

**HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

PRESENT:

Carol Black
Rosemarie Esber
Shawn Eyer
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs
Sam Hoffman

Richard Klingenmaier
Linda Lovell
Severiano Ortiz
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond

Gail Rothrock
Danny Smith
Monica St. Dennis
Stetson Tinkham
Andrea Tracey
Ivy Whitlach

EXCUSED:

Maddy McCoy
Steve Stuart
Laura Lieberman

ABSENT:

Paul Mazzuca

GUESTS:

Austin Klob
Paige Sass

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA
Bill Conkey, BAR
Whitney Harris, OHA
Purvi Irwin, BAR
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Danny Smith at 7:03 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 January 19, 2021 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 December 15, 2020

On a motion by Gail Rothrock seconded by Andrea Tracey, HARC voted to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting.

Chairs Update

Whitney Harris will check updated HARC roster to verify if Severiano Ortiz's renewal has been processed.

"Diversity and Inclusion in Historic Preservation" presentation by Purvi Irwin, AIA

Purvi Irwin presented, "*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Historic Preservation.*"

- Presentation is based on various conferences she attended including:
National Trust of Historic Preservation, PastForward Conference
<https://savingplaces.org/conference>
Dismantle Preservation Virtual Conference
<https://www.sarahmarsom.com/dismantlepreservation>
- This past November Irwin facilitated a conversation during the Autodesk University conference on diversity and inclusion in the architecture, engineering and construction industry.
- Current presentation is relevant to the Heritage Old Town Apartments Project, concerning issues on interpreting history that has been lost.

Presentation Highlights:

- Must put more emphasis and focus on intangible resources: events, lives of persons, info related to pre-history.
- How do we preserve something that doesn't have a physical manifestation?
Alexandria Zoning Code, Article X. Historic Districts and Buildings.
- Not just about the physical, but education, prosperity, and general welfare. Landscapes, settings, neighborhoods, and features.
- BAR is tasked with preserving treasured elements and quality of life while educating residents and visitors about the city's cultural and historic heritage.
- Within BAR's criteria for Permit to Demolish is determining whether it will be a detriment to the public interest.
- Identity of Place includes people, buildings, memories/events. Need to be self-aware about how we construct meaning.

- Preservationists should expand ideas of what history looks like, who maintains it, and where that work takes place.
 1. Evolving our theories of Space and Place
 2. Empowered versus Disempowered

Following questions should be considered:

- How are diverse narratives and communities being represented or excluded through preservation?
- Who is participating in preservation processes, and how can preservation decision-making better engage multiple publics?
- What are the effects of preservation policies and processes on communities?

READ: Find resources that can continue to broaden your horizons and expose you to “new to you” ideas (*Color of Law*)

ATTEND: attend conferences, and lectures on the topic, to understand how others are tackling this issue

DISCUSS: Historic Preservation does not exist in a bubble. We as a board have a real impact on how history is shared in our city. That is not a responsibility that any of us take lightly.

Resources:

- National Trust of Historic Preservation, PastForward Conference
<https://savingplaces.org/conference>
- Dismantle Preservation Virtual Conference
<https://www.sarahmarsom.com/dismantlepreservation>
- University of Virginia School of Architecture Lecture on inclusion and exclusion in cities, based on book by Interboro
<https://www.arch.virginia.edu/events/tobias-armborst-daniel-d-oca-georgeen-theodore>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjVz1nSjvQc>
- Irwin made the following site for the purpose of collecting resources, <https://sites.google.com/view/aecdiversityproblem/>. Also, put out a survey on social media platforms to get information from people in the industry about issues that they have encountered in their field. Recommends the Facebook group, Historic Preservation Professionals.
- Preservation and Social Inclusion, edited by Erica Avrami
<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/books/catalog/503-preservation-and-social-inclusion>

Co-Chair Smith asked Whitney Harris to distribute resources with HARC members.

Discussion after Presentation

1. Resources for organizations with dwindling membership and issues with sustaining building.
 - Reach out to John Sprinkle, might have additional resources.
2. How do you reconcile the culture and norms at the time versus the culture and norms of today?
 - Education is key.
3. Thoughts on Freedom House and the effort to highlight history of the U.S.
 - Going in a good direction. Don't make assumptions. Ask for feedback and listen. Ask open ended questions. Gather information and make sure interpretation is best for the people who the history is about.
4. Are there ways that we can tell the whole history of the U.S. that brings everybody together instead of tearing people apart?
 - Openness from all sides. Acceptance.
5. Martha Raymond shared the resource, National Park Service "Telling All American Stories" www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericanstories

New Business

HARC Committee Composition

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

Members include: Michael Hobbs, Sam Hoffman, Martha Raymond, and Gail Rothrock.

Meetings are open to all.

OHA Support Committee – Steve Stuart, Chair

Discussion postponed.

Revision of Commission & Board Structure – Richard Klingenmaier

Tech issues. Discussion postponed.

Old Business

Torpedo Factory Arts Center Vibrancy Study

Gail Rothrock attended Planning Commission's last meeting. The chairman stated he wrote a letter to city council expressing his lack of enthusiasm about the TFAC Vibrancy Study.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

Met on January 14th

1. **Heritage Old Town Apartments Project**

Both Gail Rothrock and Michael Hobbs are key people working on the letter. Draft was distributed to HARC members prior to meeting. Only two portions were edited:

Michael Hobbs –

Discussion about height limits on 2nd page of the draft. The discussion of height district maps is more complicated than might first appear. There are many factors that come into play including: Incentives for affordable housing (South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy), and different types of zoning regulations (residential and commercial). Hobbs stated the language in the draft implied certainty about whether and what heights might be permissible for various buildings in the Heritage Project proposal. Because HARC members are not zoning law experts, language should be changed to be more aspirational.

Gail Rothrock–

Section 11 504-b-13

Too broad a phrase. Project will detrimentally impact the remains of the historic Bottoms neighborhood. Added a sentence that quotes one of the considerations the planning commission has to look at.

On a motion by Martha Harris seconded by Richard Klingenmaier, HARC voted to send the letter, with edits discussed, to the Planning Commission.

Heritage Project comes before Planning Commission on February 2nd. Co-Chair Smith will try to speak at this meeting on behalf of HARC.

HARC would like access to city's height maps.

Bill Conkey will look into how to share height map information with the public.

2. River Farm

A twenty-seven-acre property south of Alexandria. Dates back to 1615. Part of George Washington's property. <https://ahsgardening.org/about-river-farm/>

Property is now listed for sale. There is a regional effort (involving state representatives, Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust) to purchase the property. Not within Alexandria, but Advocacy Committee believes it is important to spread awareness.

- Co-Chair Smith agrees that HARC members should spread awareness to promote efforts, but River Farm is not an appropriate HARC issue.
- Whitlach believes it will ultimately become a Fairfax County issue. Agrees River Farm is not within the purview of HARC.
- Harris advocates that because Alexandria is part of the Northern Virginia region, it is an issue HARC should be involved with.

3. Place Economics – Martha Raymond

<https://www.placeeconomics.com/resources/historic-preservation-and-the-biden-harris-administration/>

Place Economics specializes in analyzing the economic impacts of historic preservation. The article, “Historic Preservation and the Biden Harris Administration” lists ideas related to historic preservation that fulfill the stated goals of the new administration.

Advocacy Committee discussed specific points that related to Alexandria. HARC could potentially bring this to the city council and mayor.

- Co-Chair Lovell proposes HARC review the article and discuss next meeting.

Board of Architectural Review Update - William Conkey

Town Motel

House was moved. Working on foundation.

Heritage Project

Will go before the Planning Commission on February 2nd, City Council on February 20th and then back to the BAR for the certificate of appropriateness.

Liberty Gas Station

Going to the BAR hopefully in February. Some things they have agreed to: putting back trim around door and windows and returning lighting to original. Painting of the masonry is a big issue and they will take their proposed options to the BAR.

101 Duke Street

Important project. Applicant wants input. Recommends everyone take a look documents on city’s website.

Painting Unpainted Masonry

BAR has been seeing an increase in instances of property owners painting previously unpainted masonry. Not yet a major issue but encourages HARC to keep any eye out for these cases.

OHA Report – Submitted by Gretchen Bulova, read by Whitney Harris

- All OHA museums are closed at this time due to COVID-19. Virtual programs and educational content continue and are available at alexandriava.gov/historic.
- A lot of wonderful programming coming up in February for both Black History Museum and the annual George Washington Birthday Celebration.
- More than 20 members of the OHA staff are currently assisting the City’s community pandemic support efforts through food deliveries, call centers, vaccination clinics, communications support, etc.
- Budget planning process for FY22 continues (10% reduction scenario). We are awaiting City Manager Mark Jink’s budget proposal to City Council to see what cuts will be imposed on our department.
- Freedom House

- Historic Structures Report contract has been awarded to Smith Group.
- First floor exhibit design contract has been awarded to Howard+Revis Designs
- Specifications are still in progress for the replacement of the Murray Dick Fawcett House roof. The garden has been winterized with seasonal flowers.
- A newly restored gun carriage has returned to the historic Fort at Fort Ward.
- Interior renovations are wrapping up at the Lloyd House, Black History Museum, and The Lyceum.
- Capital improvements are being planned for the interior of the Archives and Records Center, including “sealing the buildings envelope,” HVAC upgrades, and lighting improvements in the Archaeology and Museum storage areas.
- With the assistance of State funding, a perimeter fence and interpretive signage has been added to the Lebanon Union Cemetery off of Duke Street. This is one of the abandoned cemeteries in Alexandria that the City maintains.
- Staff are following proposed bills to the 2021 General Assembly that may have impact on the City’s historic resources or preservation efforts. There is currently a bill on easements that is up before the Natural Resources subcommittee on January 20th at 7 a.m. (HB1760 and SB1199).
 - **Summary:** Provides that an easement held pursuant to the Virginia Conservation Easement Act or the Open-Space Land Act or by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation be liberally construed in favor of achieving the conservation purposes for which it was created.

Co-Chair Lovell added that the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum has been added to the list National Historic Landmarks. There will be an OHA press release.

Commissioner Updates

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

George Washington Birthday Celebration

Laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will most likely be virtual.

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

George Washington Birthday Celebration

Plans are still being determined; will possibly be an online stream from the GW Memorial.

GW Memorial remains open to the public most days. Best to check website before visiting.

Sam Hoffman – Planning District I

Potomac River Generating Station purchased by Hilco.

From the Open Space perspective, will give updates about any relevant information.

Deborah Osborne – Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

- Susan Horne is now chair/president of the Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.
- There are currently thirty easement properties. Only five contain interior easements. Ten have been inspected; on hold due to pandemic.

- Plan is to conduct two-year inspections of the properties moving forward. Every five years for interior easements.
- Some easement forms for property owners are being updated.
- Still working on project about easement awareness. Currently developing an outreach presentation.
- New member, Marie Smith is interested in outreach and advocacy. May attend future HARC meeting.
- Next meeting is February 10th. Open to all

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

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

Andrea Tracey – Carlyle House

- Moved out of offices in the basement of the Bank of Alexandria building.
- Have temporarily relocated to the basement of Carlyle House where visitors enter the museum.
- Once renovations are complete offices will be relocated to first floor of Bank of Alexandria building.
- Bank of Alexandria building sale was finalized on January 5th.
- Will be leasing the back half of the first floor. Shared use of the historic bank lobby, protected by easement.
- Getting a new fire alarm panel and phone operating system. Will also be upgrading HVAC system.
- February 25. Virtual program with Maddy McCoy about the Slavery Inventory Database.

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

- Have sent letter to city council about Torpedo Factory regarding Archaeology Department housing and significance of building.

Martha Raymond – Planning District II

- Meeting with city on February 4th about flooding issues. Will give a report next meeting.

Public Comment

Paige Sass – Little Theater of Alexandria

Member of their Community Relations Committee.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission