

Minutes of Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group

June 22, 2010 Meeting

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (“Group”) convened at the Fort Ward Museum at its announced meeting time of 7:00 p.m. Members and City Management and Staff present included:

Tom Fulton
Charles Ziegler
William Schreiner
Frances Terrell
Richard Brune
Ripley Forbes
Robert Mohr
Laura Durham (Parks and Recreation)
Susan Cumbey (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Wally Owen (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Pam Cressey (Office of Historic Alexandria)

The agenda circulated by Chairman Fulton was approved. The minutes of the prior meeting were also approved, with one correction.

Old Business

Chairman Fulton stressed that one-half of the Group’s work had been completed, and heard reports from the various subcommittees drafting up their sections of the final report. In response to the consensus of the Group, he agreed to circulate a “draft issues template” document to serve as a basis for each subcommittee’s section.

Laura Durham reported that City staff was to meet with the members of the Oakland Baptist Church on June 28 to discuss the trees in and around the Oakland Baptist cemetery.

Chairman Fulton reported that a discussion of the Parks and Recreation Department’s portion of the City’s Roadmap for Change project had not yet been scheduled.

New Business

Pam Cressey reported that the Office of Historic Alexandria has received funding for up to 8 signs in the park, and would be moving ahead to plan the location and text of the signs. A robust discussion ensued regarding the role of the signage, location of the signage, and the overall context of interpretation in the Park. By consensus, the Group: 1) commended Historic Alexandria for receiving the grant for the signs; 2) requested further information from OHA on its plans for the signs; 3) asked OHA to hold a joint meeting with the Group to solicit comment on the signage project.

Pam Cressey also reported that a contract to perform archaeology in the Park was expected to be signed shortly. Chairman Fulton encouraged public discussion of the archaeology project so that

Park users, families of ancestors buried in the Park, and others could be informed about the work. Ms. Cressey responded that the nature of this archaeological project – which could disturb graves – needed to be handled with care, and proposed that public awareness be increased when finds are located. Ms. Terrell agreed.

A vigorous discussion ensued. The consensus of the Group was that given the potential sensitivity of the issues surrounding the archaeological sites that may contain human remains, the Group asked the City to act as it deemed best, but asked the City to minimize, if possible, surprises to the surrounding community and stakeholders.

The Group agreed to meet on July 27 and August 24. Chairman Fulton reminded members that, in his view, applicable law required that meetings of three or more members of the Group be considered public meetings.

Mr. Eugster commented on the current working draft of the historic resource inventory being prepared by OHA. A discussion ensued.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

The next regular meetings of the Group will be on July 27, 2010 and August 24, 2010, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Schreiner, Secretary