

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 18, 2021

PRESENT:

Carol Black
Rosemarie Esber
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs
Sam Hoffman

Richard Klingenmaier
Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond

Gail Rothrock
Danny Smith
Monica St. Dennis
Steve Stuart
Ivy Whitlach

EXCUSED:

Severiano Ortiz
Stetson Tinkham
Andrea Tracey

ABSENT:

Christopher Brownlowe
Paul Mazzuca

GUESTS:

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA
Susan Hellman, BAR
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Co-chair Smith at 7:05 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 May 18, 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 April 20, 2021

On a motion by, Richard Klingenmaier seconded by Linda Lovell, HARC voted to approve the minutes from the April 20, 2021 meeting.

Chairs Update

- In an effort to limit non-germane conversations during meetings, Co-chairs request tangential discussions to after the official meeting has ended.
- Planning Department and HARC Commission Discussion
 - Within a month or two, the planning department will have a presentation prepared for HARC.
- A letter of appreciation was sent to former HARC member, Maddy McCoy. A similar letter was also sent to the Mayor and City Council recognizing McCoy's contributions to the City of Alexandria.
- The Advocacy Committee letter regarding the Place Economics Report was sent to the Mayor and City Council. Both the Mayor and Vice Mayor responded positively.
- During meetings, commission members are encouraged to discuss issues related to the seats they represent. Commissioners should notify Co-chairs when they need to add an item to the agenda.
- Severiano Ortiz, representing Alexandria Historical Society, is moving out of the area and has submitted his resignation from HARC.

New Business

No new Business

Old Business

TFAC Vibrancy Study (Ivy Whitlach)

- Waterfront Commission Meeting was held on May 18th
- A space study will take place in about ten months. This study will include rooftop accessibility, first floor ventilation needs, a first-floor café, and more.
- After a consultant for the study is selected, the consultant will reach out to stakeholders.
- Gretchen Bulova has informed the city manager's office of HARC's interest in becoming a stakeholder. Co-chair Smith would also like Bulova to notify Diane Ruggiero of their interest.

506 N. Overlook Update (Danny Smith)

- City Council Approved sub-division of property. Due to renovations, very little remains original to the building.

- There has been interest in the 100 Year Old Building list. Councilman Chapman suggested a systematic review of properties that could be added to the list.

HARC Bylaws

- Every commission will be required to have bylaws. HARC currently has none.

5G Network

- There are already several small cell network installations, including at the Justice Black House.
- A property on N. Patrick Street has objected to the location of a pole – stating it is too close to a historic property.
- More installations are coming; commissioners should be aware.

Justice Black House Update (Gail Rothrock)

- The Supreme Court case took place Friday morning on April 23rd. A decision will be made within 4-8 weeks.

Elks Lodge Update (Carol Black)

- The Elks Lodge was recognized on Preservation Virginia's 2020 Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places list.
- Only 20-30 members remaining. These members have spent the past year clearing out the building.
- The HAF Grant was used for roof, mortar, and plumbing repair.
- Planning & Zoning, Transportation & Environmental Services, and Code Enforcement are helping with the alley's water issues. Due to the paving of the alley, water has been accumulating beside the building and leaking into the basement of Elk's Lodge. Although downspout extensions were installed and other remedial measures were taken, the four neglected buildings (facing Queen Street) which share the alley are contributing to this issue because their fence lines encroach onto the alley.
- Need to discuss how HARC can help Elk's Lodge. Oral history and record retention are two examples.
- Their website has been designed; can use this as a platform for fundraising.

GenOn Power Plant Update (Sam Hoffman)

- A community update was held on April 29th. Link can be found: http://alexandria.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=29&coa_clip_id=4997&coa_view_id=29
- The site requires environmental remediation, which will be a long process.
- Will incorporate additional open space – an increase from two acres to 4 acres.
- The broader community planning process will take place in Fall 2021.
- Planning to have community site tours on June 4th and 5th.
- Link to website: <https://www.hilcoredev.com/projects/hrp-alexandria>

River Farm Update

- Board of American Horticultural Society has agreed to negotiate further with Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority.
- Recent article: <https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/news/river-farm-local-state-officials-air-concerns-at-press-confe/>
- River Farm was recognized on Preservation Virginia's 2021 Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places list.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Raymond, Co-Chair

- At the request of the Advocacy Committee Chair, the HARC Co-Chairs designated Martha Harris and Martha Raymond as Co-Chairs of the Advocacy Committee.
- **100 Year Old Building List**
 - Only 36 designated 100 year old buildings (located outside of historic districts)
 - Adding a building to the list is a complicated process which includes filling out a National Registry Preliminary Information form, getting reviewed by BAR staff, being submitted to the BAR for review, going before City Council, and finally an ordinance is adopted by City Council.
 - Process requires owners consent due to the restrictions that will be placed on the property (same restrictions as historic districts.)
 - In the past, only BAR staff nominated properties for the 100 Year Old Building List. Now, private citizens can nominate their properties.
 - Most people are not aware of the list and/or don't know the benefits.
 - Outreach needed to convey benefits of listing a property:
 - Write an editorial
 - Planning district representatives can reach out to associations within their districts to spread awareness.
 - Can Alexandria create its own tax advantages for being listed?

Brainstorming: Topics to Discuss for meeting between HARC and City Council

- Negotiate with developers for better historic preservation outcomes. Provide the city with tools (e.g., Place Economic Report).
- Look at the Affordable Housing process regarding historic preservation. Evaluate past issues, look for improvement/solutions.
- Make a statement about re-use. What is the inventory, and what are the opportunities?
- Susan Hellman can notify HARC when buildings are being added to the list. Can then create preservation stories to share with the Alexandria community.
- Discussion will continue during next meeting in June. Should establish a regular meeting time.

OHA Support Committee – Steve Stuart, Chair

- Looking at ways to diversify Commission. Will be able to conduct more outreach once COVID restrictions have been lifted and meetings/events can be held in person.

Ad Hoc, HARC Composition – Richard Klingenmaier, Chair

- Meeting held on May 5th – Goal was to look at overall composition of HARC from the standpoint of representatives and organizations.
- Reviewed current number of HARC representatives. Will reduce that number where applicable to achieve a more focused and efficient body.
- Reviewed the positions currently represented with the goal of consolidating and/or eliminating positions that are redundant or inappropriate for the commission’s advisory status and scope of responsibility.
- Need to seek additional membership diversity on HARC by encouraging participation by organizations that meet applicable guidelines and city code.
- Overall, considering reducing HARC by six positions. Planning to meet again prior to June HARC meeting. Will hopefully be able to report on the final recommendation by next meeting.

Ad Hoc, Nominating Committee – Laura Lieberman, Chair

- So far, one person has volunteered for Secretary and three people have requested NOT to be considered for Chair.

Board of Architectural Review Update – Susan Hellman

- First CAMP session took place May 14th. A lot of helpful information including legal insight on historic preservation and property owner rights.
- Next BAR hearing takes place on May 19th. Will discuss the following concept reviews:
 - 101 Duke Street (apartments)
 - 805 North Columbus Street (large multi-family housing)
- Thursday, May 27th at 7:00pm – panel discussion on equity and preservation. Host, Bill Conkey. Panelists – Purvi Irwin, John Sprinkle, and Jacqueline Taylor, City’s Equity Officer.
- GenOn Power Plant project will go to BAR; a small portion sits in the historic district.

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

- Our open museums (Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, Alexandria Archaeology, and The Lyceum) are seeing their pre-COVID visitation numbers once again.
- Deaccessioning – Not ready to discuss at this meeting, still coordinating with City Attorney’s Office
- FY22 Budget is now finalized. Includes:
 - \$50,000 to enhance OHA’s Oral History Program, including a new full-time Research Historian position from mid FY-2022
 - Increases a 0.75 part time Archaeologist position to 1.00 full time employee
 - Increases 7 part time Museum Aide II positions from 0.375 to 0.6 FTE

- Eliminates funding for historic ship preservation and Waterfront programming
- Temporarily eliminates funding for OHA's Wayfinding Signage system
- Reduces by 50% the budget for travel, conferences, mileage, education and training
- Includes Capital Improvement Plan funding for the Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study
- Proposed several items for American Rescue Plan Funding, under the expanding tourism category. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey, provided comments to the city, and attended the public meetings last week.
 - African American Tourism initiatives, Duke Street Coordinator and Civil Rights Tour
 - Digitization of the Moss Kendrix collection and exhibition
 - 275th Commemoration events (2024)
 - Increase funding for museum staff to open all sites, including Freedom House (unbudgeted) and includes Lab Tech at Alexandria Archaeology
 - POS system, meets IT's security needs
- Friendship Firehouse Museum's Hose Reel conservation update. The conservator is making progress on the restoration of the historic fire vehicle and hopes to return it to Alexandria in the Fall.
- Historic Preservation Month Programming during May, Alexandriava.gov/historic
 - Fantastic lecture by Dr. Joshua Rothman to support his new book *The Ledger and the Chain*. This lecture and others are available at alexandriava.gov/historic.
 - Lecture by Dr. Krystyn Moon this Thursday, encore presentation of her talk at the Ramsey Homes Symposium. Finding a Place to Call Home: Race and Place in Alexandria, Virginia, 1860s-1960s This will NOT be recorded, per Dr. Moon's direction. May 20 at 7 p.m. Free.
 - Panel discussion on Equity in Preservation, with John Sprinkle, Purvi Irwin, and Jacqueline Tucker. May 27 at 7 p.m. Free.
- Freedom House Museum
 - Draft of the Historic Structures Report has been completed and is being reviewed by OHA staff.
 - Successful fundraising campaign through Spring2Action, raising \$17,000 toward new exhibits at the museum.
 - Elevator work has been completed and is awaiting final inspection.
 - The new first floor exhibit on the site is nearing 75% completion by the designers. It will be reviewed by professors, museum professionals, and other scholars in the field next. Hoping to install the exhibit and open for this Fall.
 - A tremendous amount of research has been done on the site and is available on the Freedom House website, Alexandriava.gov/FreedomHouse

Commissioner Updates

Ivy Whitlach – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

- Major Budget requests approved: Waterfront Feasibility Study and Ben Skolnik's position.
- Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial is now part of the National Park Service's African American Civil Rights Network. Whitlach gave a brief summary of the site's civil rights history.

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

- As of June 1st, three vacancies

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation

- Grants committee reviewed seven grants. Will announce grants for 2021 after June meeting.

Linda Lovell – Mortar & Pestle Society

- Annual society meeting will take place in July.
- Speaker will talk about the abolitionist work.
- Will be a hybrid meeting, both virtual and in-person.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

- In collaboration with Carlyle House: Pillars to Pavers Tour, Trivia Night, and Scavenger Hunt.
- Conducting various special tours, twice a month.

Martha Harris – Volunteer at Historic Property

- Carlyle House remains open despite maintenance projects.
- Open Space Committee on break over the summer. Thursday, May 20th – Special Walk

Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I

- Vandalism at African American Heritage Park
- There was no Torpedo Factory or Historic Alexandria representation at private art festival on John Carlyle Street.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission