

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

PRESENT:

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

EXCUSED:

ABSENT:

Steve Stuart
Christopher Brownlowe

GUESTS:

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA
Bill Conkey, BAR
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Linda Lovell at 7:04 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 February 16, 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 January 19, 2020

On a motion by, Michael Hobbs seconded by Paul Mazzuca, HARC voted to approve the minutes with edits from the January 19, 2021 meeting.

Chairs Update

Ramsey Homes Symposium – Co-chair Lovell

Last two sessions have been recorded and will be available for viewing after February 24th.

Session Two:

Anna Maas, MUEP, Architectural Historian/Preservation Planner with Environmental Research Group, LLC presented the results of the studies conducted in preparation for the redevelopment of Ramsey Homes.

Char McCargo Bah, CEO/Founder of Finding Things for U, LLC presented on the lives of the individuals who lived at the Ramsey homes from the 1940s-1950s.

Session Three:

John Dumsick, Al Cox, and Purvi Gandhi Irwin presented on the structural system for one of the earliest precast concrete residential buildings in the United States and the reasons Modernist architectural design was used in a city best known for its red brick Colonial heritage.

The American Institute of Architects offered credit for students that joined the virtual symposium.

New Business

HARC Committee Composition

OHA Support Committee – Steve Stuart, Chair (Co-chair Smith presented on Stuart's behalf) Stuart is working on the composition of the committee and recruiting new members.

Will revisit the OHA/HARC guidebook Laura Lieberman created. Will update and prepare for new City Council.

Restructuring of Commissions

City Council is planning to restructure commissions. HARC should take the initiative and begin looking at current structure. Some open seats will never be filled due to organizations that no longer exist. Could create rotating seats (e.g., Historic Church seat and Friend's Group seat.)

Will continue discussion next meeting.

Old Business

TFAC Vibrancy Study

On the City Council meeting docket for March 9th. Letters from HARC, the Alexandria Archaeology Committee, and Alexandria Symphony Orchestra have been submitted.

Ivy Whitlach – It seems that only written comments are included in plans sent to City Council. Oral comments do not go on record (e.g., several comments from Visit Alexandria were not included.)

Co-chair Lovell - Volunteered to speak as general public at the meeting. Would like to see more reference to history included in the plan. Should enhance the representation of African American and women's history of the Torpedo Factory.

Michael Hobbs – Believes this will be a legislative meeting and therefore may not be room for public comment.

Maddy McCoy - The African American Heritage Trail does begin to talk about the African American history of the Torpedo Factory; should be expanded.

Heritage Development

Special Use Permit has been approved by Planning Commission. Needs approval from City Council. Will then return to the BAR for Certificate of Appropriateness. Three prior reviews from BAR were concept design reviews.

Co-chair Lovell informed HARC there are approximately 45,000 applicants for affordable housing. Although HARC should continue to advocate for appropriate design guidelines, the commission cannot ignore that affordable housing is a huge issue in the city.

Co-chair Smith spoke on behalf of HARC at last public hearing stating that HARC is not opposed to affordable housing and not opposed to redeveloping Heritage Apartments to include affordable housing. HARC is opposed to current design and plan.

Martha Raymond – Did not speak on behalf of HARC at public hearing. Was concerned about the light wood frame construction which uses materials that can be flammable.

On a motion by, Gail Rothrock seconded by Richard Klingenmaier, HARC voted for Co-chair Smith to make a public statement on behalf of HARC at the City Council meeting Saturday, February 20th regarding the Heritage Apartments project.

Vote unanimously passed.

River Farm Update

Martha Harris - NOVA Parks and Northern Virginia Conservation Trust have put in a bid on River Farm. Bills have been submitted to the Virginia General Assembly on both the Senate and House side that would provide more than \$2 million in funding for River Farm. Many of the donations made have come from Alexandrians. Members of City Council are well aware of the project. Harris feels HARC should be one of the supporting institutions, but is aware other members do not feel the same. This is a critical moment to support the project.

Andrea Tracey – NOVA Parks is getting involved in conversations about how to preserve open space. Cannot financially take on full responsibility of preserving the space.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

Hilco Redevelopment Plans for GenOn Power Plant – Sam Hoffman

First community meeting was held on February 11th Still in preliminary stage. Planning a mixed-use development. Plan to adhere to the Old Town North Small Area Plan. Their first step will be an extensive environmental remediation. Anticipate having initial plans in Q3 of 2021.

Environmental remediation should wrap up in 2023 at the earliest and demolition will follow.

Place Economics – Martha Raymond

The Place Economics Report was sent to Biden-Harris administration regarding historic preservation action items. The report includes historic preservation tools and actions. Could be helpful for City of Alexandria. Raymond went through the report and found five items that would be of interest to Alexandria.

Existing:

1. Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit – great incentive for historic rehabs of commercial properties.
2. Certified Local Government Funding – particularly for climate change adaptation
3. Low Income Housing Tax Credit – the credit is available for new and existing buildings.

Proposed:

4. Historic Home Owners Tax Credit – stay in homes and rehab
5. Affordable Housing Fund – Historic Preservation aspects

If appropriate, would like for HARC to send a letter to city administration, city council, and the mayor.

Andrea Tracey volunteered to work on this with Martha Raymond.

Stetson Tinkham suggested coordinating with the Archaeology Commission since they have been working on similar initiatives.

Ivy Whitlach agreed with Tinkham and suggested including Torpedo Factory as well.

Deborah Osborne suggested that HARC take a look at House Bill 4447, the Clean Economy and Jobs Innovation Act which talks about energy renewables and greening affordable housing.
[www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4447](https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/congress/house/bills/4447)

Martha Harris suggested scheduling a public Advocacy Committee meeting in March before the HARC meeting to discuss this project further.

Board of Architectural Review Update – Bill Conkey

805 N Columbus Street (February 17th)

Location of the former Town Hotel, where the historic house was moved. A multi-family (five story) apartment building project. Transitional and interesting site/project: large hotel to the east; residential buildings to the west; north and south end has a three story massing with a significant setback to the five floor building. The lower part of the building will be designed as a vaguely industrial look. Was brought to the BAR for feedback on massing and design; still early in the project.

101 Duke Street (March 3rd)

Second concept review. Making good progress. Getting building height down. Working on stoop height. Improved the architecture. Should be seeing final designs soon.

Liberty Gas Station

Negotiating with owner for quite some time. They have agreed to fix the lighting, doors, and the windows. They have engaged with a contractor to remove the paint from the brick. The material has a 40 degree F limit on its use so the paint removal has been delayed by cold weather. Asked if they can postpone until April. Feels confident that they will remove the paint.

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

- All OHA museums are closed at this time due to COVID-19. Virtual programs and educational content continue and is available at alexandriava.gov/historic.
- Have a lot of wonderful programming going on this month for both Black History Museum and the annual George Washington Celebration. Encouraged to attend two virtual lectures: “Hidden in Plain Sight,” lecture about African American advertising exec pioneer Moss Kendrix on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and Susan Hellman’s lecture, “You Will Find it Handy – the Green Book” on February 24. All programs can be found on the City’s website alexandriava.gov/historic.
- Several members of HARC attended the February 11 Ramsey Homes Virtual Symposium. HARC’s representatives to the committee were Linda Lovell and John Dumsick. The program was fantastic and the recording will be available by the end of February.
- The FY22 budget will be formally proposed by City Manager Mark Jinks tonight (February 16th) via zoom. Will be able to watch the recording online. There will be public information sessions with the adoption on May 5.
- Freedom House (mentioned a few of these items last month, but wanted to review)
 - Historic Structures Report contract has been awarded to SmithGroup and the assessments of the building’s structure, mechanical, and electrical systems has begun. OHA staff have written the history and are working with SmithGroup architectural historians to determine the original floor plan of the building and evolution of the site.
 - The first-floor exhibit design contract has been awarded to Howard+Revis Designs

- The first of the building has been renovated to allow for museum exhibits, ADA restrooms, a staff kitchen, and Northern Virginia Urban League offices. In addition, the HVAC system has been upgraded, the elevator is being repaired, water drainage issues have been addressed, and the building has been wired for internet/WIFI.
- Freedom House will be a part of Spring2Action once again, where we hope to raise \$25,000.
- Fundraising continues. Have received several large, generous individual donations as well as \$2.4 million from the state. Recently applied to the National Park Service for a Save America's Treasure's Grant in the amount of \$500,000.
- Working to identify the full cost of the building's restoration.
- 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, the cupola of Friendship Firehouse, and the interior of Gadsby's Tavern Museum.
- The conservation of the historic hose reel at the Friendship Firehouse is scheduled to be completed in May. The RFP for the conservation of the pumper will be sent out shortly.
- Several new interpretative signs will be installed in the next few weeks: Women's Suffrage on St. Asaph/Prince, 2 for the 100th anniversary of Parker Gray School, Rosemont, 2 for Waterfront Park – and a few replacement signs in Del Ray and along Hooff's Run. Gretchen is working with Virginia Department of Historic Resources on a marker about the Restored Government of Virginia.
- The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) work continues, with plans for a virtual remembrance in April 23. This year, the committee will install markers at the lynching sites and next year plan to organize a soil collection program. Regular programs are scheduled through the summer and can be found on the website alexandriava.gov. A new list serve has been created specifically for this project. Encouraged everyone to sign up. Will be sure to send the link.

Commissioner Updates

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

Update on Elks Lodge -

Have cleaned the exterior/interior of building. Will finalize website in time for Spring2Action.

Asked HARC for assistance with the following:

1. Advice for cleaning ceilings
2. Consolidating and preserving records.
3. Overall organization.

Need to get the building stabilized, recruit more members, and eventually restore the building.

Remaining records are stored in the boiler room. Al Cox volunteered to work with the plans of the building. They have been digitized and he is going through them.

Black would like to schedule another meeting at Elks Lodge once COVID regulations allow for in-person meetings.

Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I

Flooding remains at upper King Street.

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

George Washington Birthday Celebration consisted of a small virtual celebration. Will post links on website.

Richard Klingenmaier – Alexandria Association

Term was approved for another two years.

Alexandria's Boards and Commissions Audit and Review Committee – No additional meetings due to pandemic.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

Special tours almost every weekend. In consultation with local health authorities.

February 13 – Under the Same Roof: Enslaved and Free Servants at the Lee-Fendall House, 2:00 p.m.

February 27 – Stories in the Architecture, 2:00 p.m.

March 6 – Virtue and Vice: The Women of Lee-Fendall, 2:00 p.m.

Walking tours will return when weather warms up.

Will be an Easter event (COVID adapted) towards end of March.

Maddy McCoy – Planning District II

February 25 – Breaking Down the Wall of Slavery at Carlyle House (Virtual)

Severiano Ortiz – Alexandria Historical Society

March 24, 7:30 p.m. – Virtual Lecture: Virginia Theological Seminary Reparations Endowment Fund

April 6, 6:00 p.m. – Members Only Meeting to Vote on Proposed Bylaws

May 26, 7:30 p.m. – Jewish History of Old Town Alexandria

Upcoming meeting to vote on amendments to by laws and articles of incorporation along with new board members. Currently have board position openings.

Deborah Osborne – Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

Still looking at easements. Renovations on existing easements can be approved but they are considered temporary. Looking into this. Term ends in March, will reapply. Application for Easement Commission was accepted, will serve another four-year term.

Martha Raymond – Planning District II

Flooding is still an issue in Del Ray and Rosemont area. Meeting on February 4th, 6 or 7 city employees came out and met with residents.

Hooff's Run clearing of the culvert is halfway through. Did find extensive blockages, they are making progress.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation

Will be testifying for the Heritage project on Saturday. Sent a letter and testified at the Planning Commission.

Black House – Will assign a hearing date in April. Not sure if it will be public access.

Andrea Tracey – Carlyle House

Still operating and giving tours.

Virtual Lecture: “You Will Find it Handy – The Green Book” on February 24th at 4:00 p.m.

Coordinating a wine and chocolate virtual tasting.

Walking tours in March/April hopefully.

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

No meeting last month.

Virtual party for FOA – very successful

Danny Smith – Business Representative

Life of George Washington in Four Acts – Reenactor is amazing!

George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee - Register for tours! About 1.5 hours long.

Begins at the front door of Vola’s Dockside Grill at 2:00 p.m. each Sunday in February.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission