

Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2015

Members Present:

Vince LaPointe, Planning District I (Chair)
Elizabeth (Indy) McCall, Member at Large
(Vice Chair)
Kevin McCandlish, Alexandria Association
(Secretary)
Rebecca Siegel, Planning District II
Janice Magnuson, Planning District III
S. Kathleen Pepper, Society for the
Preservation of Black Heritage
Mary Jane Nugent, Friends of Alexandria
Archaeology
Ralph Rosenbaum, Member at Large

Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Member at Large
Mark Ludlow, Member at Large
Seth Tinkham, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Ellen Hamilton, Chamber of Commerce
Jacob Hoogland, Member at Large

Members Absent:

Georgia (Katy) Cannady, Alexandria Historical
Society

City Staff:

Fran Bromberg, City Archaeologist

The March 2015 Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC) meeting took place at the Alexandria Black History Museum. The formal meeting was preceded by a tour of the Museum and the Watson Reading Room. The AAC meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

The Minutes for the January 2015 and February 2015 meetings were reviewed and approved as amended.

Chair Report: AAC Chair Vince LaPointe is back from his time away is still catching up on missed items. He will provide an update on progress at the next meeting.

Budget: The results of the most recent stage of the budget process were released and on par with the AAC's expectations. Alexandria Archaeology was not awarded the requested \$35,000 for drainage at Fort Ward which was to be carried over from the previous year; however, the budget did provide for \$150,000 in Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Funds to be put towards the Fort Ward Interpretive Plan. The budget does not include money to refill the vacant Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) position at the Lyceum that will occur as a result of a retirement, and also does not fund the creation of a full-time position for the OHA part-time research historian. The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) has written a letter requesting a line item addition to the budget for additional funds to make the research historian a full-time position. Vince asked whether the AAC should also write a letter regarding the position, to which City Archaeologist Fran Bromberg agreed. AAC Vice Chair Indy McCall put forth a motion for the AAC to write a letter requesting the restoration of funds for an OHA research historian, which passed unanimously. The topic of funding for Sunday afternoon staff was also discussed, and it was mentioned that funds could be taken out of the seasonal staff budget.

The AAC also inquired about the status of \$75,000 in funds already approved for FY2015 for the purposes of museum improvements. Commission members expressed concern about the significant passage of time without money being dispersed. Fran mentioned that there is a significant budget processing time period and that the five to six design firms recommended by Alexandria Archaeology

would need pre-approval. She reassured the commission, however, that as long as the promised funds are encumbered by the end of May, they should remain readily attainable. Indy suggested that a letter still be written to the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) Director Nelsie L. Birch, specifically highlighting that this is the third year that such funds were promised. The motion passed.

Membership: AAC member Mary Jane Nugent's term expires in May. She has already sent in her reapplication and received an email from Alexandria City Clerk, Jackie Henderson, confirming receipt of the reapplication. AAC member Ellen Hamilton's term expires in November and she does not plan to reapply.

AAC Brochure: The topic of the AAC brochure was tabled until the April meeting.

Public Education Committee: The Public Education Committee has not yet met, and is working to find the best opportunity to do so.

Threatened Sites Committee: AAC Member Kathleen Pepper sent an email out to the committee about the next steps in the process of formulating a criteria for submissions. The AAC also discussed collaborations with other organizations on the project, namely the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF), the Alexandria Historical Society (AHS) and the Alexandria Association. It was suggested that a joint-committee of different local commissions and organizations could form to produce the annual Threatened Sites list and press release.

Cemetery Committee: Kathleen informed the Commission that she is still finalizing the fillable form, and may work with City staff on the last step. Fran indicated that OHA's IT Coordinator, Barbara Magid, will help to work on the project.

AAC Calendar: Next month the AAC will hold its annual joint meeting with the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) at the Archaeological Museum.

Waterfront: AAC member Ted Pulliam updated the AAC that Carr Hospitality is currently awaiting the results of a lawsuit before the Virginia Supreme Court. The AAC discussed the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC)'s plans for building a new clubhouse on the current site of the Beachcomber (which Ted confirmed the ODBC plans to tear down). He said that it will look similar to how it does now. Ted also informed the commission that the Robinson Terminal South designs will be going in front of the Planning Commission on April 7, with the Robinson Terminal North plans slated for review in early June. City staff have indicated that conditions to any special use permit will include the incorporation of history into open spaces of development.

Fran updated the AAC that City staff plan to meet with the Robinson Terminal South planners next week. Ted also confirmed that the old waterfront food court will become the site of Blackwell Hitch (a seafood restaurant based in Annapolis), which will open around June. At the Waterfront Commission meeting there was a presentation for the Department of Planning & Zoning on behalf of Olin Studios regarding plans for the City-owned Waterfront areas. The plan stage in question dealt with lighting and the materials that will be used to pave and develop the pathways, along with other furnishings and trash receptacles. There will be an effort to duplicate the appearance of the rest of Old Town, to include tree wells. Fran mentioned that she has a copy of the plan, and private development is expected to move more quickly than public development. Indy remarked that several of the projects only have general design elements in place, but not all of the specific details, begging the question of what elements of art

and history will ultimately be incorporated. On this topic, Indy mentioned a concern for fundraising to ensure that there is sufficient funding for history elements of the developments. Vince and Indy raised the suggestion that Al Cox be invited to a meeting to discuss the implementation of art and history components into the waterfront development, which was widely supported by the AAC. Discussions were also held regarding flood mitigation and the governance plan to be presented by City staff at the next Waterfront Commission meeting. AAC members Janice Magnuson and Seth Tinkham expressed concerns relating to flood barriers and the risks associated with the raising of historic buildings to add elevation and remove risk of flood damage.

Torpedo Factory Art Center Board: The AAC moved to formally appoint member Ralph Rosenbaum as the Commission's representative and liaison to the Torpedo Factory Art Center Board (TFACB), the motion for which passed unanimously. Ralph informed the AAC that the TFACB received \$25,000 for planning in the most recent budget, which may prove to be insufficient, but will provide a start. This has led the TFACB to consider various ways to raise money. Ralph also mentioned that there is an opening on the buildings and issues subcommittee, and they have requested an archaeologist. Fran expressed her enthusiasm that the TFACB is hoping to emphasize archaeological involvement.

Freedman's Cemetery: Fran informed the AAC that she is still working on getting a stone for the sidewalk interpretive marker. Kathleen mentioned that for the first dedication ceremony after the building demolition local schoolchildren designed and decorated paper bags (filled with sand and a lit candle) to represent each grave at Freedman's Cemetery; several of the luminaries are on display at the Alexandria Black History Museum.

District II: There is no update for District II.

Fort Ward: The upcoming City Council Work Session has been rescheduled for April 28 instead of the original March date. City staff is currently dealing with changes to drainage at the site. There was no response from Descendants groups regarding the offer and request to set up a meeting; if no further reply is issued, a public meeting will likely be set up to provide an update and address concerns. There is also support for setting up an advisory committee in relation to the implementation plan. The AAC discussed the submission of a letter to J. Lance Mallamo, Director of OHA, indicating the commission's support for the concept of an advisory meeting and desire to participate. A motion to this extent was proposed by Indy and passed by the AAC. Further discussion centered on other potential members and organizations of the advisory committee, with a general sentiment expressed that it shouldn't grow to be too large.

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC): Updates on behalf of HARC were discussed in an earlier segment of the meeting.

Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage: Kathleen updated the AAC that the latest meeting for the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage (The Society) got postponed. The Society recently wrote a proclamation that was signed by City Council regarding the anniversary of the emancipation of slaves in Alexandria (Emancipation Day was April 7, 1864, since the Emancipation Proclamation did not pertain to Union held territories). The alternative government of Virginia that maintained allegiance to the Union during the Civil War, known as the Wheeling Government of Virginia, was located in Alexandria. Char Bah will be hosting a lecture on the topic on Tuesday, April 7, at 7 p.m. The lecture will also function as a fundraiser to purchase a manumission document, a joint

venture between the Society and the Alexandria Black History Museum. An antiques dealer will be on hand to help with the proceedings.

Alexandria Historical Society: AAC member Katy Cannady was not present to provide an update.

Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA): FOAA will also be participating in Spring2Action on April 22 to raise money. More information about the initiative will be shared as it draws closer.

Chamber of Commerce: AAC member Ellen Hamilton informed the Commission that the Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Women's Leadership Forum event at the Little Theatre of Alexandria. There is also an event tonight for Non-Profit Organizations.

Alley Project: AAC member Seth Tinkham reported that the Alley group will be seeking a grant for an intern. The ultimate goal moving forward will be to build towards the National Register of Historic Places. The Alley Ad Hoc Working Group hopes to produce context statements, synthesize GIS data, and incorporate photographs of past and present day into one report. There is an additional hope that the report can be brought to the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference, which will take place in the fall in Washington, DC. There is a thought that the alley group could possibly put together a field session to bring attendees to the city of Alexandria. A discussion was also held about the involvement of Alexandria Archaeology staff, particularly in the supervision of any new interns. Vince extended an official note of gratitude to Seth for all the work he has done representing the AAC throughout the Alley way projects.

Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF): Indy has already provided the majority of the HAF update, with the exception of the ongoing status of the Strategic Plan and the upcoming grant application deadline.

Alexandria Association: AAC Member Kevin McCandlish updated the AAC that he attended the most recent meeting and provided an update on Archaeology, with particular emphasis on the upcoming Threatened Sites list. He said that he received a warm reception and an interest from the organization to be kept apprised of any new developments.

Staff Report: Fran mentioned that City staff has begun the hiring process with two interviews today, and they will be interviewing a total of six people. There is a hope that someone will be offered the job by the next meeting. Vince asked to extend an invitation to the new hire to attend the following AAC meeting to meet the commission.

Roundtable: The AAC concluded by discussing the Old Town Wharf area and its relevance in the next planning stages. The City Council also passed the Fort Ward Management Plan, though there are still some discussions as to who will be involved with the implementation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 15, at 7 p.m. at the Archaeology Museum, as a joint meeting with FOAA.