

MINUTES

Tuesday, Dec.15, 2015

PRESENT:

Elliot Bell-Krasner
Melinda Barnes
Michael Commisso
Jolande Goldberg
Martha Harris
Susan Hellman
William Hendrickson
Dennis Hensley

Vanessa Herndon
Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell
Ann Marie Maloney
Elizabeth McCall
Carolyn Meza
McArthur Myers
Gail Rothrock

Allen Schirmer
Danny Smith
Anna Stillner
Nancy Tingen
Tobin Tracey
Patricia Washington
Richard Webber
Margaret Wood

EXCUSED:

UNEXCUSED:

CITY STAFF: Al Cox, J. Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Hendrickson called the meeting to order at 8:15pm.
The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as amended. The motion for approval was made by Danny Smith with Dennis Hensley second.

The first discussion was on architecture pattern books, such as the one recently prepared for Del Ray, for other Alexandria neighborhoods. Al Cox noted that a neighborhood needed to request pattern books which can be used by homeowners, developers and construction companies to follow housing patterns suitable for a neighborhood.

The majority of the meeting concerned the newest archaeological finding at 220 South Union Street. A 50 foot portion of a wooden ship was found in the last few days. Several members of the commission spoke on this issue concerning preservation of this item and funding of future finds along the Waterfront.

Elizabeth McCall stated that the initial action to be taken was preservation of all items found at the site and that Carr developers were very interested in using the artifacts. However they do have a business to run and some items will take 3 years to properly preserve. While the code requires the developer, in this case, Carr to fund the excavation and documentation, they are not required to provide funding for storage. She feels that we should work with the City Council to find funding.

Martha Harris supported our commission informing the Council of the potential urgent need to address conservation and preservation at this site. In addition, she noted that these will be continuing issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive way in the Waterfront Plan. To that end we should invite individuals familiar with the governance concept of the Plan to speak at HARC. She also noted that ultimately some form of public/private coherence is needed for the totality of historic preservation on the Waterfront and beyond. Will Carr cooperate in the effort as it relates to the dig on that site?

Dennis Hensley made the following points – 1) The City – the Mayor, Council and staff – needs to be more assertive in protecting significant artifacts both (a) at the time of granting approvals for development and (b) when artifacts are discovered. 2) HARC should formally urge the City to move quickly to protect and preserve the recently discovered remains of the ship. 3) HARC and all the historically-focused private groups in town should begin a deliberate effort to secure funding for the preservation, protection and interpretation of significant historical artifacts. This effort should include work with the City to hind and protect funds but the effort should also include exploration of privat dedicated funding and possible-public private partnerships.

Margaret Wood stated that – Yes, the Mayor, Council and Staff need to protect the antiquities we possess but also what we are beginning to discover both in conservation and preservation. We need to galvanize interest in the historic discoveries we unearth. It is also important to inform the public as well as the Council if our goal is to excite, inspire and wake up support from those unaware of what we have here. It is instrumental for future fund raising for future archaeological finds.

Elliot Bell-Krasner added the following points: 1) We and the city need to be proactive with respect to preserving the artifacts that might be found so that we aren't always reacting at the last minute when something of note is discovered. There needs to be a policy in place. 2) Perhaps we could help lead an educational campaign to get the citizenry interested in the historic aspects of the waterfront. 3) Moving forward, we need to have a cohesive strategy but one that doesn't just duplicate what HAF or the Archaeological Commission if already doing or planning 4) We should invite representatives from the waterfront commission, as well as the Mayor and council members to come and speak with us once we have an idea in mind of our goals with respect to the waterfront plan.

Lance Mallamo noted that the waterfront project will continue for a number of years and that archaeology was always an integral part. It was not anticipated that artifacts the size and scope of the warehouse and boat would be found. Putting together non-profit funding for this could be

a multi-year process and perhaps, the Commission should have a subgroup for funding. We should continue this discussion at the January meeting as part of the OHA strategic budget. Danny Smith proposed the following motion: The commission in its role to advise the Council and the Mayor regarding historic preservation, strongly recommends serious attention to potentially momentous discovery of a 50 foot ship at the Carr hotel construction site. The Commission strongly urges the Council and the Mayor to support appropriate funding to conserve the archaeological objects for further research and interpretation. The motion was seconded by Dennis Hensley. The Commission voted to approve this motion and requested that Chairman Hendricks send this motion to the Mayor and Council as soon as possible.

OHA UPDATES / STRATEGIC PLAN

OHA has been asked to propose a budget reduction of 5%. About 25% of this will be covered by recent retirements. The City Manager will be asked to provide for a full-time historian position and a Clerk position to help with FOIA requests.

Fort Ward Management Plan held a meeting on December 5th with a presentation by City Archaeologist, Fran Bromberg. The next meeting will be held January 21 and a site to be decided.

Carlyle House will open a new exhibit connected to the “Mercy Street” PBS series on January 19th.

There will be a preservation forum in the spring, focused on deciding if something is endangered and how do you preserve it- the philosophy of what is more important.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

nothing to report

MEMBER REPORTS

Each member reported on their particular upcoming events and gave updates.

NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be on Jan. 19 at the Lloyd House

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Lovell, member of HARC
J. Lance Mallamo, Director, OHA