

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

for

FISCAL YEAR 2008

I. SUMMARY

The Commission had another very active year pursuing its three-fold mission of preservation, education, and advocacy for Alexandria's archaeological and historical resources as they arose regarding issues involving development, the natural and historic environment, transportation, economy/tourism, diversity of community, and efficient, community-oriented government.

During Fiscal Year 2008, the AAC:

- Presented Ben Brenman Awards to recipients Milner Associates, Eakin/Youngentob and E. Sanders Partee in December 2007;
- Solicited nominations for the 2008 Ben Brenman awards, which recognize individuals and businesses who help to promote and preserve Alexandria's archaeological past;
- Endorsed the Preservation Action Plan submitted to City Council by the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission;
- Submitted a letter to the Environmental Policy Commission, in response to its request for Commission views on issues regarding the environment and quality of life;
- Endorsed the invitation that Alexandria host the annual conference for the National Association for Preservation Commissions in July 2010 and wrote a letter of support for such invitation;
- Discussed drafts of letter to be sent to Manchester, England, to see if they would like to become an archaeology sister city;

- Prepared an issue paper to begin discussion with the Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria for the building of a modern archaeology museum that would increase tourism and local support for historic and archaeological interests;
- Conducted, by members Ted Pulliam and Diane Riker, research and published articles on the Fitzgerald Warehouse, the stable on the 200 block of N. Pitt Street, and the waterfront block between Duke and Wolfe Streets where the Robinson Terminal South is located;
- Conducted, by member Dave Cavanaugh, research that resulted in recognition of an African-American school previously located on the site of the new T.C. Williams High School;
- Hosted Stephanie Brown, Director, Alexandria Convention and Visitor's Center, as a guest speaker who spoke about the Alexandria Brand and Image Research Report;
- Participated in the Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Design Steering Committee and discussed issues related to the Freedmen's Cemetery;
- Organized and conducted informal "coffee chats" in Old Town with residents to discuss history and archaeology topics relevant to the neighborhood and toured nearby historic or archaeological sites;
- Discussed archaeological and historical preservation issues involving display of artifacts at Alexandria hotels, the Bruin slave pen memorial, the proposed Hunting Terrace development, the Potomac yards parks design, the Wayfinding Sign committee, and the Alexandria Heritage Trail;
- Participated in honoring the work of Archaeology Museum volunteers and hosted a joint meeting with the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology, volunteer organization supporting Archaeology Museum activities;
- Conducted meetings in various locations as part of the Commission's outreach program, including a boat trip to National Harbor and a visit to the Payne Street Archaeology Storage facility;
- Refined the AAC's strategic plan and used it for identifying and following specific action items tied to that plan;
- Drafted a proposal to improve City residents' understanding and knowledge of archaeological resources on private property and worked with City Archaeologist Pam Cressey to present a seminar for Preservation Month in May on these issues;

- Discussed archaeological storage issues and joined with the Public Records Commission in sending a letter to City Council on the importance of planning for expected archival and artifact storage needs in the next few years; and
- Discussed issues concerning the Alexandria waterfront.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends:

- Continued active involvement in proposals involving the Alexandria Waterfront, which contains several historic structures;
- Working with other City organizations or groups that are interested in historic preservation and the waterfront for greater co-ordination on issues concerning the waterfront;
- Incorporating archaeological and historic resources into discussions and planning involving tourism and economic development;
- Planning for future storage needs for the City's archaeological and historic resources begin before existing storage space is exhausted.

III. GOALS FOR FY 2008-2009

The AAC set as its goals for 2008-2009 that it will:

- Participate and assist in developing historically significance themes for consideration in the waterfront planning process;
- Assist and collaborate with other groups interested in preserving Alexandria's heritage;
- Increase public interest, importance and awareness of Alexandria archaeology and history through "coffee chats", publications in journals and newspapers, and events;
- Facilitate and support necessary consideration of archaeology resources in developing tourism and economic development; and

- Support preservation, protection and storage of artifacts and archaeological materials for public reference and use.

IV. AAC ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN FY 2007-2008

The Archaeological Commission conducted a variety of activities during FY 2007-2008. These activities are set forth below. The listings are organized within headings taken from the City's Strategic Plan in order to facilitate an understanding of how the Commission's activities relate to the vision, goals, and objectives of the City.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Ben Brenman Award: The Commission solicited nominations for the second Ben Brenman Awards which are given to individuals, families, or organizations or developers for their significant contributions to archaeology in Alexandria. The members set as a goal to present these awards in October during Alexandria Archaeology Month. Members discussed the need to refine the nomination and selection process and timeline.

THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Preservation Action Plan: Members discussed the draft Preservation Action Plan drafted by the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. The proposed plan was a result of the Preservation Summit held in Spring of 2007. Upon approval by the members, a letter was sent to the Mayor and City Council endorsing the Preservation Action Plan.

Environmental Policy Commission Request for Comments: The Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) sought comments from Boards and Commissions on issues of relevance to each Board and Commission as it related to the environment and quality of life. Members discussed this and found seven issues to be important to future planning involving archaeology and preservation: waterfront planning, preservation planning, open space, green building design, infill development, internal environmental review process, and pollution and rising sea levels. A letter setting forth the AAC's views on these seven issues, in response to the EPC request, was sent to the EPC with a copy to the Mayor and City Council, as well as other City Department heads, following approval by the members.

National Association for Preservation Commissions Conference: The National Association for Preservation Commissions invited Alexandria to host its annual conference in July 2010. Members approved endorsing the invitation and writing a letter of support.

Sister Cities: Vince LaPointe drafted a letter to Manchester, England, to see if they would like to become an archaeology sister city. Members discussed this before agreeing that a further draft letter would be needed.

Archaeology Museum: Vince LaPointe drafted an issue paper to begin discussion with the Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria for the building of a modern archaeology museum that would increase tourism and local support for historic and archaeological. Members discussed this before agreeing that a further draft letter would be needed.

Research and News Articles: Dave Cavanaugh shared his research on Seminary School, an African American school that operated from 1927 to 1950 on a site now occupied by T.C. Williams High School. From her research on waterfront properties in Alexandria, Diane Riker had an article on the Fitzgerald Warehouse published in the Alexandria Historical Society's *Chronicle*. Ted Pulliam informed members of his research into the ownership of a former stable on the 200 block of N. Pitt Street in Old Town which had been reputed to have been built or owned by Moses Hepburn, a prominent 19th century businessman and freed black. In addition, Ted also published an article in the Fall 2007 edition of the Alexandria Chronicle on the waterfront block between Duke and Wolfe Streets where the Robinson Terminal South is located.

ECONOMY/TOURISM

Tourism and Archaeology: The Commission had Stephanie Brown, Director, Alexandria Convention and Visitor's Center, as a guest speaker in January. She spoke to members on the recent Alexandria Brand and Image Research Report. Members learned that a survey of visitors and residents showed that Alexandria's historical ambience and period architecture were among the City's strong features. Members also learned of the ACVA's plans for future marketing strategies and asked questions regarding those proposed strategies' effect on history and archaeology.

DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Freedmen's Cemetery: The AAC continued to be keep abreast of the issues regarding the Freedmen's Cemetery and the Freedmen's and Contraband's Cemetery Design Steering Committee. The Steering Committee selected three design finalists and will be selecting a winner, second, and third place from those finalists. AAC Chair, Kathleen Pepper represents the AAC on that committee and Lillie Finklea represents the Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery and both serve as co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

Coffee Chats: Vince LaPointe organized and conducted several informal "coffee chats" at various locations in the Old Town area for residents to tour nearby historic or archaeological sites and talk about history and archaeology topics relevant to the neighborhood. These "coffee

chats” are outreach efforts to residents to help them learn more about their neighborhoods and to ask questions about history and archaeology.

Other Issues: The Commission was involved in discussions regarding other issues of archaeological and historic preservation interest including the having artifacts displayed at the Hotel Monaco, the proposed memorial at the site of the Bruin Slave Pen, the proposed Hunting Terrace development, the Potomac Yards parks design, the Wayfinding Sign committee, and the Alexandria Heritage Trail. As part of the Commission’s commitment to outreach, AAC meetings were scheduled aboard a boat trip to National Harbor and at the Payne Street Archaeology Storage facility. The AAC also participated in honoring the work of Archaeology Museum volunteers and hosted a joint meeting with the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology, a volunteer organization supporting Archaeology Museum activities.

EFFICIENT, COMMUNITY-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT

Alexandria Archaeological Commission Strategic Plan: The AAC continued refining its strategic plan by setting goals and actions items. The Commission’s goals in its strategic plan were linked to specific City Strategic Plan goals. Vice-chair Vincent LaPointe developed a master tracking document to record the status and progress on the specific action items.

Archaeology Education Project for City Residents: Vince LaPointe drafted a proposal to improve City residents understanding and knowledge of archaeological resources on private property. The draft proposal was in response to members’ concerns that residents do not understand what resources are available which has resulted in the loss or destructive scavenging of historic artifacts from residential renovations/excavations. Pam Cressey, City Archaeologist, and Vince LaPointe worked together to present a seminar for Preservation Month in May on these issues.

Archaeology Storage Issues: The Commission addressed the need for expanded storage for Alexandria Archaeology as well as for the City’s Archives and other museums. Members recommended that a joint letter with the Public Records Commission be sent to the Mayor and City Council expressing mutual support for the use of this space for expanded storage. That letter was sent to Council by the Public Records Commission at the end of the fiscal year.

STRUCTURE OF THE ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC or Commission) serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on matters relating to the City’s archaeological resources and related issues within the City. Included among the AAC’s responsibilities are the establishment of goals and priorities which contribute to the history and heritage of colonial, federal and historic Alexandria; propose local ordinances and state statutes to the City Council and the City Manager which promote the goals and aims embodied in Ordinance No. 3733; plan,

develop and recommend short-, mid- and long-term archaeological plans and programs for the City; encourage the integration of archaeological and historical information and site preservation into master plans and development efforts; study and make recommendations to City Council with respect to additional activities involving the City's archaeological program and artifacts; promote the use of the highest professional standards by Alexandria Archaeology staff; and enhance the visibility of the City of Alexandria as a leader in archaeology throughout Virginia, the United States and the world.

AAC meetings are held at least 10 times per year, on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, or occasionally at other sites of interest to the Commission. The fourteen (14) members of AAC include five (5) members at large, three (3) citizen members representing each of the City's three planning districts and six (6) members representing various City organizations.

Elections are held in October of each year. The Commission officers consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Due to changes in membership and elections, persons serving on the Commission may be listed in more than one representative or leadership capacity. The Commission welcomed new members Georgia (Katy) Cannady, representing the Alexandria Historical Society, Dave Cavanaugh, representing the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology, and James Clark, member at-large. and said goodbye to Walter Hall, who represented the Historic Alexandria Foundation, and Bill Tabor, who represented the Alexandria Historical Society. The following people served on the Commission during all or part of Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

James Clark
Ann Davin
Lillie Finklea
S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair
Peter Petersen
Tim Peterson
Ted Pulliam

PLANNING DISTRICT MEMBERS:

Planning District I: Vincent C. LaPointe, Vice-Chair and Acting Chair
Planning District II: Donald Kent, Jr.
Planning District III: Janice Magnuson

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES:

The Alexandria Association: Diane Riker

Alexandria Chamber of Commerce: Adron Krekeler

Alexandria Historical Society: Bill Tabor, Secretary; Katy Cannaday

Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage: S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair

Friends of Alexandria Archaeology: Dave Cavanaugh

Historic Alexandria Foundation: Walter Hall