

**HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

PRESENT:

Carol Black	Laura Lieberman	Gail Rothrock
Rosemarie Esber	Linda Lovell	Danny Smith
Shawn Eyer	Paul Mazzuca	Monica St. Dennis
Martha Harris	Maddy McCoy	Steve Stuart
Michael Hobbs	Severiano Ortiz	Stetson Tinkham
Sam Hoffman	Deborah Osborne	Ivy Whitlach
Richard Klingenmaier	Martha Raymond	

EXCUSED:

ABSENT:

Christopher Brownlowe

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova
Apasrin Suvanasai

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Linda Lovell at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Webinar.

Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice

Tonight's virtual meeting via Zoom is being recorded.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the November 17, 2020 meeting of the Historic Alexandria Resource 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 Sections 4-0.00(g) in HB29 and HB30 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 in the City Council Chamber at 301 King Street, 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.

Approval of Minutes for November 17, 2020

On a motion by, Richard Kligenmaier seconded by Paul Mazzuca, HARC voted to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2020 meeting.

Chairs Update

Co-Chair Lovell

- Alexandria Historical Society and Alexandria Association have joined OHA to present virtual lectures. One benefit of virtual meetings and programs has been to achieve a greater demographic reach.
- Recognized and thanked OHA staff for their work during COVID-19.
- Del Pepper announced that she will retire from City Council. HARC recognizes Del Pepper for her 35 years of service to the city and support of Historic Alexandria. HARC agreed to write an appreciation letter to Del Pepper and City Council thanking her for her service. Will also submit to local newspapers.

Co-Chair Smith

- HARC sub-committees must have at least four members to be official. Urges commissioners to volunteer for a committee – may be assigned.

New Business

Plan to have a presentation on Diversity and Inclusion in Historic Preservation by Purvi Irwin at the January HARC meeting

Old Business

TFAC Vibrancy Study – Danny Smith

Letter was submitted to Mayor and City Council several weeks ago. All HARC members should have received a copy of the letter via email. Councilman Seifeldein and Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker have both responded stating their appreciation for the letter and will take comments into consideration.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

Recognized and thanked members of Advocacy Committee for helping with the TFAC letter. Both Gail Rothrock and Martha Raymond have attended virtual briefings on TFAC. Stressed importance of HARC to stay on top of issue.

OHA Support – Steve Stuart, Chair

OHA Support Committee needs members. Currently working on establishing a friend's group for OHA to allow for tax deductible donations in support of museums. Still in the exploratory phase.

Board of Architectural Review Update

Report read by Co-chair Lovell

Towne Motel

The historic home was moved from the original location to the west side of the site on December 2nd and 3rd. The contractor is now working on excavating the site for the construction of a below grade parking garage. Upon completion of this work the home will be moved to a location approximately 19' south of the original location. In the final design the home will be integrated into the design for the new hotel. The exact timing for the completion of this work is not currently known but staff will update HARC on the details as soon as possible.

Heritage Apartments

The BAR held the fourth Concept Review for the Heritage project on December 2, 2020. The Board gave detailed feedback on specific portions of the buildings and guidance on the height, scale, mass, and general architectural character of the proposed design as indicated in the Concept Design policy. The project is scheduled to go to the Planning Commission on February 2, 2021, and City Council on February 20, 2021. It is expected to return to the BAR for a Certificate of Occupancy following these reviews.

Liberty Gas Station

Staff has met with the applicant to review options for the resolution of the outstanding violations. According to the applicant the pandemic has impacted their business and they are exploring ways to bring the property into compliance in a cost-effective way. Staff will continue to follow up with the applicant to resolve these issues.

Solo Parking Garage (101 Duke Street)

Staff has met with the prospective owner of the property at 101 Duke Street to discuss development options. Preliminary plans for the property show individual townhomes facing Union Street. There are a number of zoning and development issues that the project will need to resolve prior to any continued progress. This process is currently ongoing, and it is expected that the project will go the BAR Concept Review once these have been addressed.

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

Museum Openings

Reminder that three museums are open to the public at this time – free admission for Alexandria residents and encouraged advance ticket reservations at both Gadsby's and the Apothecary.

Alexandria Archaeology (Friday to Sunday)

Gadsby's Tavern Museum (Friday to Monday)

Apothecary Museum (Saturday to Monday) -encouraged advanced ticket purchases

FY22 Budget Planning

The budget planning process for FY22 continues (10% reduction scenario). Public comment is now open <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Budget>. Whitlach suggested distributing an advocacy response/statement to engage public in support of OHA. Bulova advised this be crafted after City Manager reviews her requests and she knows what will be cut. In the past, HARC usually weighed in on the budget.

Virtual Winter Programs

On November 20, OHA launched a series of virtual Winter programs that feature videos, activities, and collection highlights tell the stories of the season. This has been a tremendous success and a true effort on the part of our staff.

Holiday Ornament

This year's Historic Alexandria holiday ornament features the historic Hose Reel at Friendship Firehouse. This and other OHA ornaments can be purchased at the Apothecary, Gadsby's, Alexandria Archaeology, Visitor Center, and Old Town Shop on Union Street.

Freedom House

- a. Working on a Save America's Treasures grant to support part of the restoration.
- b. Welcoming a traveling exhibit, Determined, from the Virginia Museum of History Culture that will be available when the site reopens in the Spring. This is the story of African Americans in Virginia from 1619 to Civil Rights. We are creating a companion exhibit, with the Alexandria story.
- c. Staff is also working on an exhibit for the first floor of the site.

City's Employee Recognition

Today was the City's employee recognition. We celebrated the service of Lauren Gleason (10 years), Whitney Harris (5 years), and Ben Skolnick (5 years). Also recognized Izetta Mobley receiving her PhD.

Commissioner Updates

Martha Raymond – Planning District II

Heritage Apartments –

Suggested sending letter (which was sent to BAR) to City Council and Planning Commission. Offered her assistance. No major modifications are necessary. Possibly add a cover letter.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation

Presentation by John Sprinkle, member of HAF Board and BAR, on December 16th at 7:30 p.m. Historic Preservation to Neighborhood Conservation – Displacement, Urban Violence, and Architectural Survey in Alexandria, Virginia

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

Public Records Advisory Commission still looking to fill vacancies on commission.

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

LED Lighting –

Currently raising funds for additional LED lighting to fully light the memorial. Have been lighting in sections.

Virtual Reality Tours –

To address museum closures due to COVID, virtual reality tours have been created. Virtual tours have outnumbered regular, in-person tours. Account for 31% of web traffic.

<https://gwmemorial.org/pages/virtual-tour>

From historic preservation perspective, before an area is changed you can capture and preserve through virtual reality-based tours. For example, six stained glass windows that were removed and replaced with windows that match architect's original intention were captured and can be visited virtually. Eyer offered his assistance with similar projects.

Paul Mazzuca

Commended the work of staff at Freedom House Museum. Informed HARC that there are efforts to trace ancestors of enslaved individuals that were sold through the building.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

Hosting candle-light tours. Limited spaces available. Have been compliant with health department protocols. Last night is December 19th.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission