

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 4, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

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**ISSUE:** Receipt of the 2007-2008 Annual Report from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council receive the report of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission and thank the Commission for their efforts on behalf of the City.

**DISCUSSION:** The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission has prepared a report detailing the activities of the Commission from July 2007 through May 2008. During this period, the Commission held nine meetings at several sites that focused on different aspects of history and preservation in Alexandria and worked with City agencies and private organizations on successful projects. Additionally, the Commission continued its regular responsibilities in providing a forum for history institutions, improving communication among the history community, promoting history and our historic sites, and advising City Council. Most importantly, the Commission welcomed the new Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria, Lance Mallamo, and thanked Jim Mackay for his service as Acting Director for a year and a half.

1. **Preservation Conference Follow-Up.** The collaborate group that planned the Alexandria Historic Preservation Conference wrote an Historic Preservation Action Plan that was presented by HARC to City Council in October 2007. The plan contains a guiding principle, five major goals and supporting objectives. This year's conference, organized by the Office of Historic Alexandria, has offered a series of lectures and workshops for citizens.
2. **Maintenance and Care of Historic Properties.** The quarterly meetings on maintenance, attended by HARC representatives, Vice Mayor Pepper, staff from the City Manager's Office and General Services, foster communication and collaboration in caring for our historic sites.
3. **Historic Gala.** After being asked to take over the annual Decorative Arts Forum, HARC decided to combine this event with a Gala to raise funds to support the public and private

museums in the City. The weekend of September 26-27, 2008, has been chosen for this exciting collaborative event.

4. **Policy and Other Activities.** HARC commented on several issues confronting the City, and members have served on committees and attended many City conferences. In addition, HARC has suggested naming an alley for a fallen police officer, Sergeant Elton Hummer, and has accepted the invitation to assume the lead of the Alexandria Sesquicentennial Civil War Committee.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENT:** Historic Alexandria Resources Commission Annual Report, 2007-2008

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

**HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2007-2008**

Patrick H. Butler III  
Vice-Chair  
June 2, 2008

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC), chaired by Ellen Stanton, continued many of the activities initiated in earlier years, while adding new activities to its annual program. Continuity remains important to the Commission as it works to develop the historic resources and programs essential to the character of Alexandria. While much of the focus is on the Old and Historic District, the Commission continues to seek ways to expand and support activities across the entire city.

The Commission began its year by welcoming the new Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA), Lance Mallamo, at its September meeting. Mr. Mallamo continues and expands on the tradition of staff leadership and support for historic preservation in Alexandria through his work with HARC and all the different City projects and programs. At the same time, HARC recognized the important work of Jim Mackay, who served as Acting Director of OHA for a year and a half.

Historic Preservation Conference Follow-Up

In May 2007, HARC began a new and distinctive educational initiative with a day-and-a-half conference on historic preservation in Alexandria. The conference took a different form in its second year as a series of “how to” workshops and lectures organized by the Office of Historic Alexandria dealing with specific elements in historic preservation. Three lectures, in succeeding weeks in May, accompanied by two hands-on workshops, focused on key aspects of preservation for Alexandrians.

At the October 23, 2007, meeting of City Council, the Mayor and Council received from HARC the Historic Preservation Conference Action Plan. The plan consists of five major goals with the guiding principle “to enhance, maintain and promote Alexandria’s unique and significant historic resources – utilizing the advances and improvements in preservation tool and practices – and to support sustainable heritage tourism for the economic benefit of the community.” Each of the goals is supported by specific objectives. The plan was endorsed by the Alexandria Archaeological Commission and the Historic Alexandria Foundation and was the result of a collaborative effort by representatives of Alexandria’s historic community. City Council asked that the Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria and the Director of Planning and Zoning respond to the goals and objectives outlined in the Five-Year Action Plan.

At the same time, HARC continued to explore issues raised during the 2007 conference, including a survey of available funding sources for historic properties and sites across the City. The survey demonstrates the need to expand the non-profit funding base for our community's historic resources.

### Historic Gala

In an effort to improve private sector support for the public and private museums in the City, HARC with the support of the Mayor and Council developed plans for a fund-raising gala to be held September 26-27, 2008. At the same time, the Alexandria Association sought to turn over its Decorative Arts Forum, normally held in the fall, to HARC. After a review of the opportunity, HARC decided to take on the Forum, combining it with the Gala to create a weekend devoted to support for historic preservation while at the same time creating a resource to be used to provide continuing financial support for the museums and preservation activities within the city. The Forum and Gala will be held at the George Washington Masonic Memorial and the Torpedo Factory Arts Factory.

### Maintenance of City-Owned Historic Sites

HARC continues to meet on a quarterly basis with Vice Mayor Del Pepper, the Director of General Services, and a representative of the City Manager's Office on issues related to the maintenance of our historic sites. An Historic Properties Activity Report is generated for this meeting, outlining the design and construction phases of various projects. This has been a highly successful collaborative effort that has resulted in greatly improved maintenance standards.

### Planning Activities

Members of HARC also served on and became involved in a variety of City commissions and task forces focusing on planning issues around the city, including the Braddock Road Small Area Redevelopment Plan, the Washington Street Guidelines, the Hunting Creek Area Plan, Jones Point, the Infill Task Force, and the Eco-City Summit. In addition, members participated in the Economic Sustainability Summit and supported the emphasis on the place of history in Alexandria as a key element in the City's economic future.

### Historic Alleys

The group received a proposal from Mr. Paul Wilson to support a task force to review the nature of historic alleys in the city. While HARC determined that this needed review from the Department of Planning and Zoning, the idea of further support for the care and use of the alleys is one valued by HARC.

In her recent book on the history of the Alexandria Police Department, Amy Bertsch, former Police spokeswoman and current Office of Historic Alexandria Public Information Specialist, told the story of Sergeant Elton Hummer, the only Alexandria policeman whose murder on duty, 80 years ago, remains unsolved. Ms. Bertsch determined that the alley where Hummer was shot, around the corner from his own residence, is unnamed. The Police Department confirmed precedent for naming streets to

honor fallen officers. Chief Baker supports the effort to honor Sgt. Hummer by naming the alley in his honor. HARC voted to support the naming of the alley north of Duke Street between Alfred and Columbus for Sgt. Hummer.

### Other Activities

As a collaborative commission, members of HARC reported on the activities of different local museums, galleries, associations and neighborhoods, sharing news of the many activities planned by these agencies. Guest speakers, including Farroll Hamer, Director of Planning and Zoning, attended HARC meetings.

The Commission, along with the Alexandria Archaeological Commission and the Public Records Advisory Commission, voted to support space in the former Print Shop area for use by OHA for vitally needed collection and record storage.

HARC also continued to promote its 400<sup>th</sup> Virginia Anniversary publication, "Discover Historic Alexandria." Sales of this children's activity book continue to go well, and funds from the publication will support future efforts of this type.

HARC also supported the City's plans to place the Parker-Gray Historic District on the Virginia and National Historic Registers. At the same time, it supported the program of re-accreditation facing Gadsby's Tavern, Fort Ward, and The Lyceum.

HARC agreed to accept the invitation to assume the lead of the Alexandria Sesquicentennial Committee, with Lance Mallamo acting as the City's liaison, in commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil War on state and national levels.

In summary, HARC continues to play an active role in promoting the care and use of our historic sites and in advising the City in the preservation of historic sites and buildings, artifacts, and records.

**Revised 06-02-2008**