

Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission
MINUTES

Wednesday, September 9, 2020
8:00 a.m
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar

In Attendance:	Adam Froemming, Carter Batey, Cindy Stevens, Michael Commisso, Susan Horne, Taryn Anthony
Excused:	Deborah Osborne
Unexcused:	Melinda Barnes
City Staff:	Gretchen Bulova, Whitney Harris, staff, Office of Historic Alexandria Susan Hellman, staff, Planning and Zoning

1. Call to Order - Chairman Commisso called the meeting to order 8:11 am.
2. Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice - Harris read the notice language
3. Consideration and Approval of Minutes of March meeting – tabled until the next meeting

Commisso opens the floor for comment: none stated

4. Advocacy Updates

a. Freedom House Updates –Bulova reports that the Freedom House sale was finalized in March. The NVUL has the use of three offices in the building for 5 years. Funding request for \$2.4M to support the restoration and exhibition design in Governor’s budget that will be voted on as part of the September 2020 General Assembly Special Session. Basic renovation work underway right now, including HVAC replacement, elevator repair, and ADA accessible restrooms. A Master Plan is funded and will begin the community engagement process. The HSR is in procurement and a vendor should be selected by the end of September.

Commisso reported that alley report to be completed soon.

5. Outreach Updates - None stated

a. HARC Report - Bulova reported that HARC will resume meetings next Tuesday. HARC is focused on advocacy for the Elks Lodge, which is in need of capital improvements.

b. OHA Report – Bulova reported that museums closed March 17th and transitioned to virtual programming. Hands on activities and streaming events were offered through #HistoricALX2U. Three sites have reopened, beginning in July. These include The Lyceum, Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, and the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. Gadsby’s transitioned

to 100% self-guided tours. Health and safety precautions in effect. Fort Ward will likely be next site to reopen. Much needed repairs to OHA buildings taking place during closure.

c. City Updates - Hellman reported that the Heritage Project went before BAR. Demolition of 1970s buildings approved at last hearing. Design not approved – only part to be in historic district. Developer may go straight to City Council for design approval. City busy due to many projects by residents. Trust for Architectural Easements does not exist anymore; 18 houses have easements but no successor clause - City Attorney should review.

6. AHRPC Policy #8 - Batey reported that no progress made since March and to follow up at next meeting.

7. New Business—Easement Inspections – Comisso reported that due to current environment, will hold off on doing any inspections until different phase of recovery. Some exterior inspections could be possible and will explore options.

Horne wants to know what will happen if homeowner does not comply with access. Letter should go out and finalize language.

8. Updates/Issues

Horne reported that the Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee sold. The Commission has an easement on garden, but the inspection was already completed for this year.

9. Next meeting October 14, 2020 at 8 a.m. (virtual)

10. Adjournment

No public in attendance. Michael Comisso adjourned meeting at 8:52.