

## **ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

**for**

**FISCAL YEAR 2010  
JULY 2009 - JUNE 2010**

### **I. SUMMARY**

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC) had another 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. In particular, the AAC focused on Waterfront Plan issues, the Torpedo Factory Study and its implications for Archaeology, and crafting a new strategic plan for Archaeology in light of the financial crisis facing the City and other challenges and opportunities.

#### **During Fiscal Year 2010, the AAC:**

- Sent a letter to City Council in response to the proposed FY2011 budget, recommending reinstatement of funding for part time positions to keep the Archaeology Museum open Sundays and restoration of funding for non-personnel expenses. In addition, the AAC directed James McCall to speak at a Council meeting based on the letter.
- Sent a letter to City Council asking that the AAC be consulted and be an active participant in any planning concerning the future of its offices and the museum at the Torpedo Factory Art Center. A delegation of members also met with City officials to discuss Commission concerns.
- Wrote a letter to City Council regarding the City's revised Strategic Planning goals.
- Wrote a letter to the Department of Planning and Zoning in support of the preliminary design for the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial.
- Wrote a letter to the Alexandria Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park & Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group urging a commitment to preserving the park, and supporting a unified approach to planning that reflects a sensitive appreciation of the unique historical and cultural assets there.

- Celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alexandria Archaeological Protection Code, the first such comprehensive municipal code.
- Presented the Ben Brenman Archaeology awards to recipients Vivienne Mitchell, Sarah Borgotti, the Louis Berger Group, Inc., Elizabeth V. Douglas, and Joe Reeder.
- Revised the Archaeological Commission's Strategic Plan.

## **II. GOALS FOR FY 2010**

The Archaeological Commission set as its goals for July 2009 - June 2010:

- Continued active involvement in proposals involving the Alexandria Waterfront, which contains several historic structures;
- Working with other City organizations or groups which 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; and
- Conducting History Chats in neighborhoods to encourage public interest.

## **III. AAC ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN FY 2010**

The Archaeological Commission pursued a variety of activities during FY 2010. These activities are set forth below and 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**

**Waterfront Planning:** The AAC continued to support a strong and visible history content for Alexandria's Waterfront Plan. Members attended, participated, and spoke at several public meetings organized by the City and the consulting firm it has hired, including a History Night, an Arts Night, an overview held at the Torpedo Factory, and the unveiling of the initial Concept Plan. In addition, the AAC offered specific recommendations to the City about history content

drawn from the History Night discussions and AAC work groups. The AAC also contacted the Arts Commission to begin develop an ongoing collaborative approach to integrating arts and history themes in public art for the waterfront.

**Ben Brenman Archaeology Awards:** The Commission selected four recipients for the third annual Ben Brenman Archaeology Awards, which were presented in October 2009 during Alexandria Archaeology Month. The award winners were Vivienne Mitchell for community involvement, Sarah Borgotti for archaeology advocacy, the Louis Berger Group, Inc. for professional archaeology project, Elizabeth V. Douglas for oral history, and Joe Reeder for stewardship.

## THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

**Fort Ward:** City Council created a Steering Committee for Fort Ward, and AAC Member, Tom Fulton, was selected as the representative of HARC for the Fort Ward Advisory Committee. AAC wrote a letter to the Alexandria Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park & Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group urging a commitment to preserving the park, and supporting a unified approach to planning that reflects a sensitive appreciation of the unique historical and cultural assets there.

## ECONOMY/TOURISM

**Torpedo Factory Art Center and Archaeology Museum:** The AAC closely followed the Torpedo Factory Study commissioned by the City to evaluate the economic health and potential of the Torpedo Factory Art Center (TFAC). In October, the Commission met with Rosemary Feit Covey, President of the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, who updated the AAC on the concerns of the Association and the potential changes to the Torpedo Factory. The AAC later discussed the Study report itself, noting that not only did the Study raise the possibility of moving Archaeology from its current location in the TFAC, but it also failed to offer an alternative location. Subsequently, the idea circulated as rumor that Archaeology would be moved elsewhere, despite any actual City decision for it to be moved. The AAC instructed AAC Vice-Chair, Vince LaPointe, to write a letter to City Council asking that the AAC and staff be consulted in any deliberations regarding the fate of Archaeology within the Torpedo Factory. In addition, members of the Commission met with the City Manager's Office to convey AAC concerns about rumors of moving Archaeology and asking for representation for Archaeology on any oversight committee created for the Torpedo Factory planning or administration. Members also spoke directly to the Department of Planning and Zoning during the unveiling of the Waterfront Concept Plan about the mention of moving Archaeology offices and the museum. The AAC remains concerned about poor communications regarding this issue and the importance of including the Commission in any planning regarding Alexandria Archaeology's offices and the Museum.

## **DIVERSE COMMUNITY**

**Freedmen's Cemetery:** The AAC continued to keep abreast of the issues regarding the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial and the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Design Steering Committee. The AAC wrote a letter in support of the preliminary design plan for the cemetery. AAC Chair, Kathleen Pepper, represents the AAC on that committee, and Lillie Finklea represents the Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery. Both serve as co-chairs of the Steering Committee and are also members of the sculpture committee, which worked to develop an RFP for the sculpture selection process.

**The American Legion Building:** The AAC devoted part of one of its meetings to discussing preservation of the American Legion Building at 224 North Fayette Street and the history and experience it represented for the community both during WWII, when it was built as a nursery and daycare center to allow African Americans to aid the war effort, and post war, when it became an important gathering place for African American veterans. The AAC wrote a letter to council supporting the preservation of the building.

**History Chats:** Vince LaPointe continued to organize and conduct informal History 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 History Chats are outreach efforts to residents to help them learn more about their neighborhoods and to ask questions about history and archaeology.

**Morrison House Talks:** The AAC supported the inaugural series of history and arts talks presented at the Morrison House the first Tuesday of each month. The series is sponsored jointly with the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, and the Morrison House Hotel. The series has been well attended, and featured topics such as "Archaeology: History Under Your Feet" presented by Pamela Cressey; "From the Torpedo Factory to the White House" by Margaret Huddy; "From the Torpedo Factory to the Mount Vernon Trail" by Christopher Erney; "Braddock's March - A Pilgrimage of Destiny" by author Thomas E. Crocker; "Striking Example - Local Slave Patrols and Slave Resistance" by Terry Buckalew; and Alexandria in Civil War Photographs, Slave Patrols, Portraiture by Matthew Harwood.

## **EFFICIENT, COMMUNITY-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT**

**Alexandria Budget for FY2011:** The members discussed the proposed City budget for FY2011, including the proposed staffing and hours reduction for the Museum and reduction in non-personnel budget. Members approved sending a letter to City Council recommending that funding for both be restored so the Museum would not lose Sunday hours (1:00 – 5:00 p.m.), that accounts for 20 – 25% of the Museum's visitation.

**Friends of Alexandria Archaeology:** As part of its exploration of fundraising options, AAC held a joint meeting with FOAA to discuss whether FOAA would support expanding its fundraising role with help from AAC. FOAA was willing to discuss the issue further.

**Alexandria Archaeological Commission Strategic Plan and Goals:** Last year the AAC refined its strategic plan by setting goals and actions items. It also changed its plan from a calendar year basis to a fiscal year basis in order to conform the goals to the period needed for the Annual Report. In 2010, Vince LaPointe organized a SWOT-style approach to the review and long-term planning, and the AAC set up subgroups to discuss and craft the elements of the SWOT, prior to a full AAC review.

**Alexandria Archaeological Commission Off-Site Meetings:** The Commission members met at Freedom House Museum in July 2009 for its annual walkabout; Barrett Library, where the Librarian gave the Commission a tour of special collections; Lloyd House for the AAC joint meeting with FOAA; City Hall; and Fort Ward in June 2010 for its annual walkabout.

**Virginia Joint Senate Resolution:** AAC member Seth Tinkham contacted State Senator Patsy Ticer's office which resulted in a resolution marking the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Alexandria municipal archaeological code, the first of its kind in the nation. The resolution was passed early this year.

#### IV. GOALS FOR FY 2011

The AAC currently is finalizing its strategic plan; however, at this time the following are some goals:

- Working with other City organizations or civic groups which are interested in historic preservation and the waterfront for greater co-ordination on issues concerning the waterfront, including planning for Civil War Sesquicentennial;
- Incorporating archaeological and historic resources into discussions and planning involving tourism and economic development;
- Improving archaeological staffing levels while better utilizing dynamic volunteer group and promoting cooperative efforts with the larger history community;
- Enhancing the presence of archaeology and history on the waterfront to increase resident and visitor awareness and improve visitor experience by improving the Archaeology Museum, offices and storage space; and
- Improving funding for the Alexandria Archaeology program.

## **V. RECRUITMENT, LEADERSHIP SELECTION, AND SUCCESSION**

The Commission recruits members by referral and the recommendation of sitting members, by advertisement on the City's website, and/or by other City organizations they will represent. In addition, the Commission seeks an active presence throughout the City, holding its scheduled meetings at widespread locations to allow the public to learn more of its activities and opportunities. Both Commissioners and staff attend historically-related events, presentations, tours, etc., at which they may promote AAC and also service on the Commission. Nominees are encouraged to attend commission meetings prior to formal application to City Council to help inform them of current issues, and the activities and makeup of the Commission. The AAC's brochure is distributed and appears on the OHA/Alexandria Archaeology website.

The Commission chooses its officers by simple majority vote from among nominees proposed at the October Commission meeting: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. A slate of officers is presented for this vote by the Slate Committee in September. Any additional names may be included from the members before the October vote. Individual members may not nominate themselves. Terms are not staggered. The leadership serves a one-year term, and an unexpected vacancy is filled for the remainder of the term. Leaders may serve again at the discretion of the Commission, but must be re-nominated in competition with other nominees and chosen again by simple majority.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair acts in its stead, both at AAC meetings and representing AAC at HARC and other meetings. The Vice-Chair has also headed strategic planning for the Commission, ensuring continuity and depth of understanding of goals and activities. Individual Commissioners also act in a leadership capacity, heading subcommittees or representing AAC at Council, or at the meetings of other City commissions and organizations. Service on these committees helps prepare Commissioners as future officers of the AAC.

## **VI. 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. at the Alexandria Archaeology Museum and, several times a year, 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 Ellen Hamilton, representing the Chamber of Commerce; James McCall, Member-at-Large; and Mary Jane Nugent, representing Friends of Alexandria Archaeology; and said goodbye to James Clark, Member-at-Large, and Dave Cavanaugh, Friends of Alexandria Archaeology representative. The following people served on the Commission during all or part of Fiscal Year 2010:

**MEMBERS AT LARGE:**

James Clark (Resigned December 2009)  
Ann Davin  
Lillie Finklea  
James McCall (Appointed January 12, 2010)  
Peter Petersen  
Edward (Ted) Pulliam

**PLANNING DISTRICT MEMBERS:**

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

**ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES:**

Alexandria Association: Tom Fulton  
Alexandria Historical Society: Georgia (Katy) Cannady  
Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage: S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair  
Chamber of Commerce: Ellen Hamilton (Appointed November 24, 2009)  
Friends of Alexandria Archaeology: Dave Cavanaugh (Resigned January 2010)  
Mary Jane Nugent (Appointed March 9, 2010)  
Historic Alexandria Foundation: Seth Tinkham