

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

PRESENT:

Carol Black
Rosemarie Esber
Shawn Eyer
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs
Richard Klingenmaier

Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell
Martha Raymond
Gail Rothrock

Danny Smith
Monica St. Dennis
Steve Stuart
Andrea Tracey
Ivy Whitlach

EXCUSED:

Sam Hoffman
Deborah Osborne
Stetson Tinkham

ABSENT:

Christopher Brownlowe
Paul Mazzuca
Severiano Ortiz

GUESTS:

CITY STAFF:

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Danny Smith 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 March 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 Commission and City staff are participating from remote locations through Zoom. This meeting is being held electronically, as a determination has been made that it is not safe enough to be held in person at the Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA. Electronic access is provided. 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 February 16, 2021

On a motion by, Monica St. Dennis seconded by Ivy Whitlach, HARC voted to approve the minutes with edits from the February 16, 2021 meeting.

Chairs Update

Maddy McCoy's Resignation from HARC

Maddy McCoy has officially resigned as a representative from District II. HARC now has an opening for District II. Michael Hobbs makes the suggestion that HARC show their appreciation to Maddy McCoy for her extraordinary contributions to the commission and to the welfare of the City of Alexandria in writing.

On a motion by Michael Hobbs seconded by Martha Harris, HARC voted to send a letter to Maddy McCoy expressing HARC's appreciation for her service to the City of Alexandria and HARC.

Old Business

TFAC Vibrancy Study

Ivy Whitlach - Attended and testified at last meeting; proceeded to give summary:

- Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Office of the Arts spoke on the "historical and artists" perspective without including the Archaeology Department.
- Ruggiero gave the same presentation she has given to Archaeology and several other organizations without any modifications.
- There was considerable discussion among council members about inviting more stakeholders into the project.
- Del Pepper was clearly disappointed that the artists were unhappy.
- Archaeology should not be treated like a tenant but rather a stakeholder.
- Mayor Wilson seemed frustrated with progression of project.
- It was decided that Diane Ruggiero would come back in two months with a plan for how to engage stakeholders.

Ruggiero replied to Gail Rothrock's email stating that she is working on stakeholder engagement and will have something to present to city council.

Co-chair Lovell stated that she is concerned with how the overall history of the Torpedo Factory will be represented. Current signage and overall presentation is very poor.

A member from the Alexandria Archaeology Commission and/or HARC should be represented on the proposed stakeholder group. Hobbs recommended that Co-chair Smith email Diane Ruggiero, attaching the HARC letter to City Council and reaffirming active and genuine interest in the Torpedo Factory redevelopment and being represented in the stakeholder's group. Gretchen Bulova, at the request of HARC, sent an email to Ruggiero requesting that HARC be on the stakeholder's group. Bulova clarified that the Alexandria Archaeology Museum is not in danger of being evicted.

Heritage Development

Co-chair Smith attended and spoke during the virtual meeting on February 20th. Worked with Michael Hobbs to recraft the Planning Commission letter to be more appropriate for Mayor and City Council. The City Council voted unanimously to approve the project as designed. Next step: BAR for Certificate of Appropriateness. Mayor Wilson referenced Ramsey Homes and the debate over historic preservation and affordable housing. Mayor Wilson suggested a special work group session between HARC and City Council to discuss historic preservation and affordable housing.

River Farm Update

Co-chair Smith encouraged HARC members to sign the petition,

<https://www.saveriverfarm.com/petition>

Gretchen Bulova provided information on the formation of a historic overlay district for the site by Fairfax County:

- Information on the historic overlay district, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/river-farm-hod>
- Staff report is comprehensive and available on website.
- Planning Commission meeting, March 17
- Board of Supervisors meeting, April 13
- Final approval by the Fairfax County Architectural Review Board, May 13
- Legislation passed by General Assembly gives the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors the authority to regulate to some extent the use of the property.

Ivy Whitlach asked about the process of determining how much the property is worth. No information available.

Carol Black referred to an article in the Alexandria Times which discussed the prevention of the property being sold to a private developer. Believes this issue is relevant to the City of Alexandria and HARC should monitor language included in the sale of historic properties.

Co-chair Lovell proposed to continue discussion when Deborah Osborne, representing AHRPC, is present.

Justice Black House – Gail Rothrock

Virginia Supreme Court will hear the case either April 19 or 20, 2021. A call-in number will be provided to allow citizens to listen in on the court hearing.

Ramsey Homes Symposium Link:

The symposium link is now live on the alexandriava.gov/historic website.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic/info/default.aspx?id=108729>

Dr. Krystyn Moon's session was not recorded and may be given again as part of the Historic Preservation Month programs.

New Business

HARC Committee Composition

OHA Support Committee – Steve Stuart, Chair

Co-chair Smith and Stuart discussed which HARC members will be asked to join the committee.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

Met on March 3rd

- Torpedo Factory - suggested HARC be a stakeholder.
- Heritage – Drafted a letter (circulated to HARC members prior to meeting) to Mayor and City Council which expressed interest in the work session regarding historic preservation and affordable housing.

On a motion by, Gail Rothrock seconded by Richard Klingenmaeir, HARC voted to formalize the draft letter and send via email to Mayor Wilson and City Council, adding a link to the Place Economics report and enclosing the document.

Ivy Whitlach – St. Paul's Episcopal Church is holding a series of seminars about systemic racism, <https://www.stpaulsalexandria.com/blog/exploring-systemic-racism-in-alexandria-march-discussion/>

City's History in Housing last Thursday, March 18 – relates to discussion and letter.

Martha Harris suggested gathering resources on the topic. Perhaps work with OHA to identify thoughtful resources.

Former Mayor Silberberg sent an email to Co-chair Smith regarding 506 N. Overlook. Owner plans to sell the property. BAR is aware of the building, but it is not within the historic district. Garrett Fesler from Alexandria Archaeology has compiled information on the history of the site and has shared his research with the community. The building dates to approx. 1870 and was not used as a Civil War hospital, as previously thought. The owner would have to apply for the 100-Year-Old Building designation.

Board of Architectural Review Update – Bill Conkey

Solo Parking Garage (Duke/Union)

Recently went to BAR for second concept review. They will most likely come back for a third review. Will then go to Planning Commission and City Council for DSUP, then back to BAR for Certificate of Appropriateness. Still working on design. Overall, moving in a positive direction.

Liberty Service Station

Tech Painting will remove the paint in April. Need warmer weather for removal to be most effective.

1000 Queen Street - Painted Masonry

Painting project was terminated; only two-thirds complete. Owner agreed to remove paint. Will wait until warmer weather.

GenOn, <https://www.hilcoredev.com/projects/hrp-alexandria>

First public information meeting was held; available on website. Website also gives background on developer and team. GenOn has experience with industrial sites. Will be a long process.

Town Motel

No date on when the historic house will be moved.

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

- Will be reopening four sites beginning March 25th with limited hours. The Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, and Gadsby's Tavern Museum will be open three days a week and the Friendship Firehouse Museum will be open once a month. These hours and dates of operation will remain in effect through June 30, 2021 unless the virus dictates otherwise. FY21 museum hours will be determined later this spring. Virtual programs and educational content continue and is available at alexandriava.gov/historic.
- Sign up for the weekly list serve, "This Week in Historic Alexandria." Link on website.
- Wonderful programming for Women's History Month:
 - Tavernkeeper Hannah Griffith (virtual)
 - Sampler from the collection of The Lyceum made by Mary Muir
 - New interpretive marker about the Suffragists held at the Lorton Workhouse being tried in Alexandria
 - Special girl scout program
 - Out of the Attic articles and more.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic/info/default.aspx?id=120274>
- The February 11 Ramsey Homes Virtual Symposium – is now posted online.
- Freedom House Update
 - Physical investigations of the building are being conducted by the architectural historians working on the Historic Structures Report. Last week, they took mortar, paint, and plaster samples throughout the building.
 - The first-floor exhibit writing team has been formed and they are researching, writing, and gathering images for their assigned sections.

- Fundraising continues. A recent appeal letter went out and we will participate in the April 28 Act for Alexandria Spring2Action program.
- The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) is planning for a virtual remembrance on April 23 and a small in-person marker dedication/wreath laying. Also a lecture on April 24 as part of this remembrance, A White Historian Confronts Lynching by Susan Strasser. This program is free and via zoom. A separate email list serve has been established for this project. I encourage you to sign up. This link is also on our website.
- Discussed the site of the lynching of Joseph McCoy (SE corner of Cameron and N. Lee) and where the plaque will be erected. The plaque will be about 40 inches high and 12 inches wide.

Commissioner Updates

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

Elks Lodge – Website almost complete. Hopefully can then proceed to fundraising efforts. Contact Black via email for more information.

Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I

Commends Out of the Attic publication.

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

In 1980 the GW Memorial granted Alexandria City an easement for the circle/plaza at the entrance for the use of emergency vehicles. For the past several years there has been ongoing discussion about the King Street and Callahan Street intersection. The City wants to make the primary use of the circle/plaza as a cut-through for traffic. Access to the Memorial would be secondary. The issue will come before City Council for a vote. Landscaping of the Memorial was done by the Olmstead Brothers – the leading American landscape architecture firm. The land, including the circle/plaza, is part of the National Historic Landmark. GW Memorial wants to protect the area and ensure the proposed traffic cut-through does not hinder the possibility for restoration of the intended design.

Carol Black believes HARC should pay closer attention to this issue. Aligns with open space discussions.

Martha Harris – Volunteer at Historic Property

Open Space Committee – Discussion about the definition of Open Space continues. Discussions have highlighted accessibility, diversity, and equity. Historic vistas and resources are highlighted in the draft. March 30 – Public Meeting, will be an update on public space easements, typologies of open space, funding for open space, and zoning language. For the next six months the committee will work on new acquisitions. From October, 2021 to March, 2022 the focus will be on open space and new developments. Harris alerted HARC on an upcoming public meeting - briefing on Carlyle Plaza - involves extensive and different approaches to open space.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

Continuing to provide walking tours and special theme tours in the museum. Easter Egg Hunt has sold out. There will be more tours going forward. Pillars to Pavers Tour (with Carlyle House) will begin in the next few months. Trivia in the Garden will begin in the Summer.

Linda Lovell – Mortar & Pestle Society

Planning annual meeting via zoom. Will concentrate on family history research and abolitionist work. Hope to have Steve Hammond speak. Will take place in July, no specific date yet.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation

HAF Grant applications due May 1st.

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

Currently two vacancies, please share and help recruit for PRAC.

Andrea Tracey – Carlyle House

Continuing to offer tours (limited space). Virtual Lecture, Legacy of the Green Cabinetmakers on April 7. Plan on bringing back walking tours, focus on architecture.

March 29 - April 2, offering socially distanced family pod activities outdoors (morning and afternoon sessions.) Pillars and Pavers Tours in May.

Ivy Whitlach – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

1800 Block of King Street (near Pines of Florence building), excavation taking place under the parking lot. Whitlach shared photos and a short video. Currently emptying out the former basement and yard space. So far, a Portner's Brewery Bottle has been found and a fireplace and well have been uncovered. Building originally constructed in 1829 and filled in around 1930.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission