

# MINUTES

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

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**PRESENT:**

Melinda Barnes  
Michael Commisso  
Martha Harris  
Susan Hellman  
William Hendrickson

Vanessa Herndon  
Laura Lieberman  
Linda Lovell  
Ann Marie Maloney  
Elizabeth McCall  
Carolyn Meza  
McArthur Myers  
Gail Rothrock

Allen Schirmer  
Danny Smith  
Nancy Tingen  
Tobin Tracey  
Richard Webber  
Margaret Wood

**EXCUSED:** Elliot Bell-Krasner, Jolande Goldberg, Patricia Washington

**UNEXCUSED:** Anna Stillner

**CITY STAFF:** Al Cox, Historic Preservation Manager, Dept. of Planning & Zoning  
J. Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

**GUESTS:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hendrickson at 7:36pm

The minutes from the March meeting were approved with the following correction: The date was changed from the “16” to ‘15”. Michael Commisso’s status was changed from Excused to Present. Under Member Reports “and listening to testimony” was added to the sentence beginning “Elizabeth”

## **Report on Endangered Sites Presentation**

Elizabeth McCall noted that the original public call for endangered sites in Alexandria was 18 months ago. Seventeen sites were presented to the Alexandria Archaeological Commission. More than had been anticipated. When controversy ensued, AAC decided to have a presentation on the subject. The nominated sites were divided into “Built Environment & Objects”, “Scenic Easement”, “Civil War”, “Archaeology” and “Cemeteries”. AAC does not necessarily discuss fabric sites. Future plans are to catalog what we have and what is the process for protection. Al Cox reported that due to the length of time between nominations and presentations, some of the sites’ status has been settled. Linda Lovell was a presenter and felt the program went quite well. Lance Mallamo noted that citizens need to understand that this presentation was not part of the legal process. This concern was echoed by Susan Hellman, saying the presence on the nomination list does not give the site official historical status, Martha Harris said she felt the presentation was a safety valve for the public. Mike Commisso felt this was a platform to share concerns. Elizabeth thinks that the presenters will have unrealistic expectations; that AAC will need to clarify the definition of endangered site. A video of the presentations will be posted on the OHA website in the future.

Chairman Hendricks inquired about the funding of artifacts, noting that most of the waterfront redevelopment is not funded particularly the art and history aspects. Some money in the OHA budget has been directed toward the hiring of an individual with expertise in fundraising. This will be presented to the public and HARC in the future.

## **Ramsey Homes**

Al Cox reported that at a meeting of ARHA and the City there had been a frank discussion of possible options and alternatives. Boyd Sipe is in consultation with the consulting archaeology firm, Thunderbird. The Council has directed ARHA to attempt to preserve some of the homes. An additional public meeting will be held with HARC, BAR and HPRC present as consulting parties. Gail Rothrock said the Sandusky lawsuit will file a motion for nonsuit which allows them to reconsider the suit in six months.

## **Joe Reeder House**

Susan Hellman reported that the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority has presented Joe Reeder with a down payment for his property at 517 Prince Street, believed to be the oldest structure in Alexandria. Mr. Reeder has hired Ronald Bierce, a historic preservation consultant, to prepare a Historic Structures Report (HSR) for the house. Mr. Reeder will have a life tenancy in the house, as NVPRA has no immediate future plans for the property. The consultant hired by Mr. Reeder would like to see the house used for architectural education. The purchase is contingent on the City of Alexandria renewing the lease on the Cameron Run waterpark. The City is amenable to renewing the lease, although not for as long as 40 years. NVPRA accepts that. If the City renews the lease, NVPRA will settle on the house in May 2016.

## **OHA Budget – SWOT ANALYSIS**

Lance Mallamo distributed the analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats before OHA. He requested the commission to review the various issues and note what could be added/deleted/etc. Various members noted that many of concerns were budget related; such as, staff deficits, recruitment difficulties and insufficient maintenance funding. Martha Harris asked about the state of current volunteers and the difficulty of obtaining them. Lance answered that volunteers are mainly retired seniors but they are supplemented by younger hired- and volunteer-interns. Lance noted that the City budget process has been redesigned and involves multiple departments working together in Focus Area Teams. OHA is designated as part of the Livable, Green and Prospering City team, which includes transportation, planning and economic partners. Elizabeth moved that a letter from HARC be sent to the City Manager supporting the initiative for a fulltime historian and a standing \$50,000 emergency funding. McArthur Myers seconded this motion which was approved unanimously. The discussion of the budget and the SWOT analysis will continue at next month's meeting.

## **Ad Hoc Committee on Confederate Names and Memorials**

Elizabeth McCall, HARC's representative to the Committee, reported that the meetings have been very tumultuous. There is no mechanism to make a decision. City Council did not provide the committee with a set of instructions, thus in her opinion, the process is flawed.

## **Member Reports**

**Alexandria Historical Society** The recent lecture on Woodward and Lothrop was the most popular of the year showing that lectures on recent history can also draw crowds. The next meeting will be the Annual History Awards with City Archaeologist Ben Skolnik as the main speaker. His talk will feature the recent discoveries. Dennis also requested nominations for the AHS board. The election is in June.

**Carlyle House** Holding their annual plant and herb sale on April 23.

**Athenaeum** Will hold a market place on April 23. The new director, Katherine Finnegan will start on June 6.

**ARHC** Mike reported on the status of the alley survey.

**GWBC** Working with the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to hold a GW run on September 11.

**Lee-Fendall** Spring2Action funds will be dedicated to the chimney fund. Also contributing to the chimney fund will be "Raise a Glass, Raise the Chimney" fund raiser on May 21.

Martha Harris noted that she had spent three days in Richmond with the National Historic Trust gaining knowledge in tax credits and a range of instruments used for protection of historic sites.

**OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

- Nothing new to report

**NEXT MEETING**

- The next meeting will be on May 17, 2016 at 7:30pm at Lloyd House.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Lovell, member of HARC  
J. Lance Mallamo, Director, OHA