

Minutes of Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group

Thursday December 9, 2010

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (“Group”) convened at the Fort Ward Museum at its announced meeting time of 7:00 p.m. Members, City Management and Staff, and identified guests present included:

Tom Fulton
Linda Ries
Charles Ziegler
William Schreiner
Adrienne Washington
Frances Terrell
Phillip Voorhees
Richard Brune
Ripley Forbes
Robert Moir

Susan Cumbey (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Wally Owen (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Lance Mallamo (Office of Historic Alexandria)
Pam Cressey (Office of Historic Alexandria)
Glenn Eugster
Sharon Annear (Councilwoman Hughes’ Office)
Mary Furlong (Ottery Group)

The Chairman observed that a quorum was present, and the agenda was distributed and approved. The Group unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

Old Business

Pam Cressey provided an update on the progress of the archaeological field work, that to date has focused on the maintenance yard and the immediately adjacent area. A written update on the work is attached to these Minutes as Exhibit A.

Ms. Cressey reported that ten graves have been confirmed by the field work, along with six graves in one area. The six graves suggest that an organized cemetery was located in the area on the north end of the west border of the maintenance yard, and suggest that more graves may be in that area. Work will continue in that area, and then will move to the Jackson Family Cemetery area.

Much work will need to be done to attempt to obtain the names of people buried in this area, and Ms. Cressey hopes to use volunteers for this work. The Group discussed the results of the field work, its implications for the draft Report, and the potential need for additional funding for the next phase of the archaeology.

New Business

The Group discussed the public comments that were received on the draft Report. Most members reported they had no changes to their individual sections of the Report based on the comments. Those members that did have changes agreed to send them to the Chairman promptly.

The Group discussed the use of photographs in the Report, and agreed that a small number of photographs may be helpful. The Chairman was tasked with placing those photographs. He was also tasked with incorporating final tweaks and edits to the draft before the draft was placed in final form.

W. Schreiner reviewed the City's 2011 mowing plan for the Park and compared it with the 2010 plan and the recommendations on mowing contained in the draft Report. The Group briefly discussed W. Schreiner's report, but no action was taken.

The Group discussed the dates of future meetings. It was agreed that the meeting that would be held on December 28, 2010 by the Group's normal schedule would be cancelled. The Group agreed to stand "at the call of the chair" to meet on January 4, 2011 or January 6, 2011 if the final edits to the Group's report required that meeting; if not, the Group would meet on January 13, 2010. The Jan. 13 meeting is expected to be the Group's final one, and will involve turning the final Report over to the City of Alexandria.

A. Washington removed from the table the issue of whether the Group should include an apology to the descendants of those who lived at Fort Ward and whose homes were demolished to build the Park. She proposed that the Group include such a recommendation in its final report. A spirited but thoughtful discussion followed on the merits of such a recommendation and the Group's ability to include it. By general agreement, the Group authorized the Chairman to include text in the Report that: 1) remarked on the tragic history of the construction of the Park; and 2) asked the City of Alexandria to ensure that no similar tragedies occur in future construction of parks or other development.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Schreiner, Secretary