

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

PRESENT:

Elliot Bell-Krasner
Melinda Barnes
Martha Harris
William Hendrickson

Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell
Elizabeth McCall
John Dumsick

Danny Smith
Nancy Tingen
Stephen Damm
Keith Moore

EXCUSED: Commisso, Meyers, Rothrock

UNEXCUSED: Goldberg, Hellman, Tracey, Weber, Wood, Soule

CITY STAFF: J. Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:44 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW HARC MEMBER

The Chairman introduced new HARC member, Lawson Moore. Mr. Moore represents Christ Church. He has lived in Old Town Alexandria for over 20 years; he practices law, specializing in planning/zoning and is interested in historical preservation.

The Chairman informed the group that Mr. Damm represents planning district three and Mr. Soule, who was just appointed to represent planning district one is moving overseas; therefore, there will be another vacancy for a citizen to represent planning district one.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2016 MINUTES

The group reviewed the December 20, 2016 HARC minutes and suggested some minor changes. Indy McCall made a motion to approve the December 20, 2016 minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Danny Smith and the motion was unanimously approved.

OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN UPDATE

City staffer, Catherine Miliaras, briefed members on the Old Town North Small Area Plan. This plan began 18 months ago and should be completed by summer 2017. The plan contains several categories such as open space, recreation and cultural activities; economic development; transportation and land use; historic preservation. The historic preservation chapter of the plan provides recommendations for the city. It acknowledges the significance of Washington Street and reaffirms the 1929 agreement the city has with the National Parks Service. The interpretive guide of the plan makes use of a new concept/approach consisting of being more accessible and user friendly and contains a catalogue for various interpretation strategies that included street/blocks, site elements (African and Native Americans, agriculture, industry, military, urbanization of the 1920s to the 1960's, and transportation); themes (thematic maps); narratives, etc. The City welcomes feedback on the proposed old town north small area plan. Mrs. Miliaras opened the floor to questions.

Question by Linda Lovell: There is a lot of signage along the Mount Vernon trail. Do the signs belong to the National Park Service?

Answer: Yes, the signs belong to the National Parks Service and they have also been attending the community meetings related to the small area plan.

Questions by Elliot Bell-Krasner: What approach is the city taking to ensure that these types of plans contain proper historical interpretation and does the city have recommendations on how city appointed commissions should work with the city to ensure that preservation actually takes place?

Answer: Detailed plans are created by both city staff and third party consultants and are approved by the city council so that they can serve as guidelines for developers to incorporate into their projects. The HARC retreat is a good environment to discuss city recommendations for its boards and commissions.

Question by Mr. Hendrickson: Will a future discussion about priorities take place?

Answer: Once the plan is approved, there will be a discussion on how to actually implement the plan.

Indy McCall raised concern about the Small Area Plan because it is not integrated into the waterfront plan and it allows for developers to have a lot of discretion on their sites and could result in the developer choosing the least burdensome and cheapest option for their project.

Question by John Dumsick: What makes up the other seven chapters of the plan?

Answer: You can view all seven chapters of the plan by going to the city website and reviewing the plan.

Question by Martha Harris: How will specific proposals in the North Old Town Small Area Plan be implemented? Who would decide if a building should be preserved and other proposed measures to add regulatory power to preservation?

Answer: To be determined.

Linda Lovell stated that the city needs to be transparent with the environmental study of the grounds of the old power plant that is proposed to be redeveloped. This site should be thoroughly tested for heavy metals.

HARC RETREAT

The HARC retreat was discussed. The retreat was initially set for February 28, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; however, a new date is needed because it will be difficult for city staff to attend the retreat because the city council has a meeting scheduled on the 28th. New retreat dates could be March 4th or March 11th. Timeframe for the meeting will be 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Possible locations for the retreat include the Presbyterian Meeting House, Christ Church, American Legion or Lloyd House.

The Chairman informed the group that he talked with several HARC members about the programming of the retreat. He summarized an email written by Mrs. Rothrock who suggested the retreat focus on reviewing the mission and purposes of HARC, along with a summary or list of its accomplishments in the last 5 years. She also suggested that the panel discussions be made into a “workshop/forum/conference” and be opened up to the city’s preservation audience. The Chairman opened the floor for a discussion.

Linda Lovell suggested that members should re-evaluate HARC’s mission and discuss topics such as resources and volunteers.

Laura Lieberman suggested that the retreat should focus more on HARC’s mission and action items for 2017.

Indy McCall suggested that the retreat should focus on re-evaluating HARC’s mission statement. She also urged the members who represent various associations to talk to the leadership of their associations and see what action items that they would like to see HARC take in 2017.

Danny Smith suggested that HARC have a full day retreat; the first half of the retreat would be member discussions about HARC’s mission and action items for 2017 and the second half of the retreat be city staff presentations.

RAMSEY HOMES UPDATE/SECTION 106 PROCESS

The status of the Ramsey Homes and the section 106 process was discussed. The Chairman informed members that the consulting parties received a letter from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources regarding the Ramsey Homes 106 process. The Chairman read excerpts of the letter to the membership. The complete letter will be emailed to all members. There is another mitigation meeting tentatively set for February 15, 2017. The Chairman will let members know when that meeting happens.

REEDER HOUSE UPDATE

The group was given an update on the status of the Reeder House. Currently, the city has a contract to purchase the Reeder House. OHA is waiting to see if they get the grant that they applied for. OHA will find out if they are awarded the grant by February 9, 2017. If OHA doesn’t receive the grant, they will be short \$250,000.00 for purchasing the house.

OHA UPDATES

The city has asked for a five percent budget reduction. OHA will not be affected by this cut

because they are able to make up much of the reduction easily due to a few staff retirements and replacing the positions at a lower grade and step, as well as minor fee increases. The former curator for Gadsby's Tavern, Liz Williams, was recently promoted to the Director of Gadsby's Museum.

New historical markers/kiosks have been installed along King St. street corners.

MEMBER REPORTS

The floor was opened to member announcement/concerns.

Carlyle House has a new curator and they are in the process of updating the hospital exhibit in time for the second season of Mercy Street. A book signing event will take place on February 11, 2017.

The Apothecary Museum has a new exhibit on diseases that were prevalent in Alexandria during the Civil War.

Lee-Fendall House will hold a tour on February 4, 2017. The tour will be about the enslaved people who lived on the property.

Elliot Bell-Krasner informed the group that he will have guests (students from GW) attend our next meeting.

Bill Hendrickson said he would like to get someone to speak at an upcoming meeting to give us an update on the status of the Torpedo Factory.

NEXT MEETING

The next HARC meeting will be held at Lloyd House on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 7:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

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