that there haven't been opportunities to provide feedback on the effect proposed project work will have on the historic integrity of the property and subdivision plans. The Archaeological Commission discussed that there have been limited opportunities for the City's archaeological resource protection code to be triggered, as there hasn't been ground disturbance; nevertheless, the broader concern is how the subdivision process accounts for historic resources. Richard (Dick) Owens asked if HARC has done outreach to other municipalities about how they have handled this. Eleanor indicated that the North Ridge Civic Association has proposed moving the home, which was built by a free black plasterer in Alexandria who lived there until the 1880s until it was leased. The property is not listed in the National Register or a Virginia

Landmark. The Archaeological Commission discussed whether the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) has review authority over this property and that there are resources outside the central core that are historic. Esther White noted that there are many properties that are historic and are only 50 years old. Eleanor clarified that the purchase of multiple parcels, or their subdivision, is not a trigger until there are actual plans, specifications, or even a Special Use Permit. Further, most private homeowners' projects would not trigger the hiring of an archaeological consultant due to the code.

HARC also discussed a pending request by the City to change the access road in front of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial (Masonic Temple). The proposed change conflicts with future work by the temple to restore historic landscape features.

Finally, HARC is considering revising the composition of their commission as they have had several longer-term vacancies. HARC is in the process of understanding what the implications of a new composition would be.

Staff Report

Staff from Texas A&M recently provided the City with a digital comparison of the four waterfront ships (designated as the ship from the Hotel Indigo, F200, F155, F159).

- F159 was not fully excavated.
- The ship from the Hotel Indigo is being conserved.
- Ships with feature numbers 200, 155, and portions of 159 have been disassembled, submerged, and will be transported and stored at the bottom of Ben Brenman Pond.

Ivy asked about how timbers will be labelled. Eleanor said that the City has worked with the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC lab) to develop a long-term labelling strategy. Currently, they are labeled with impermeable labels that give their location within the feature as a whole. In preparation for submersion, the individual timbers will be labeled again with additional labels; however, not much movement is expected once the timbers are in the pond and secured to geotextile with cable ties. Timbers will be inspected for displacement every five years.

Additional staff reports followed later in the meeting.

Alexandria Archaeology Support Committee – no report

Community Outreach Committee – no report

Civic Engagement Committee – no report

Awards Discussion and Committee Selection

Jake and Dylan chair this effort. Eleanor, Christine, and Dylan discussed the concept of the Del Pepper Public Advocacy Award as a joint AAC-FOAA award. Christine noted that there may be some challenges with defining the “public advocacy” that fits within the purview of FOAA *and* of AAC. Christine asked the general question of who would be the ideal winner of this award? After a discussion, it would be individuals who have served in a public role; however, this discussion resulted in the question of whether there are members of the public who have

advocated for resources but *not* in an elected capacity. Further discussion resulted in the following key points:

- FOAA is interested in partnering, pending better definition of the award
- Jake clarified that this is the Del Pepper Advocacy Award – with advocacy being the key word, however that happens; Ivy asked whether the award could be something like the Del Pepper Advocacy Award or Del Pepper Partnership Award
- Tom Macia (FOAA) will work with AAC members Jake and Dylan to refine the definition of the Del Pepper award
 - Ivy indicated that the joint FOAA-AAC Del Pepper award committee will take into account that Councilwoman Pepper will step down from City Council in June and suggested that perhaps the first award is to Del Pepper in October alongside the Ben Brenman award
- Eleanor noted that Brenman award solicitations usually begin in April/May

Membership Update

- Christopher (Chris) Warren, Rebecca Doser – now voting members
- Seth was reappointed to represent the Historic Alexandria Foundation
- There is a current vacancy for Planning District III
- Standing vacancy from the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage

Planning Updates and Reports (as needed)

Waterfront Updates

- Ships/Waterfront Archaeology Update – Eleanor Breen
 - planning process for ship ponding continues
 - American Institute of Archaeology talk last week on the ships
- Waterfront Commission – Mark Ludlow
 - The Waterfront Commission met Tuesday, April 20.
 - A key agenda item of this meeting was forming a comment to City Council regarding the proposed budget, of relevance to AAC was the proposed \$125,000 for a Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study and the desire for the Waterfront Commission to have a role in that study.
 - i. Frustration was expressed by many members of the Waterfront Commission on their limited awareness and value of a study for an unfunded museum.
 - ii. Many were unaware of the proposed budget item.
 - iii. Mark reported that it appeared to the Waterfront Commission that the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) had not briefed them in advance of the meeting and that is what may have caused this negative reaction
 - iv. Mark noted that AAC has been advocating for a museum study for some time and his opinion was concern that the study would not be endorsed by the Waterfront Commission. Ivy noted that this budget item has been in the budget for several years. Ted raised that one of the objections to the proposed waterfront museum was the failure of the canal plaza museum – which he suggested was not a one-to-one correspondence with the proposed waterfront museum.

African American Heritage Trail Committee – Eleanor

The heritage trail committee meets Thursday, April 22 and continues to develop the draft of stops for the southern end of the trail.

Torpedo Factory Vibrancy Plan – Ivy/Ted Pulliam/Ralph Rosenbaum

Ivy reported that Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Office of the Arts, should be coming back shortly with a stakeholder engagement plan, in response to a request from City Council; next steps will be determined based on this plan.

African American Civil Rights Network Nomination for Freedmen Cemetery– Seth Tinkham

The Commission now has the required letter from the property owner needed to complete the application. For the purposes of this application, the property owner is the City of Alexandria acting through the City Manager. The next step in completing the nomination application is that Ivy, Seth, Eleanor will work on entering data into the online application.

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Training

Eleanor reported that Planning and Zoning applied to the Department of Historic Resources for a Certified Local Government grant to host Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP®) “Building the Preservation Community” training from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions for City staff, BAR members, and a variety of City commission members. AAC members should let Eleanor know if they are interested in attending by this coming Monday.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Eleanor reported that the City has drafted a Native American/Virginia Indian page, including updated information regarding state and federally recognized tribes in MD, VA, and DC and new references. OHA is circulating a draft statement with the knowledge that consultation must be a next step.

Staff Reports – Eleanor Breen

- Social Media Updates
 - 1300 King Street (late-1820s Alexandria building) excavation has revealed intact buried cellar with relieving arches and potential internal draining/sump; investigations for comparative examples underway; another wood-lined feature was discovered
 - Spring2ACTion this year is related to the preservation of Freedom House at 1315 Duke Street to contribute towards the physical preservation of the building; day of giving is Wednesday, April 28
 - FOAA After Dark – Thursday, April 29, 6:30 p.m., Dr. Garrett Fesler will present on Nat Turner (“Nat Turner and the 46 Petitioners”)
 - Joseph McCoy Lynching Memorial – Friday, April 23, 8-9 a.m., late 19th century individual who was lynched at the corner of Lee and Cameron Street in 1897
- May 19 – Next AAC Meeting
- Record Volunteer Hours

- Public Comment
- Adjournment the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.