

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 16, 2018

PRESENT:

Alan Chodos
Shawn Eyer
Jolande Goldberg
Martha Harris
Kelly Spradley-Kurowski
Laura Lieberman

Elizabeth McCall
Maddy McCoy
Keith Moore
Severiano Ortiz
Gail Rothrock

Monica St. Dennis
Danny Smith
Stephen Stuart
Nancy Tingen
Tobin Tracey

EXCUSED:

John Dumsick
Bill Hendrickson
Linda Lovell

ABSENT:

Melinda Barnes
Stephen Damm
Krystyn Moon

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA
Al Cox, BAR
Craig Fifer, Director of Communications and Public Information
Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Indy McCall at 7:05 p.m. at Lloyd House.

Approval of Minutes for September 18, 2018 Meeting

On a motion by, Stephen Stuart seconded by Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, HARC voted to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2018 meeting.

Meeting Schedule for November

On a motion by, Alan Chodos seconded by Keith Moore, HARC voted to move the November HARC meeting from November 20th to November 13th.
Absences will be excused.

Follow Up on 619 South Lee Street and State Agencies, Letters, etc.

Sara Taylor, new Director of Legislative Affairs will mediate a discussion between OHA and State Offices. Will attempt to develop a procedure in which Alexandria City is notified about future actions of the Department of Historic Resources.

Tobin Tracey explained the letter he drafted to the Department of Historic Resources regarding the open-space easement on 619 South Lee Street. He requested the commission to reconsider the proposed construction on the property. Current plans are to tear down approximately 422 sq. ft. of structure and add 3,174 sq. ft. which is 750% greater than the footprint of the structures removed. The Lee Street side of the property will be most affected. The deed clearly states no new buildings are to be constructed. Under the Open-Space Land Act, an open-space easement requires an equivalent amount of open-space be allotted to the proposed development in the vicinity. Tobin stated that this case sets a precedent for future open-space easements therefore, it is necessary for HARC to weigh in on this issue.

The Historic Alexandria Foundation sent their letter on this issued to DHR on October 1st. Copies of the draft letter were made for review. HARC reviewed and voted on its approval later in the meeting.

Combined Sewer Outfall Project – RiverRENEW.com

Kelly Spradley-Kurowski attended the Old Town Civic Association Meeting, in which RiverRENEW identified the proposed alternative routes for the tunnel. The Section 106 Process requires alternative options:

Option 1: Potomac River. 62 structures would be affected, 4 of which are historic properties

Option 2: Lee Street and Greene Street. Dramatic difference. 606 structures would be affected, 84 of which are historic properties.

Option 3: Union Street. No numbers available.

Both RiverRENEW and OTCA agreed that Option 1 would be ideal. The tunnel will be approximately 12 ft. in diameter and 100-120 ft. underground. HARC members agree they should support a site that will create the least amount of impact to historic structures.

On a motion by, Maddy McCoy seconded by Shawn Eyer, HARC voted to write a letter to RiverRENEW in support of the Option 1 route, underneath the Potomac River.

Elizabeth McCall will write the letter.

Interim Park Naming Process and Input

Invited: Craig Fifer (Director of Communications and Public Information) and Jack Browand (Division Chief Parks and Recreation)

Craig Fifer presented on the Interim Park Naming Process (Power Point available at www.alexandriava.gov/news_display.aspx?id=106160)

The new park will include:

Former Boat Club

King Street Park

Former Boat Club Parking Lot

Waterfront Park

This public space at the foot of King Street was first referred to as “Fitzgerald Square” in 2012. The history plan for the waterfront including this park was adopted by City Council after public input, but there was no focus on names for the park. No formal or binding name selections.

City staff and the public used “Fitzgerald Square” as a placeholder name until 2018. City staff began using “King Street Park at the Waterfront” as a placeholder name for the interim park until March 2018. The new interim park has never been officially named or renamed.

The Naming Committee’s guidelines already provide for the possibility of naming features within the parks. This provides the potential to accommodate community interest in people that should be honored, but not necessarily with park name(s). Keeping in mind that this public space will be an interim park, temporary features should not be named since the structures may be demolished within several years.

The Waterfront Small Area Plan (2012) referred to “Fitzgerald Square” and “Waterfront Park” as separate entities but, didn’t provide a clear recommendation that they should exist as separate parks. The areas are relatively small and immediately adjacent spaces with no natural borders between them. A decision must be made whether to name a single park or separate parks.

There is an online survey (available now) which asks for public input regarding:

1. Whether the public space should be named as one single park or two separate parks.
2. Name suggestions for the [separate | single] park.

Proposed Schedule:

September 27: Naming Committee adopts schedule and public input process.

September 28: Emails to HARC, Alexandria Archaeological Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, and Waterfront Commission requesting updated name recommendations by November 16.

October 9: News release soliciting public input on park name, with link to an online survey and information about public hearing.

November 15: Public hearing.

November 16: Online survey closes.

November 23: Staff report on public input.

Early December: Naming Committee meeting to make recommendation to City Council.

December 11 or January 8: City Council legislative meeting.

December 15 or January 12: City Council public hearing and adoption of new name.

Spring: Dedication ceremony.

Open discussion:

HARC should give their recommendations but note if discussions/votes were formal or informal. Also, specify whether statements are made by the commission or by co-chairs on behalf of the commission

“Fitzgerald Park” has not been ruled out.

Martha Harris reminded HARC of the letter she drafted to the Naming Committee suggesting the name, Alexandria Historic Gateway Park.

Maddy McCall conducted research on all the enslaved individuals owned by John Fitzgerald which she sent to Mark Jinks. The letter was distributed amongst HARC members as well.

Indy McCall and Danny Smith proposed organizing a committee to discuss the park name and offer suggestions to the Naming Committee.

On a motion by, Kelly Spradley-Kurowski seconded by Maddy McCoy, HARC voted to schedule a meeting before November 13th to discuss a name for the interim park at the foot of King Street.

Elizabeth McCall will organize the meeting via email and circulate a link to the Waterfront History Plan.

There is a possibility to coordinate with the Archaeology Commission and the Waterfront Commission.

On a motion by, Severiano Ortiz seconded by, Jolande Goldberg, HARC voted for the naming of a single park.

Returned to 619 South Lee Street

HARC members reviewed Tobin Tracey's draft letter to the Department of Historic Resources. Jolande Goldberg commented on the second to last paragraph; change to "will set a dangerous precedent...."

On a motion by Gail Rothrock, seconded by Elizabeth McCall, HARC voted to approve the letter to the Department of Historic Resources.

Advocacy with New Council and Outreach to City Organizations

New council members will be invited to the HARC Holiday Party. Possibility of a welcoming happy hour for new council and committee members. HARC needs to improve interactions with other organizations in the city; should begin attending/networking at events.

Keith Moore suggested collecting the dates of other commission meetings and creating a calendar to circulate. Laura Lieberman suggested distributing the HARC orientation packet she has been working on. Sara Taylor, Director of Legislative Affairs is currently working on a staff briefing for the new council which will include an orientation to OHA.

Waterfront

Park at the foot of King Street – Input process

Should be finished by the end of November.

Trails update

Tested the northern portion of the trail. Will meet 9 a.m. on October 25th at the foot of King Street to test the southern portion of the trail. Will be informal; a way to gauge how Storymap functions as a technical tool.

Metro Closing Update

Visit Alexandria and the task force assigned to the closing of Metro Summer 19' has determined this is a bigger issue than expected; Alexandria City will lose tourism. The team has begun looking at mitigation ideas and will announce a strategy this winter; publicity on the alternatives Spring 19'.

Standing Sub-Committee Reports

OHA and Planning Support

Laura Lieberman expects the HARC orientation packet to be complete by early November.

Advocacy and Preservation

Martha Harris began the discussion.

The Subcommittee reviewed the combined BAR proposal and decided to wait until the staff report is released before taking a position.

Tobin Tracey raised the point that if the BARs are combined, official language from the Code of Federal Regulations should be included: “All commission members must have a demonstrated interest, competence or knowledge in historic preservation.” Also, the subcommittee recommends a seven-member commission, with at least three members that meet the Secretary’s professional qualification standards.

Martha Harris brought up Freedom House Museum. The MOU ends November 30th. Will wait until the Urban League makes their decision before further discussion.

Finance

Continuing the development of a non-government foundation to financially support historic preservation in Alexandria City. Danny Smith has discussed mechanisms with Patricia Washington

Educational Outreach

Jolande Goldberg requested more members join the Educational Outreach Subcommittee.

Holiday Party

The Holiday Party is scheduled for December 18th. Elizabeth McCall will send out an invitation to new members of council, Mark Jinks, Emily Baker, etc. Stephen Stuart volunteered to organize the party.

OHA Report

Gretchen Bulova presented the OHA report:

Portside:

Godspeed weekend visit went great.

8000 visitors total.

3000 people toured the ship including 750 school kids.

Portside History Programming will resume in the spring once the park is complete.

Will continue portside history program.

Archaeology is giving specialty walking tours which will end at Hotel Indigo with a special cocktail. Space is limited, 20 people per tour.

Freedom House:

MOU will need to be renegotiated in November.

\$25K has been received from the planning grant.

Currently working on a preservation plan.

Will be participating in a special workshop with the National Trust.

- FY20 Budget has started.
- Fort Ward Interpretive Plan – will have an open house in November.
- 2019 special documentary screening will take place October 17th at The Lyceum, 7:00 p.m. One-hour documentary about the 2019 Commemoration, 400th anniversary of the House of Burgess, importation of slaves, women, and Thanksgiving.
- Cider Festival will be held at Lloyd House on November 17th.
- WWI Commemoration at the American Legion Post 24. November 11th at 9:30 a.m. There will be a ceremony and plaque unveiling for the white and black soldiers killed in action during WWI.
- Black History Museum’s Dollhouse Exhibit is extended through the beginning of the new year.

Combined BARs Proposal – Update

Al Cox presented:

November 17 – Planning Commission Hearing

Currently, BARs Old and Historic Alexandria District is drafting a staff report.

Al Cox is currently in correspondence with MacArthur Meyers regarding the issue of gentrification in the Parker Gray District. Based on Census Bureau data the Parker Gray District was 96% African American in 1980 and dramatically decreased to 14% currently. Out of the 14%, 50% of African Americans live in public housing. Due to redlining, African Americans and other minorities left the Parker Gray District for better opportunities.

Is the Office of Historic Alexandria responsible for cultural preservation?

Al Cox stated that from a cultural preservation perspective, a combined BAR versus two separate BARs is not relevant to the issue of gentrification.

The Old and Historic Board has taken on more African American sites than the Parker Gray District.

The recommended composition for a new combined BAR:

Two members from Parker Gray District

Two members from Old and Historic District

Other three positions at large.

Commissioner Updates

Nancy Tingen from the Alexandria Association announced The Athenaeum received a \$10K grant to repair its west side façade.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Apasrin Suvanasai, OHA Staff to the Commission