

**HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

PRESENT:

Carol Black
Shawn Eyer
Mark Farkus
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs

Sam Hoffman
Laura Lieberman
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond
Gail Rothrock

Danny Smith
Monica St. Dennis
Steve Stuart
Ivy Whitlatch

EXCUSED:

Rosemarie Esber
Richard Klingenmaier
Linda Lovell
Andrea Tracey
Catherine Weinraub

ABSENT:

Tom Soule

GUESTS: None

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA
William Conkey, Planning and Zoning
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Danny Smith at 7:02 p.m. via Zoom Webinar.

Approval of Minutes for November 16, 2021

On a motion by, Sam Hoffman seconded by Mark Farkus, HARC voted to approve the minutes with edits from the November 16, 2021 meeting.

Chairs Update

- Letter of gratitude sent to Council Member Del Pepper prior to her going-away party. Chair Smith read letter aloud to commissioners.
- HARC Bylaws have been submitted.

Commissioner Updates

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

- Remain closed to the public but open for events.
- Attempting to host the George Washington Birthday Annual Gala on February 26th.

Martha Harris – Volunteer at Carlyle House

- HVAC work completed. Interior of house looks great. Construction continues on the bank building.
- Have been able to maintain programs and visitation despite pandemic.
- Will pass along inquiry about consistent incorporation of African American history throughout museum tour by Commissioner Mark Farkus.

Michael Hobbs – Old Town Civic Association

- No in-person meetings, but still active.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House

- December programming included: Victorian Christmas – Open House, Kissing Ball Workshops, and Candlelight Tours
- Will close for deep cleaning from January through February 2022.
- Repair needed on brick wall. Currently accepting donations.

Martha Raymond – Planning District II

- Flooding Issues – Waiting for inspection of Timber Branch and Hooffs Run

Danny Smith – Business Representative

George Washington Birthday celebration –

- Planning for parade.
- “George Washington’s Alexandria” Tour – Sundays at 2 p.m.
<http://washingtonbirthday.com/events-1> (see website for reservations)

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

- Two vacancies on PRAC, please spread the word

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

- Will be creating a new logo.
- John Chapman in favor of change in city ordinance, “Society for the Preservation of Black History or an equivalent organization.” Will allow for more opportunity of African American representation.

Deborah Osborne – Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

- Tour given by Al Cox of the historic fabric and architectural characteristics of significant historic properties. There was a north route. Will ask if HARC members can join tour of south route.
- Looking to add easements on African American historic sites. The Hepburn House, George Seaton’s house, and the property on the corner of Oronoco and Washington Street are being considered.
- Beginning to address multigenerational change in perceptions of historic preservation. Need to reach younger generations.

New Business

Revitalization of the TFAC

- Sent “Torpedo Factory Art Center Implementation Strategy” letter to Mayor and City Council on November 11th. Mayor and Vice Mayor acknowledged receipt of letter.
- Resubmitted letter to Clerk of Council before December 14th meeting. Letter not posted to meeting’s agenda.
- Mayor Wilson prepared a memorandum on the “Torpedo Factory Next Steps” which laid out principles for administrative restructuring. Did not include any mention of architecture or history.

Action Item: Chair Smith asked Gretchen Bulova to distribute City Council memo to HARC Commissioners.

- Any proposed changes/modifications to the building must be approved by BAR.
- OHA & BAR stance – City Council respects historic significance. Being located within the Old & Historic District does provide some protection. BAR does not have jurisdiction over the interior.
- The original artists contribute to the cultural and social history of Torpedo Factory Art Center.
- Bulova will continue advocating for HARC and OHA representation on the stakeholder’s group.

Old Business

Jones Point Lighthouse Letter to City Council

- The Advocacy Committee’s, “Jones Point Maintenance” letter was sent to Mayor and City Council on December 2nd. Mayor Wilson will get in touch with National Parks Service (NPS) for plans of near-term restoration or better maintenance. City Manager will have staff conduct a visual assessment.
- General Services in consultation with OHA followed up with assessment and email. NPS stated they will follow up within 30 days.

Torpedo Factory for All

- Torpedo Factory for All has become nonexistent.

Elks Lodge Update

- Sent letter on December 13th to City Council and Mayor, Yon Lambert, Director of Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), and Mark Jinks, City Manager.
- Re-drafted letter to include history of well-known entertainers.

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Raymond, Co-Chair

- January meeting canceled. Thanked Bill Conkey, Gretchen Bulova, and HARC Co-chairs for their assistance.
- Encouraged commissioners to attend public meetings.

Ad Hoc, HARC Composition – Richard Klingenmaier, Chair

- Working on revising a draft.

- In order to address inactivity of the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, may use Archaeology's strategy: "Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage or a comparable/equivalent organization."
- Commissioners are encouraged to attend meetings.
- Need to ensure new composition does not stray from HARC's mission.

OHA Support – Steve Stuart, Chair

- Laura Lieberman and Sam Hoffman are working on the New Member Binder.

Board of Architectural Review Update – Bill Conkey

- Intern helping with survey of historic districts.
- Next BAR meeting on January 5th. Will discuss the following topics:
100 Block of King
- Asked T&ES for an informational session on the temporary measures.
805 North Columbus Multifamily Building (also referred to as Columbus Flats)

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

Freedom House Museum

- Generous donations on Giving Tuesday
- Working on the installation of track lighting next, fixtures due to arrive December 30 and installation starting on January 3.
- Ben Sklonik co-authored an article on The Uncas, Franklin and Armfield's ship, with Joshua Rothman. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/12/domestic-slave-trade-us-history-uncas.html>

FY23 Budget in Progress

- Public survey open: <https://survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/FY23-Budget>
- Online Town Hall on December 15th, can be viewed online <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Budget>
- Budget presentation to new city manager in early January
- \$500,000 in Governor's FY23 budget to support the preservation of Douglass Cemetery

New Markers – Domestic Slave Trade

- Received some nice press on WJLA Channel 7 news about new markers related to the Domestic Slave Trade at the foot of Duke Street and planned markers for the waterfront. <https://wjla.com/news/local/alexandria-residents-continue-to-preserve-african-american-history-new-markers-added>

Wrapping up this year

- Slowly returning to in-person tours and programming
- Welcoming back volunteers and starting new training programs at the Apothecary and Gadsby's
- Lots of maintenance (including some much-needed interior painting, roof work, and restroom upgrades) this year at our sites, due to the closures

- Oral History, Curator of African American History, and Research Historian positions currently advertised and closing Jan 3.
- OHA staff have learned a lot of new online skills – including virtual meeting management, video editing, and hybrid meetings implementation
- Many thanks to all of our commissions, friends’ groups, volunteers and donors who have supported us in 2021!

Looking ahead to 2022

- Re-accreditation as a museum system
- Opening Freedom House
- Filling vacant positions
- Historic Structures Report and Master Plans for the Murray Dick Fawcett House
- Master Plan and Design documents for Freedom House
- Starting the Waterfront History Plan and Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study
- Working on water drainage issues at Douglass Cemetery
- Implementing the Interpretive Plan for Fort Ward (just to name a few projects)

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the Commission