

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: AUGUST 28, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF THE 2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

ISSUE: Receipt of the annual report (2006-2007) 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 2006 through June 2007. During this period, the Commission held 10 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.

1. **Maintenance and Care of Historic Properties.** Members of HARC testified at the City's budget hearings. After HARC proposed a task force for the purpose of developing a maintenance plan, the City Manager suggested that a committee of HARC members be formed to meet quarterly with the City Manager and General Services to review the maintenance of City-owned properties and develop private/public partnerships in support of the historic structures. Two meetings have taken place to date.
2. **Preservation Education.** Members of HARC worked with City staff from OHA and Planning & Zoning, the Historic Alexandria Foundation, and other community groups to plan and hold the Historic Alexandria Preservation Conference and Town Meeting in May 2007. Over 200 people participated in this event.

3. **Jamestown Activities.** HARC suggested and endorsed events in Alexandria honoring the 400th Commemoration of the founding of Jamestown. As a special project, HARC created and published a children's activity book titled "Discover Historic Alexandria."
4. **Policy Activities.** HARC commented on several issues confronting the City and provided leadership in writing a document detailing a preservation perspective on the waterfront planning.

ATTACHMENT: HARC Annual Report

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

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2006-2007

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) during the 2006-2007 year focused both on continuing to support programs serving to educate citizens on the nature of the historic resources within the community while also supporting the programs developed by the Office of Historic Alexandria, and by other public and private non-profit historical organizations within the city. At its regular monthly meetings, HARC worked to support communication between the different historical agencies within the community while reviewing and supporting public policy in these areas. As in the past, HARC built on existing programs to expand its services to the community while adding new activities and reviewing and commenting on public policy.

During the year, HARC moved its meeting locations among several historic sites to provide its members the opportunity to review new and continuing programs at the sites. The sites that HARC visited in the past year included Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, the Old Dominion Boat Club, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, and Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site. Regular meetings also took place at Lloyd House and The Lyceum. These meetings helped the members understand the issues facing the different sites, as well as the many accomplishments achieved by staff and volunteers.

HARC focused its programmatic activities on the continuation of support for the care and maintenance of historic properties and on the expansion of its program of citizen

education on the needs and opportunities of historic preservation in Alexandria. Both these projects had been initiated in the 2004-2005 year through discussions, followed by public conferences and programs in the 2005-2006 year. HARC also continued to develop programs in support of the Jamestown 400th anniversary celebration.

Care of Historic Properties: Following a series of meetings in the 2005-2006 year, the activity changed focus from public meetings to private meetings between members of HARC and city officials. Representatives of HARC testified at the City's budget hearings concerning funding for the care of historic properties. This led to the creation of a committee of HARC members that works closely with the City Manager to review the needs of the City's historic properties and help to develop programs to expand City support for the care of those properties, as well as encourage private/volunteer efforts. This is a continuing program that has led to increased support from the City Council for the properties in the budget.

Preservation Education: In the spring of 2006, Mayor Riley of Charleston spoke to community leaders about the strategies for supporting historic preservation activities in his city. In 2007, HARC worked with the City's Department of Planning and Zoning, the Historic Alexandria Foundation, the Office of Historic Alexandria, and representatives of other groups involved in historic preservation in the city to develop a conference focusing on those needs. Held May 4-5, 2007, with a variety of speakers and sessions, the Historic Preservation Conference & Town Meeting reached 218 participants who discussed the present state of preservation and the role of historic preservation in the future of planning

and development of Alexandria. Follow-up programs and conferences are being explored. A full report on the conferences is being submitted by the planning committee.

Jamestown Activities: In addition to endorsing events, including the Historic Preservation Conference, as activities appropriate for the Jamestown calendar, HARC developed a children's activity book entitled "Discover Historic Alexandria" as a significant addition to the educational materials available to the public concerning the history of Alexandria. The book, combining the histories of the major historic sites in the community with games, drawing, learning activities and a walking tour, is an important new guide for children and their families to Alexandria. Completed during the winter, it is on sale to the public in gift shops and museum stores around the city. HARC also supported the visit to Alexandria by the *Godspeed* in June of 2006.

Policy Activities: HARC, as a leader in coordinating preservation efforts across the city, has worked with other groups to represent the historic community's reaction to a variety of issues confronting the City. The activities of HARC in support of or in opposition to different activities marked an effort to include the historic preservation perspective in issues facing the community. These include the following issues:

- 1.) Gunston Hall Apartments: HARC supported efforts to preserve the apartment complex.
- 2.) Jones Point Park: HARC monitored activities associated with the redevelopment of Jones Point Park, participating in the planning discussions and supporting the efforts to maintain the historic character of the area.
- 3.) Hunting Creek Plan: Developments at the southern gateway to the city led to public meetings on the issue, with participation of members of HARC. David Murphy, representing the National Park Service, spoke at a HARC meeting

regarding the plan. Subsequently, HARC wrote a letter to City Council expressing concerns about the proposed development.

- 4.) Alexandria Waterfront: HARC, along with the Alexandria Archaeological Commission, Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, and the Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance, developed a "Preservation Perspective on the Waterfront" that was shared with City Council, City departments, and groups throughout the city to advocate for the importance of making preservation central in all future planning for the waterfront.
- 5.) Washington Street Guidelines: Again, HARC participated in the discussions of the Washington Street guidelines to insist on inclusion of the historical perspective.

Throughout the year, representatives of HARC have remained involved in the discussion of policy issues facing the City, while also continuing to provide leadership in projects including the maintenance of historic City properties, the education of the community about historic preservation, and the Jamestown celebration.