

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes

Lloyd House
Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Attendance

Present: (11 for quorum)

Carol Black
Donna DeBlasio
Nigel Mease
Ivy Whitlatch
Roberta Stevens
Corrine Marasco
Tyler Hale
Christina Bembenek
Lisa Schumaier
Ed Jayne
Russell Simonaro
Michael Pope
Jenny Waters
John Patrick
Gayle Converse

Excused:

Margaret Whitesides
Christopher Brownlowe
Mia Mulrennan
Rebecca Super
Steve Stuart

Absent:

Public:

Robert Ray

City Staff:

Mary Bramley, OHA Staff
Bill Conkey, P&Z Staff

Agenda

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Donna DeBlasio at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes from February 17, 2026:

A motion to approve the minutes was made by John Patrick and seconded by Carol Black. An edit was made to change Russell Simonaro from absent to excused. The February 17, 2026 minutes were approved as edited.

Commissioner Updates:

Tyler Hale – Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)

- No Report

Jenny Waters – Lee-Fendall House Museum

- The Museum reopened and has a very busy calendar!
- The Easter egg hunt and suffrage tour are sold out.
 - The Suffrage exhibit (Shall Not Be Denied: Alexandria Women and the Fight for the Ballot) is open until May 31st.
- There is an April 11 panel discussion featuring four women who lived in the City of Alexandria and excelled in their respective fields. The event is scheduled at The Lyceum at 10a.m.
- The wallpaper project of the entire house continues. The front parlor has been finished and work is underway on the back parlor's wallpaper. The wallpaper's design was popular during the Victorian period and is made by Adelphi Paper Hangings.

Ed Jayne – Community Member

- No Report

Gayle Converse - Volunteer

- A new exhibit will open at Gadsby's Taven Museum on March 26th. "We Were Always Here" features the story of coffee house proprietor Hanna Coville Griffith – a good example of a "deputy husband," a term coined in the 1970's to describe a woman whose husband was away at sea or off to the American Revolution and who was left to run the family home or business. The new exhibit will also include 14 current women business owners who are located in the immediate area of Gadsby's and Market Square. It will be on display for one year. The exhibit opens next week at Gadsby's.
- The historic chocolate-making information presented by Gadsby's wonderful Junior docents will play a key role in celebrating America250 and "Sails on the Potomac." From June 12-14, 2026, four tall ships along the waterfront and 18th century chocolate-making demonstrations will be a highlight of the festival. This hands-on opportunity will include the history of "sipping" chocolate and its ties to patriotism, smuggling, slavery, and the political discourse in places like Hannah Griffith's establishment.

Roberta Stevens – Alexandria Association

- The lecture on Brick Meeting House’s historic homes and antiques, scheduled for Monday, March 16th, was cancelled due to inclement weather.
- The April 20th lecture at The Lyceum is titled “Mrs. House has the most commodious Rooms: The Experience of Boarding in Late-Eighteenth Century America.”

Steven Stuart – Planning District 3

- Excused Absence

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)

- There has been lots of press about the Torpedo Factory’s Operating Proposal around the potential of the historic ship’s remains going into the Torpedo Factory.
- A resolution has been written requesting the City Council move membership from Visit Alexandria Member to someone from the Tourism Community for the Alexandria Archaeology Commission.
- The Wilkes Street Cemetery PIF will hopefully be finalized and presented to cemetery owners in April.
- The Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) participated in the 2026 George Washington Parade and won 3rd place in the “Community Spirit” category.

Donna DeBlasio – Planning District 1

- No Report

Carol Black – Planning District 2

- She attended Del Ray Civic Association Meeting which included discussion on the zoning text amendment. Carol is interested in whether a change can be made from a Special Use Permit to a By Right Permit. She will ask Gretchen about having a speaker to talk about how permitting works.
- She attended the talk at The Lyceum about the Carlyle House Restoration that is 50 years old now. She recommended watching the meeting’s recordation on the Internet.

Russell Simonaro – Tourism and Business Community

- Tours have increased, even with the Market Square Construction.
- The Market Square statue has been moved.
- The Shiloh Baptist Church was awarded a \$360,000 preservation grant from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.
- He went on a tour of Alexandria’s Archives & Records Center and recommended the tour for HARC members.

Mia Mulrennan – Tourism and Business Community

- Excused Absence

Rebecca Super – Carlyle House

- Excused Absence – *submitted report electronically.*
- The Carlyle House hosted its 50th anniversary look-back program on March 7th. Two of the three original architects from the restoration of Carlyle House led a talk on their process and work on the house in 1975-76 and they discussed what they would have done differently had this project been undertaken today.
- Their Discovering Alexandria Architecture Walking Tours are back for the season starting March 21st at 10 a.m. The tours will also take place on April 25th, May 16th, and June 20th. They are very popular and spaces fill fast. The cost is \$20 per person.

- General Braddock will return to the Carlyle House for the 271st time on April 11th from noon to 4 p.m. for their annual Braddock Day program. This free event is one of the Carlyle House's biggest programs of the year.
- Repointing work will begin soon on the brick walls along Fairfax Street and Lee Street.

Corinne Marasco – Houses of Worship

- No Report

Margaret Whitesides – Houses of Worship

- Excused Absence

John Patrick – Planning District 2

- No Report

Christina Bembenek - Planning District 1

- No Report

Michael Pope – Alexandria Historical Society (AHS)

- On Sunday, April 12th, Pam Cressy is leading a walking tour of Hayti
- The AHS History Award Ceremony is scheduled for April 22nd.
 - The awards are given to students and adults.
 - Dr. Peter Henriques is the awards program's Keynote Speaker.
 - On March 25th, Amanda Roper will be presenting on Women in Preservation.

Lisa Schumaier – Torpedo Factory

- The City's Torpedo Factory RFP did go out with the ship component as an option but not mandatory for inclusion in the responses.

Nigel Mease – Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (AHRPC)

- No Report

Chris Brownlowe – Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association (NVFAA)

- Excused Absence

New Business:

None

Old Business:

- Waterfront Pump Station
 - The National Park Services did not approve a pump station for the proposed Waterfront Park location at 1 Prince Street. They intend to enforce the agreement of 1980.
 - The Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee is going to be assigned to provide options to address the flooding issue.
- Jones Point Lighthouse
 - Carol Black is investigating the scope of work for the fall.
- Ship Support
 - The ship's hull, which has been conserved at Texas A&M University will be returned to Alexandria in the fall of 2028.
 - There was discussion about the possibility of the ship's location in the Torpedo Factory on the third floor. The impact is a loss of space for artist studios.

- Ivy Whitlatch presented a draft letter for HARC’s consideration to be sent to the City Council thanking them for including the ship as part of the RFP for an operator with a request that HARC be a part of any discussions concerning it moving forward.
- John Patrick made motion to table the discussion and take it up at the next meeting and was seconded by Carol Black. The motion passed.
 - A letter will be presented at next HARC meeting for further discussion.
- New Member Onboarding
 - Steve Stuart has located the old files and will work with HARC’s chair, Christopher Brownlowe, on creating a new member packet.

Standing Committee Reports:

Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) – Nigel Mease

- The Steering Committee meeting was held on March 11th and included an information session on the June 12-14 Sails on the Potomac event as well as the City’s plan for the June 19 Juneteenth Festival.
- The McCoy Remembrance: Dr. Rodney Sadler will speak on the Intersection of Faith Society and Culture at Roberts Memorial United Methodist at 6:30p on April 23.
- The NAACP will provide peaceful protest training on April 24. It is a free event but registration is encouraged.
- ACPS Students are finishing up the Banned Truth Tour program.
- The Scholarship Fund has reached \$64k with \$6,000 in scholarships to be given to be given to support two student scholarships (\$3,000 each) at the Alexandria City High School.

Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Update: Bill Conkey

- 330 North Washington Street
 - The Board will be hearing a Concept Review for the construction of six new four-story townhouses in the parking lot behind the bank building at 330 North Washington Street. The string of townhouses will be in the middle of the block, parallel to the townhouses that face North Columbus Street. The proposed building will be oriented so that they face the back of the bank building with ground floor garages opposite the existing garages on the North Columbus Street townhouses. The Board will be providing feedback on the proposed design and the height of the townhouses.
- 1019 Cameron Street
 - The Board will also be hearing a Concept Review for an addition to the commercial office building at 1019 Cameron Street. The proposed two-story addition will be on top of the existing one-story portion of the building at the north end of the site. The southern portion of the building dates from 1907 and was originally the home of the Armour & Company Meat Depot. The one-story portion where the addition will be constructed dates from 1921 and does not include the decorative detailing found on the original portion of the building.
- New Board Member

- The Board has a new member. Michaela Robinson was appointed to the Board by Council to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Frances Pratt. Ms. Robinson is a local interior designer who has lived and worked in Alexandria for over 30 years. Her first hearing will be on April 8th.
- BAR hearing location
 - Since the first of the year, the Board has held hearings at the Mark Center location that also houses the City Council and Planning Commission meetings. Starting on April 8th, the hearings will be held at the Charles Houston Rec Center to allow for easier access for applicants and Board members who reside within the two historic districts.

Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) Update: Mary Bramley

- OHA is officially in full swing for Alexandria's Commemoration of the nation's 250th anniversary this year:
 - Historic Happy Hours each month
 - New Exhibit opening at Gadsby's at the end of the month titled *Women in Business: We Were Always Here*
 - Special public programming throughout the year
 - The largest event - Sails on the Potomac from June 12-14, 2026.
- Other projects include the Freedom House Museum's interior renovation and its new exhibitions as well as the Douglass Cemetery Stormwater Improvement Project.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The next meeting is planned for April 21, 2026, at the Lloyd House.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary Bramley, OHA

Roberta Stevens, HARC Secretary