

# HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

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## **PRESENT:**

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

Richard Klingenmaier  
Laura Lieberman  
Linda Lovell  
Deborah Osborne  
Martha Raymond  
Gail Rothrock

Danny Smith  
Tom Soule  
Monica St. Dennis  
Steve Stuart  
Andrea Tracey  
Ivy Whitlatch

## **GUESTS:**

Gena Bradford  
Catherine Weinraub

## **CITY STAFF:**

Gretchen Bulova, OHA  
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

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## **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair 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 September 21, 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](http://alexandriava.gov/historic) webpage. Zoom is compatible with assistive technologies such as screen readers and keyboard shortcuts.

### **Approval of Minutes for July 17, 2021**

On a motion by, Gail Rothrock seconded by Tom Soule, HARC voted to approve the minutes from the July 17, 2021 meeting.

## **Chairs Update**

- Andrea Tracey appointed as new HARC representative for the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project.
- Due to recent rise in COVID cases, City boards/commissions may continue holding virtual meetings through January 2022. HARC will need to come to a decision about whether the October meeting will be held virtually or in-person at The Lyceum – Alexandria’s History Museum.
- Thanked Stetson Tinkham for his service with HARC, representing Christ Church – has decided not to re-apply.
- Torpedo Factory for All (<https://www.torpedofactoryforall.com/>) is a new group that has formed in regard to the redevelopment of the Torpedo Factory Art’s Center. As stated on their website, their mission is to “Support Diversity, Drive Economics, and Revitalize Waterfront.” Their office is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the TFAC. Several HARC members have asked for information in regard to management/funding, but the group remains anonymous. The video posted on their website bears no mention of the Archaeology Department. Overall, several HARC members stated the Arts Department leadership disregards the AAC and HARC’s input pertaining to the building plans and vision of the TFAC.

## **Commissioner Updates**

### **Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I**

- African American Heritage Park has new historic plaques that look terrific.
- Vandalism on walkways

### **Sam Hoffman – Planning District I**

- Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> – Old Town North, Walking Tour of Development Sites. Sites include the power plant and a few of the office/residential buildings. Development representatives will be on site. Tour will meet and begin at St. Elmo’s coffee shop.

### **Richard Klingenameir – Alexandria Association**

- Resuming in-person presentations. October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. – “The Art of the Peale’s: America’s First Artistic Dynasty” by Carol Soltis

### **Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House**

- September 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Cocktail Chronicles
- Fall/Halloween Programming
- Civil War Walking Tours

### **Linda Lovell – Mortar & Pestle Society**

- Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum has resumed their Sunday & Monday afternoon hours.

### **Martha Raymond – Planning District II**

- Two serious floods have occurred in August

- Katie Waynick launched the DrainALX website (<https://drainalx.wixsite.com/website/history>) and Facebook group which provides resources regarding flood education and mitigation.

#### **Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission**

- One vacancy has been filled; two remaining.

#### **Andrea Tracey – Carlyle House**

- Working on fall programming: “Spirits at Carlyle House,” starting October 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission**

September Meeting:

- Ft. Ward Park – Children’s Playground Relocation
  - Descendants and activists attended meeting to express concerns about the new proposed playground location being a potential unmarked graves site.
  - Eleanor Breen gave an in-depth update on the most recent archaeology report (2012) done on the site.
  - Garrett Fessler presented on reasons why Archaeology does not believe the location has graves (e.g., deeds and coroner reports)
  - Commission discussed conducting ground disturbance radar.
- Commission plans to advocate for a commemorative headstone for the Jackson family cemetery (located within Ft. Ward Park) in the upcoming budget letter to the City Manager.
- Whitlatch will speak at next City Manager meeting to express the needs of Archaeology (funding for ships and more full-time positions.)
- Commission in process of changing their ordinance from “one member of the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage” to “one member of the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage OR an equivalent organization.”

#### **Deborah Osborne – AHRPC**

- Meeting was held on September 8<sup>th</sup>. John Chapman attended, in his historic tourism capacity, and spoke about African American heritage and tourism.
- Alexandria Renew is being monitored due to its proximity to the African American Heritage Park.
- No active easements under review.

#### **New Business**

- December 21<sup>st</sup> HARC meeting can be rescheduled if needed. A holiday party is usually planned for this meeting and new council members are invited/introduced to the commission.
- Co-Chairs Smith and Lovell will draft a letter to City Council thanking them for the ARPA funding support for OHA.
- Latest COVID Policies: Masks are required in all city buildings. All city volunteers are required to submit a copy of their COVID vaccination cards. Those who will not be

vaccinated must follow testing protocols. Not sure if this policy applies to city boards and commissions.

## **Old Business**

### **Justice Black House Update (Gail Rothrock)**

- Provides brief history of case: Owner of Justice Black House applied for building additions. The property is protected by an open space easement. Additions were approved by BAR and City Council. HAF appeal was denied in Circuit Court and State Supreme Court – ruled HAF has no standing.
- Senator Adam P. Ebbin sent a letter to the Joint Commission on Administrative Rules requesting an investigation of the Department of Historic Resources' practices on their Historic Easement Program. Letter was distributed to HARC prior to meeting.

### **Elks Lodge Update (Carol Black)**

- Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Elks Lodge will hold an open house for HARC to see latest progress/updates. Would also like input on record keeping and new ideas for partnerships with city organizations to, once again, provide community services and events.
- Regarding the historic restoration of the building, flooding issues (backflow and surface water) are a major concern. Elks Lodge believes surface water flooding is due to incorrectly graded asphalt. Carol Black requests HARC form a temporary sub-committee to draft a letter to city staff/leadership to address this issue.
- Gail Rothrock, Michael Hobbs, Danny Smith, and Carol Black volunteered for the committee. Will have a draft complete for HARC's review by next meeting in October.

### **Heritage Old Town Apartments (Danny Smith)**

- Co-Chair Smith attended the July BAR meeting. Applicant requested a deferral for the Certificate of Appropriateness until October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Most likely, will not be any significant changes to the mass, scale, or height of the design.
- Co-Chair Smith will continue to express HARC's concerns to the City Council, Planning Commission, and BAR at the October 6<sup>th</sup> BAR meeting.

## **Standing Committee Reports**

### **Advocacy Committee – Martha Raymond, Co-Chair**

#### **Presentation by Ivy Whitlatch – Impact of Captain's Row on the Permanent Closure of 100 Block of King Street**

- On October 16, City Council will be considering the implications of making the King Street Place Pilot permanent. Planning Commission will review on October 5, 2021.
- September 21, at Waterfront Commission meeting, Ann Horowitz, Principal Planner, TES presented the staff recommendations for the 100 block of King permanent closure.
- No indication the Council is taking into consideration what the effect that change will have on the neighboring 100 block of Prince Street (Captain's Row.)

- Captain’s Row is one of the two remaining 18<sup>th</sup> century cobblestone streets in Alexandria.
- Whitlatch requests that HARC advise City Council and the Planning Commission that a historic treasure of the city could be in jeopardy without further understanding what the implications of this decision would be on the 100 block of Prince Street and including steps to mitigate further damage in their determination.
- Whitlatch showed pictures of damaged cobblestones and increase of traffic.
- Beyond historic preservation, Captain’s Row affects Alexandria’s tourism.
- Solutions include greater enforcement of no trucks; local traffic only with notification of limited parking; resetting of cobblestones; resident only parking
- Whitlatch proposed a change of tactics to address the preservation concerns of Captain’s Row. There is an opportunity for HARC commissioners to advocate via social media and editorials (e.g., Letter to the Editor)

On a motion by Michael Hobbs, seconded by Shawn Eyer, HARC voted that its Advocacy Committee be requested to draft a letter and that the HARC Chair be requested to submit written and oral testimony for the October 5, 2021 Planning Commission meeting in regard to the historic preservation impact of the permanent closure of the 100 block of King Street on the 100 block of Prince Street (Captain’s Row.)

- HARC is not in opposition to the permanent closure of the 100 Block of King Street per se, but rather is concerned about potential negative impacts of that closure on the nearby Old & Historic District and Captain’s Row.
- At this stage, should employ the traditional means of engagement with the City – providing letters and testimony. Can then follow up with individual efforts via public campaigns, social media efforts, etc.

Action Item: Gretchen Bulova will distribute Ann Horowitz’s Waterfront Commission presentation. Commissioners should watch video for context.

Action Item: Ivy Whitlatch, Danny Smith, Linda Lovell, and Michael Hobbs will write the letter as soon as possible. Whitlatch will begin the draft.

- Due to time constraint, commissioners will not have an opportunity to provide comments/feedback, but they will be sent a copy when letter is transmitted.
- The letter can also be used for City Council meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### Jones Point Lighthouse

- There is currently deterioration of the structure. Photos shared of deteriorating fence, paint, and lighthouse.
- The lighthouse is a National Park Service historic property. Was deeded to the NPS by the DAR.
- Martha Harris spoke with NPS superintendent who communicated that the restoration/preservation would cost approximately \$1 million and work would not begin until 2024.

- Harris suggested either writing a letter to the NPS superintendent asking what can be done in the near term to remediate the current damage and preserve the structure or contacting DAR's local chapters to alert them of the issue.
- Topic was postponed to next meeting due to urgency of Captain's Row issue.

#### **OHA Support Committee – Steve Stuart, Chair**

- HARC'S updated manual should be complete within the next month.

#### **Bylaws – Sam Hoffman, Chair**

- In accordance with the revised city ordinance, HARC is required to prepare bylaws.
- Commissioners will review the current draft and individually send their comments to Sam Hoffman.
- A revised draft or finished product will be presented next meeting.

### **Board of Architectural Review Update – Bill Conkey (read by Co-Chair Smith)**

#### **Heritage Apartments**

After being approved by the City Council, The Heritage Apartment project came to the BAR for the Certificate of Appropriateness review at a special hearing held July 29. The Board previously reviewed the case under its Concept Review Policy, discussing the proposed height, mass, scale, and general architectural character of the project. After a presentation from the applicant, public comments and Board discussion, the Board accepted the request for a deferral from the applicant. The project will return to the BAR for a second review at the upcoming October 6, 2021, hearing.

#### **101 Duke Street Townhomes**

The proposed townhomes at 101 Duke Street, the site of the current parking garage, was approved by City Council at their hearing on September 18, 2021. The project was previously reviewed by the Board under the Concept Review Policy, discussing the proposed height, mass, scale, and general architectural character of the project. There were three hearings to review the proposed concept. The project will be returning to the BAR for a Certificate of Appropriateness review at the October 6, 2021, hearing.

#### **805 North Columbus Multifamily Building**

The proposed multifamily building at 805 North Columbus Street was previously reviewed by the Board under the Concept Review Policy, discussing the proposed height, mass, scale, and general architectural character of the project. There were two hearings to review the proposed project. The project will be going to the Planning Commission on October 5, 2021, and to City Council for approval on October 16, 2021. The project will be returning to the BAR for a Certificate of Appropriateness review after that approval. The case has not yet been placed on a BAR docket.

### **OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova**

- The Lyceum, Apothecary Museum, Archaeology Museum, and Gadsby's Tavern have added additional opening hours. Ft. Ward Park will reopen October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- The Lyceum will host a vintage car show on September 25 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Friendship Firehouse – Will open on October 9<sup>th</sup> for Fire Prevention Week. Hose Reel is nearing completion of conservation. Hoping it will return by early 2022.
- OHA’s 2021 ornament is Car 303 of the Mount Vernon Alexandria & Washington Electric Railway. It was one of a fleet of art deco cars purchased in 1918 for the essential trolley line that connected Del Ray commuters to DC and tourists to Mount Vernon. Car 303 ran until the railway's closure in 1932. It became a diner in 1936.
- Historic preservation contractors are conducting a window and door survey at Gadsby’s Tavern and Apothecary Museum with the intention of repairing/replacing were needed.
- Alexandria Black History Museum remains closed due to galleries being painted and remodeling of kitchen and bathrooms.
- Suffragist dedication took place on August 26<sup>th</sup> on Women’s Equality Day.
- Working on marker for Earl Lloyd, the first African American in the NBA and fourth African American coach in the NBA.
- Programming for Historic Hispanic Heritage Month starts October 13<sup>th</sup>. Will send information and articles.
- The Historic Structures Report for Freedom House will tentatively be presented in a public lecture on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Have not decided if the event will be hybrid or completely virtual.
- Freedom House – Will select a qualified firm to begin the master plan and restoration design for Freedom House within the next couple of weeks. Freedom House exhibit text writing and research continues. Working with Sites of Conscience to conduct workshop with staff on interpreting difficult history.
- Murray-Dick-Fawcett House – replacing wood shingle roof on the 1772 building. Replacing standing seam metal roof on the remaining building. Bill Conkey, Susan Hellman, and Al Cox have been helping with project. Contractor is Hank Handler with Oak Grove Restoration.
- Remembrance, in honor of lynching victim Benjamin Thomas was held on August 8<sup>th</sup>. This was the first large event for the Community Remembrance Project. Installed marker at the lynching location, on Market Square. Now turning attention to soil collections and pilgrimage to EJI in 2022.
- Received permission and funding in the last budget for a full-time Oral History Manager for OHA. Will begin hiring process.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission