

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

PRESENT:

Carol Black
Chris Brownlowe
Rosemarie Esber
Shawn Eyer
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs

Linda Lovell
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond
Gail Rothrock
Danny Smith

Monica St. Dennis
Steve Stuart
Stetson Tinkham
Andrea Tracey
Ivy Whitlach

EXCUSED:

Sam Hoffman
Richard Klingenmaier
Laura Lieberman
Maddy McCoy

ABSENT:

Paul Mazzuca

GUESTS:

Bill Hendrickson, Presenter

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova
Bill Conkey
Apasrin Suvanasai

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 November 17, 2020 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 webpage. Zoom is compatible with assistive technologies such as screen readers and keyboard shortcuts.

Approval of Minutes for October 20, 2020

On a motion by, Monica St. Dennis seconded by Gail Rothrock, HARC voted to approve the minutes with edits from the October 20, 2020 meeting.

Chairs Update

Co-Chair Smith

- Meeting and Virtual holiday party (planned by Steve Stuart) on December 15.
- HARC Members with Upcoming Expiring Terms: Martha Harris, Richard Klingenmaier, and Paul Mazzuca.
- GenOn power plant site has applied for subdivision of the site is on the Planning Commission's docket, March 3, 2021.
- Heritage Apartments Redevelopment – Thanks offered to Michael Hobbs and Martha Raymond for writing letter to BAR. The approval for demolition has been granted and affirmed by City Council. Proposed: 2 buildings, each 6-7 stories. Next BAR concept review on December 2, 2020. Developer seems to be paying attention to public comments. Probably won't reduce density, but may reduce heights of new buildings. Will go to Planning Commission and City Council in February.

ACTION: Listen to the next concept review before the BAR on December 2, 2020.

Co-chair Lovell

- Still reaching out to council regarding diversification of commission.
- City of Alexandria Boards and Commissions Virtual and Hybrid Meeting Best Practices and Etiquette was distributed via email to HARC members.
- Torpedo Factory Arts Center - Thanks to Jolande Goldberg for her service representing the Torpedo Factory Arts Center. The TFAC Action Plan for Vibrancy and Sustainability is available online (<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/arts/TFACActionPlanforVibrancyandSustainability.pdf>)

New Business

Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, Bill Hendrickson

- Outside of Old Town and the Parker-Gray historic districts there are few buildings that have legal protection regarding historic preservation.
- Del Ray is beginning to lose historic authenticity due to redevelopment. The Del Ray Citizens Association began discussing historic preservation just before the pandemic began.
- The Del Ray community has been a strong proponent of historic preservation e.g., Town of Potomac Historic District added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Del Ray community has contributed through educational events and a historic plaque program.

- The Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, 2017 is the strongest document regarding preservation. It proposed trying to preserve the historic feel and character of the neighborhood - the contributing structures on Mount Vernon Avenue - but it failed to go any further. No real legal protection against redevelopment of historic structures.
 - The Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, 2005 does have a historic preservation orientation, but it is more concerned with preserving character and feel. Does want to preserve some of the buildings along the avenue but no legal, regulatory roadblocks to doing so.
 - The Del Ray Historic Preservation Conference, 2012 was a success. Led to the Del Ray Residential Pattern Book – an educational guide to homeowners, builders, architects, and designers who are considering changes to homes in the neighborhood. Also led to a new Architectural Historian, Heather McMahon who researched sixteen art deco buildings within Del Ray. McMahon put together National Register applications for property owners (George Washington Middle School being one,) but only three applications were completed.
 - In an attempt to educate people about the importance of the sixteen art deco historic buildings, Hendrickson created the “Self-Guided Walking Tour of Del Ray’s Art Deco Architecture.”
 - Currently trying to prompt the Del Ray Citizens Association to push harder for more regulatory standards regarding their historic buildings and specifically, the sixteen art deco buildings. This effort should rank buildings by priority for preservation. Should establish criteria for preservation while remaining collaborative to developers.
 - There have been no new easements of any kind for over a decade. Should start pushing historic easements on a voluntary basis.
 - Would like to see more 100-year old building designations and more regulatory review by city staff.
 - Martha Raymond drew attention to the green building perspective. “Adaptive re-use should be the default rather than demolition.”
 - Gail Rothrock noted the city is considering an Accessory Dwelling Unit Policy. HARC should look at this when it comes out in December/January.
- ACTION:** Distribute Bill Hendrickson’s Del Ray Art Deco Walking Tour to HARC members.

Old Business

River Renew Update – Ivy Whitlatch

- The demolition of Robinson Terminal North has started.
- Archaeological digs will begin at Jones Point Park, Combined Sewer Outfall 2 (CSO-2).

Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee – Martha Harris, Chair

- Committee did not meet this month.

Torpedo Factory Arts Center

- Building dates back to 1918, 100-year old building. Significant in terms of history and position on waterfront. Harris gives brief history of site.
- City has taken over management, used to be run by artists.

- Action Plan for Vibrancy and Sustainability was released this year. (<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/arts/TFACActionPlanforVibrancyandSustainability.pdf>) Prepared by the Smith Group. Proposed changes include: redesigning first floor to allow for public engaging programs; redesigning 3rd floor for lecture place; and rooftop events.
- No mention of history or preservation of building. HARC should weigh in on this project.
- Recommends HARC draft a letter summarizing concerns about bringing history to the forefront of this action plan.
- Diane Ruggiero, will be speaking at the Archaeology Commission Meeting tomorrow night. Should use this meeting as an opportunity to ask questions. May want to invite Ruggiero to speak to HARC as well.
- Torpedo Factory Action Plan Meeting, December 9.

On a motion by, Gail Rothrock seconded by Stetson Tinkham, HARC voted to approve a letter be written to City Mayor; City Council; Mark Jinks, City Manager; James Spengler, Director of RPCA; and Diane Ruggiero, Office of the Arts regarding HARC's concern that historic character be attended to, promoted, and recognized in the Torpedo Factory Arts Center Action Plan.

- Gail Rothrock and Martha Harris volunteered to draft the letter.
 - Ivy Whitlach informed HARC that Diane Ruggiero will be speaking at the Archaeology Commission Meeting, November 18. Whitlach clarified that the Archaeology Department needs a new roof for their space on the third floor of the Torpedo Factory and therefore, has a stake in the action plan. Whitlach offered to brief Rothrock and Harris on the meeting before they draft the letter. Will also find out more information regarding the December 9, Torpedo Factory Action Plan Meeting.
- ACTION:** Prepare and send letter to city elected officials and staff encouraging consideration of the historic significance of the Torpedo Factory. Acknowledge Marian Van Landingham's role in creating the Torpedo Factory Arts Center.

Board of Architectural Review Update – William Conkey

Heritage Apartments

4th Concept Review on December 2nd

Town Hotel

Will be moving the house on Monday the 23rd. Will take approximately one week.

Solo Parking Garage (101 Duke Street)

BAR has seen an early draft; facing zoning and floodplain issues. A lot of engineering issues. Project slowed down due to pandemic, but is underway. Extensive survey of the building was done; includes 3D laser scanning. No update on their overall schedule.

Liberty Gas Station

Had a meeting with owners and attorneys about two weeks ago; ongoing discussion. Currently working on what they will agree to change and what they will take to the board. One of the items being discussed is the painted brick; they are looking at options to remove the paint.

Diversity and Inclusion in Historic Preservation: Rethinking How We Preserve our Past for the Future

Purvi Irwin will be giving a presentation on Diversity and Inclusion in Historic Preservation at the November 18, BAR Public Hearing. Co-chair Lovell expressed interest in inviting Irwin to speak to HARC about this topic.

ACTION: Linda Lovell will contact Purvi Irwin to ask her to speak to HARC on Diversity and Inclusion in Historic Preservation.

OHA Report – Gretchen Bulova

- Rotated museums now open to the public:
Apothecary (Saturday to Monday)
Alexandria Archaeology (Friday to Sunday)
Gadsby's Tavern Museum (Friday to Monday)
-Advanced ticket purchases encouraged
-New this year, City of Alexandria residents receive complimentary admission to City museums
- Monday tours are being offered at Gadsby's Tavern Museum and the Apothecary to encourage family visitation and field trips since area public schools have "asynchronous learning" on Mondays.
- Interior renovations are in progress for The Lyceum and Black History Museum. Work is wrapping up at the Lloyd House and is still in the planning phases at Friendship Firehouse, Fort Ward, and Gadsby's Tavern Museum.
- The budget planning process for FY22 continues (10% reduction scenario).
- On November 20, OHA is launching virtual Winter programs that feature videos, activities, and collection highlights tell the stories of the season—celebrating family and community, marking milestones, making and preserving food, and keeping warm. Information is on our website, social media, and online store.
- This year's Historic Alexandria holiday ornament features the historic Hose Reel at Friendship Firehouse. They can be purchased at the Apothecary, Gadsby's, Alexandria Archaeology, and Visitor Center.
- Freedom House Update
 - a. First floor renovations have been completed – including ADA unisex restrooms, first floor museum galleries, new HVAC system, interior painting/carpet.
 - b. The Historic Structures Report will be awarded before the end of the year.
 - c. Working on temporary exhibit for the first floor, have a traveling show scheduled for 2nd floor.
- Submitted an Institute for Library and Museum Services (IMLS) grant request to fund the digitization of 4 archival collections at the ABHM – 2-year grant. The grant notification will take place in June and the funding begins in July.
- The GW High School was added to the Virginia Landmarks Register, with the State Review Board recommending inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places
- City Archaeologist, Eleanor Breen, has been recognized as Outstanding Archaeology Professional of the Year by the Archaeological Society of Virginia

Commissioner Updates

Martha Raymond – Planning District II

Thursday, November 19th there will be a Zoom meeting with the mayor and neighbors regarding Timber Branch Culvert leading to Hooffs Run.

Chris Brownlowe – Athenaeum

Open to the public. Working on water intrusion issues. Have replaced basement windows and will begin working on gutters next.

Martha Harris – Historic Property Volunteer

Open Space Committee will meet on December 9th. Has been an interesting process trying to define open space in diverse environments including new developments.

Ivy Whitlach – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

- Working to fill vacancies on Commission. Reaching out to Visit Alexandria and Alexandria Historical Society. Have encouraged two members of the public that attended last meeting to apply. Will be reaching out to existing members of the Society of Black Heritage. Planning to work with City Council to potentially modify ordinance.
- Archaeology posted a video on their Facebook page about the anniversary of the Alexandria Archaeology Ordinance. Some members of City Council asked permission to share the video on social media.

Steve Stuart – Planning District III

December 15, Virtual Holiday Party. Additional details to follow.

Michael Hobbs – Old Town Civic Association

Individual members and the board are still interested in the Heritage project and other proposals within Old Town.

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic Memorial

- Remains open to the public.
- Working on developing a virtual reality experience of the building.
- Six stained glass windows from the main hall that were installed in the 1950s have been removed and replaced with windows that allow more light into the space.

Monica St. Dennis – Public Records Advisory Commission

Public Records Advisory Commission meeting was November 16th. Still looking to fill vacancies on commission.

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

- Old Presbyterian Meeting House held a ceremony for the Unknown Soldier on Veterans Day.

Elks Lodge

- Expended all funds that were received from Historic Alexandria Foundation. Helped repair plumbing problems with the remaining balance.
- Currently at a crossroads; trying to decide what type of programs they can offer. Need to decide on these programs before applying for more grants.
- Scheduling another Zoom meeting with Sisters organization.
- Experiencing difficulties renting out the hall (due to COVID) which could help with raising money for their operational costs.

Rosemarie Esber – Planning District I

African American Heritage Park

- Sent photos to Gretchen and Co-chair Lovell of African American Heritage Park concerns: railings, placards, flooded areas, and railroad bridges that go through Hooff's Run.
- The African American Heritage Park maintenance is performed by the Carlyle Association.

Durant Center

- Proposed the Durant Center become Alexandria's cultural center.
- Would like to see more use out of the building.

A few HARC members disagreed stating that the Durant Center is highly used, but has slowed down due to COVID.

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation

- HAF's attorney filed the arguments (Monday, the 14th) to the State Supreme Court for the appeal of the City Council's decision on the Justice Black House.
- Three amicus briefs went in as well, including one by Preservation Virginia.
- Will be putting the filings up on HAF's website.
- Does not expect the Supreme Court to take up the case until at least March 2021.

Andrea Tracey – Carlyle House

- Carlyle House has been reaccredited by AAM.
- Ongoing specialty tours.
- December evening programs/tours might be affected due to developing COVID regulations.
- Gearing up to celebrate the 45th anniversary of Carlyle House opening as a museum. Working on an exhibit which will include a virtual component.
- Working on HVAC improvements.

Bank of Alexandria

- Sale transaction is official. Closing on January 4th.
- Will need to vacate building during renovations. Will return working on the first floor instead of the basement.

Deborah Osborne – AHRPC

No new easement proposals. Inspections of easements has been suspended.

Linda Lovell – Mortar & Pestle Society

- Advertising windows of 107 building have been conserved and installed.
- New paneling in the 105 building, gift shop. The Mortar & Pestle Society's annual gifts for the past two years went to both projects.
- Callie Stapp, Curator for OHA, and Lovell met with descendants of Edward Stabler and John Leadbeater. Some of the descendants are interested in researching the work that Edward and William Stabler did to free enslaved individuals. Will be looking at manumission records.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA staff to the commission