

VIRGINIA BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

June 2, 2021, 5:00 pm

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Approved, September 1, 2021

Present:

Officers: Chair, James Wood; First Vice-Chair, Sharon Prescott; Secretary, Bobbie Gribble; Immediate Past Chair Bill Gambrell

Members: Finley Brakke, Sharon Felton, Harriet Frenzel, Albert Henley, Richard Klobuchar, Hannah Levi, Ian Lichacz, Becky Livas, Christi Lyons, Timothy Oksman, Katie Paulson

City Council: Rosemary Wilson

Staff: Mark Reed

Presenters: Debra McClane, Kristin Kirchen, Edna Hendrix, Joanne Lucas

Purpose The purpose of the Commission is to advise the City Council and the Department of Community Development and Museums on all issues related to the preservation of historic buildings, structures, and sites located in the City of Virginia Beach

Mission The mission of the Commission shall be to preserve, protect and maintain the historic identity of Virginia Beach and the former Princess Anne County through a program of advocacy and increased public awareness and involvement

The meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m. by the chair, Jimmy Wood. The Historic Preservation Commission's Purpose and Mission were read by Mr. Wood.

Mr. Wood asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting and provide any additions or corrections. Tim Oksman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Christi Lyons seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

Presentation L&J Gardens National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Nomination presented by Debra McClane Kristin Kirchen, Edna Hendrix and Joanne Lucas

Mark Reed introduced the project team for the L & J Gardens NRHP nomination. He noted that the firm of Debra McClane, Architectural Historian, was awarded the project contract and Ms. McClane has assembled a great team to do the work. In addition to Ms. McClane, there is Kristin Kirchen, an architectural historian, Edna Hawkins-Hendrix, an African American historian, and Dr. Joanne Lucas, an African American historian.

Debra McClane said that fieldwork has started. She said there are about 125 properties that were developed by an African American landowner, built and designed by black architects and black builders, and intended for African American residents. She said the history of this neighborhood sets it apart. Ms. McClane noted that the community planning and architecture makes this neighborhood eligible, plus its association with ethnic history, community planning and the role of residents in the social history of the local area.

Ms. McClane said that they have started the two main areas that are the basis for the nomination. These are architectural survey, which they were working on today, and research. She said that they have brought on Edna Hawkins Hendrix and Dr. Joanne Lucas to assist with the research because of the work they have done on the history of African American communities in Virginia Beach, some of which was funded by HPC grants.

She noted that they have met with the L & J Gardens civic league and selection committee. They have also talked with several residents. She said the neighborhood is in a period of transition and now has many white families living in the community. The residents are very proud of their neighborhood, and its history. Ms. McClane said they are excited to tell their story. She said they plan to use summertime for interviews and research and will be writing the nomination this fall. They expect to have a draft for Mark Reed's review by the end of the year. She said their target date for state review is the June 2022 meeting.

Edna Hendrix said that they are excited to be working on the project. It allows them to dig deeper into the history of the neighborhood beyond what they did in their original research on African American communities. She noted that L & J is different from many of those communities in that it was for upper class African Americans.

Ms. McClane opened up the floor for questions from Commission members. Mr. Reed noted that Becky Livas grew up and lived in this community. Edna Hendrix said she has talked with Ms. Livas and can't wait to talk with her even more. Ms. Hendrix said that Ms. Livas' father was her high school science teacher.

Ms. McClane discussed some of the unique characteristics of L & J Gardens in the local, statewide and national contexts. She said in many ways, L & J seems to have been different from most, if not all of them for how it developed. There is more research to do, but it certainly should be significant at the state level and may even rise to significance on the national level.

Rick Klobuchar asked if being on the historic register would add value to the properties. Rosemary Wilson said she did not think it does. Mr. Reed advised that there doesn't appear to have significant added value to properties by having the Historic Register designation. Mrs. Wilson said that this will be a point of pride for the community.

Debra McClane noted that a National Trust study found that the impact is generally positive relative to values, but mostly it is a point of pride. She said there is only one home listed for sale at this time. People who live here want to stay here. The civic league is very active and enforces the community covenants.

Mr. Reed noted that Dr. Joanne Lucas has joined the call. Joanne Lucas has been doing the interviews in the community. She said they make contact with the homeowners, follow up with information and get consent for interviews. The interviews are audio recorded and a transcript is sent back to the interviewee where they can request deletions or changes. It is a lengthy process. This also provides an oral history of the community and residents will also submit photos.

Mr. Wood thanked the panel of presenters and said that the entire commission is excited about this project and looks forward to seeing the report and seeing L& J getting on the register. Tim Oksman noted that this is an extraordinary community. He asked for Mr. Reed to come up with a strategy to increase public awareness for this community. Mr. Reed said he will work on that. He said they are planning to have a sign erected at the entrance of the communities that are on the National Register. Mrs. Wilson said we should bring this before City Council to recognize the community once it gets listed on the Register. Ms. McClane noted that L & J Gardens is included in the new brochure for the African American Tour in Virginia Beach.

Offshore Wind Project

Mark Reed reported on the Coastal Offshore Wind Project. He had a meeting on the project with representatives from Dominion Energy. He is working on setting up a meeting for the commission's executive committee with Dominion. He said they are in the early stages of doing their environmental work. It is currently expected to have transmission lines come ashore at Camp Pendleton and cross Virginia Beach to a transmission station near Fentress Airfield. The transmission line will initially run underground through Camp Pendleton until near NAS Oceana, where it will transition to be above ground.

Mr. Reed said that Camp Pendleton is a National Register of Historic Places historic district and it has been noted that there will be some adverse effect. He is not sure what the adverse effect is. He said we will have a chance to be a consulting party when the Section 106 information comes to us. He noted that the final route has not yet been determined as it goes to its western termination point. He said that there is a cultural resource management firm under contract to look at potential impacts on historic resources and they have accessed all of the surveys and information on the Commission's web page. Mr. Reed sent additional information to them to help them know locations of historic resources, including cemeteries. He said they are during their due diligence in advance of this project for potential impacts on historic resources.

Committee Reports

Cape Henry Historic Site

Mark Reed provided a report for the Cape Henry Historic Site committee in the absence of the committee chair. He said the Cape Henry Lighthouse reopened on May 7 after the COVID shutdown. He then noted that the train station renovations are nearing completion and they should be getting an update on that from the Fort Story contact at the committee's June meeting. Mr. Reed said that our immediate interest is in having some exhibits in the building on the history of Cape Henry. He said the committee will meet on June 7.

Historic Preservation Month

Sharon Prescott reported on Historic Preservation Month. She noted that we weren't able to hold Happy Hour events for Prints for Preservation, but we were able to sell glasses to raise funds for the Lighthouse. She said they included a history quiz that Christi Lyons had put together with each glass sale. Ms. Prescott noted that 100 glasses were sold, and an \$888 donation will be made to Preservation Virginia. She thanked everyone that assisted with celebrating Historic Preservation Month.

Student Leaders Committee

Hannah Levi reported for the Student Leaders Committee. She said the Military History Scavenger Hunt was held May 21 through 24. She noted that 50 students registered for the scavenger hunt and three people completed it. They will be receiving their prizes shortly. Ms. Levi said the committee will have their final meeting next week.

Underrepresented Communities

Sharon Felton reported for the Underrepresented Communities committee. She said their initial meeting will be on June 3. She said she is looking forward to getting started. Sharon thanked the Commission for its courageous insight for opening a pathway for studying and recognizing our underrepresented communities. We want to tell the stories of these communities and create conversations within our communities and lead to cultural awareness.

Project Updates

Mark Reed provided several project updates.

Historic Preservation Strategic Plan

Mr. Reed noted that the online Public Input survey had about 1200 people participate. Mr. Reed then showed some slides breaking down the survey results. He said there will be a public meeting planned for the end of month. He said he was surprised that over 50% of people responded that the southern part of VB is their favorite place to visit in the city. He noted that 68% of the respondents said that historic resources are important for tourism in the city. The two highest priorities for preservation planning turned out to be older buildings, and meeting place and place of cultural significance at 75% and 46% respectively. Several others were in the 30% range.

Mr. Reed said that to him, the responses to the survey shows we need to do more work to raise awareness about the types of historic resources we have and how unique they are. Turning to archaeology, the survey results showed that respondents think we should focus on Native American sites and those threatened by sea level rise. Mark noted that the preservation program has not done a lot of archaeology projects, yet.

The biggest threats to historic resources according to the survey is development pressures with 83% of the respondents selecting that. Funding constraints were identified as the second greatest threat.

Mr. Reed showed a slide on the question of how well the preservation program serves underrepresented communities. He noted that the majority of the respondents were not sure. He said this shows we need to get the word out about the Commission's work with underrepresented communities.

Becky Livas asked if we have any demographic data from the survey. Mr. Reed said he was told that very few people provided that info when they took the survey. He said the consultant had not shared those details with him. Mr. Reed noted that one question asked the respondents to name three underrepresented communities that are significant, and a lot of people did not interpret underrepresented communities as racial, ethnic or gender minorities. A lot of them put geographic locations. He said many answered Pungo, Creeds or Kempsville.

He said that people did pin their geographic location and there seemed to be good citywide participation. Mr. Reed said most people that responded had lived in Virginia Beach for quite a while. He said 64% had lived here more than 25 years.

(See Appendix 1 for the Survey slides that were shown during the meeting.)

Historic District Design Standards and Review Guidelines

Mr. Reed said the consultants have shortened this to Design Guidelines. He said the first draft of the document was delivered this week. Mr. Reed noted he will be distributing it to the steering committee and the Historical Review Board for comments. Mr. Wood asked him to send it out to the Commission, too. Mr. Reed said he will send a link to everyone due to the large file size. He said they are planning to have a property owner/public meeting the week of June 21st. It will be a virtual meeting.

Mr. Reed said that they are considering doing the public meeting for the Strategic Plan in person. He asked the Commission for their thoughts on having the Strategic Plan meeting in person or virtual.

Rick Klobuchar said he preferred in person if we can find a venue to support facilitation of communication so you can hear what people are saying. Becky Livas brought up the timing at the end of June and asked if the fall would be a better option. Mr. Reed noted that the main issue we face is the grant deadline for the project, which is August 30.

Sharon Prescott asked if the results of the online survey would be shown at the public meeting. Mr. Reed said a draft of the plan should be available for review prior to this meeting. Mr. Wood said he values the in-person meetings, but he noted that we have had more people participating with the online meetings. Mr. Reed said we had about 90 or 95 people registered for the first public meeting for the Strategic Plan and about 50 attended. Some people said they were unable to connect to the meeting. He said doing online gives more opportunities for people to participate. In-person gives a better quality of participation and more opportunity for small group dynamics, follow up, etc. Quality vs. quantity is the dilemma, and we have to be able to meet the grant deadlines. Ms. Livas asked if we could do break out groups using Web Ex like Zoom has. Mr. Reed said he would need to check with the City's technology staff on that. He said he will work with the consultant and the state to set up the meeting.

National Register Nominations

Mr. Reed reported on the National Register of Historic Places nominations. He said he thought the Commission had been fully updated on L & J Gardens with the earlier nomination. He noted that the contractor for the Seatack nomination, Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG), had met with the civic league's executive board about a month ago. They are scheduled to meet with the whole civic league June 14th and will start the survey work in July. Mr. Reed noted that CPG has been doing a lot of work on figuring out the boundaries for the district.

PIF projects

Mr. Reed reported on several Preliminary Information Form (PIF) projects that are under contract or in the process of being contracted. He said he had mentioned last meeting that the City has contracted with Debra McClane to do PIFs to determine eligibility for listing on the National Register. He said they have had a kickoff meeting for the Chesapeake Beach Historic District and Newsome Farm Cemetery projects so they are underway.

He said that holding the research grants until FY22 freed up some funds so additional PIF projects will be initiated. He said they will be undertaking a PIF for Pleasant Ridge School, a historically African American one-room school. He said we also are doing a couple of follow ups to the Resort Motels Multiple Property Documentation (MPD). These will be good learning projects on the value of the MPD and reduction of costs for the subsequent nominations. He said we are contracting for the Cutty Sark Motel and Blue Marlin Inn and Suites PIFs.

Mr. Reed said the Woodhurst Neighborhood Historic District PIF has been submitted to DHR. We are waiting to see whether this will be on the June agenda or the September one.

Historic Properties Glimpse

Mr. Reed provided a report on items coming up for the Historical Review Board in June. He noted that he had discussed the proposed Royal Farms project for the Nimmo Church District with the Commission in May. He said it did go to the Historical Review Board on May 19. The application was deferred for design changes. There needs to be some changes to signs and building design. Al Henley said that he has received many calls in opposition to this development. Traffic is a major concern. Mr. Reed noted that there were two members of the public that spoke at the Review Board meeting in opposition to it. He noted that the Review Board reviews the design characteristics and not the use. The use is up to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Building 2 Renovations - Courthouse District

Mr. Reed said interior renovations to Building 2 are underway and they are not subject to review by the Review Board. He said the exterior changes are mostly to the entrances. The east entrance is being enhanced and will become the main entrance. The north entrance will also be changed to be a staff entrance. The south entrance will be modified also to be a staff only entrance. The west side will have a slightly enhanced entrance. The west side will also have a new entrance at the basement level for bringing in detainees and there is a new structure proposed that will provide a covering for that area. He said he is still waiting for more details on the proposed changes. Mr. Reed said his only concern is whether these changes will negatively impact the potential for the building to become a contributing resource in the National Register Historic District. He said it is geographically within the district but is a non-contributing resource because it was built in 1979. He said he needs to send a request to DHR to see if they think there will be any negative effect on the potential for it becoming a contributing resource in the district.

Biggby Coffee - Courthouse District

The old PNC bank building on Princess Anne Road is proposed to be converted into a Biggby Coffee shop. Mostly they are changing signs and adding a drive thru menu board.

McDonald's Princess Anne - Courthouse District

The McDonald's just down the road from the PNC Bank building will be doing general upgrades with new roof, patio railings, light fixtures and most repairs are replacing in kind.

Old Business/New Business

Mark Reed noted that the Virginia Beach History Museums will be holding a public meeting for their interpretive plan. It will be on Monday, June 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

Jimmy Wood noted that this is Finnley and Hannah's last meeting with the Historic Preservation Commission. He thanked them for their service to the Commission and the City. He noted that this year was unusual worldwide, but especially for the Commission. He apologized for them not being able to get the full experience with things like the

annual trip to Richmond and many of the other usual activities. Mr. Wood said they both have been great ambassadors for Cox and for Tallwood as well as the Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Virginia Beach. He thanked them for the history quiz and the scavenger hunt and leadership with the student leaders committee.

Hannah Levi said she is going to Lehigh University and she said she really enjoyed serving on the Commission. Finnley said she is going to Miami University of Ohio. She said it has been a really great experience and opportunity. They have enjoyed working with the Commission and the Student Leaders.

Rosemary said she has listed the Carraway House for sale. It is a remarkable property built in 1734. It currently has commercial use as a real estate office. If any Commission member wants to view it, just call Rosemary.

Mr. Klobuchar said there is a flyer for the June 14th meeting on the history museums interpretive plan. He will send it to Mr. Reed.

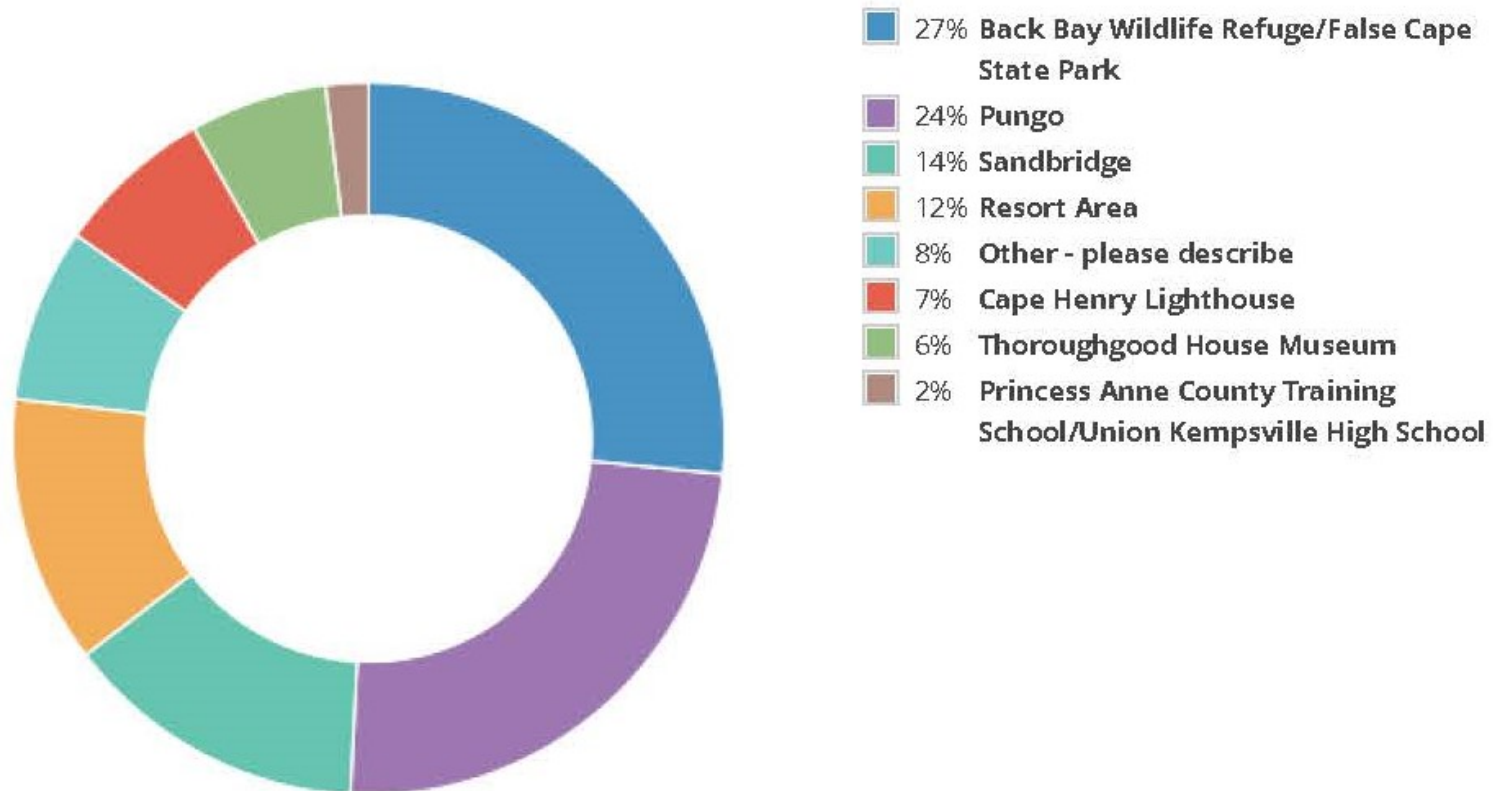
Mr. Wood said the next meeting of the Commission will be on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. He said this is the summer break for the Commission, but committees and the executive committee will continue to meet. Mr. Wood wished everyone a nice and pleasant summer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Appendix 1

Online Survey

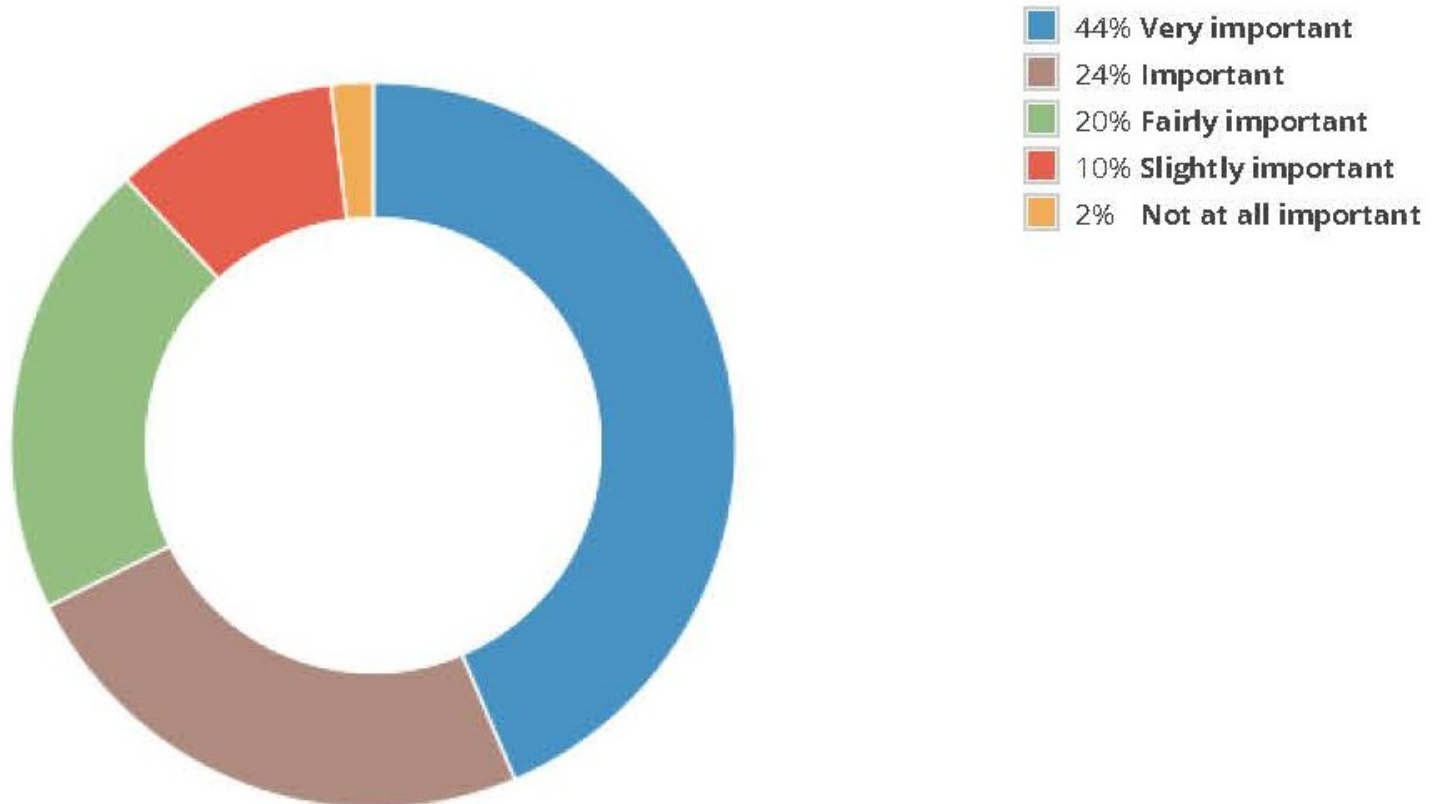
Which of the following is your favorite place to visit in Virginia Beach?



978 respondents

Online Survey

How important are historic resources for Virginia Beach tourism?



956 respondents

Online Survey

Which of the following should be considered priorities in preservation planning? Please select up to 3 and rank them in order of importance.

75%	A building constructed by the 1800s	Rank: 1.51	630 ✓
46%	Meeting place or site of cultural significance	Rank: 1.97	391 ✓
29%	Historically African-American neighborhood	Rank: 2.02	247 ✓
33%	Rural agricultural landscape and outbuildings	Rank: 2.09	279 ✓
34%	Pre-World War II beach cottages	Rank: 2.15	290 ✓
31%	Cemeteries	Rank: 2.19	263 ✓
19%	Rural crossroads community	Rank: 2.27	162 ✓
7%	Mid-century modern hotel	Rank: 2.41	63 ✓
4%	Post-World War II suburban neighborhood	Rank: 2.44	36 ✓

845 Respondents

Online Survey

Which archaeological sites should be considered a priority for assessment and investigation? Please select up to 3 and rank them by order of importance.

72%	Prehistoric/Native American sites	Rank: 1.51	590 ✓
55%	Sites threatened by sea-level-rise and recurrent flooding	Rank: 1.81	448 ✓
32%	Sites of historic events such as battlefields	Rank: 2.05	263 ✓
27%	Sites located in the City's Historic and Cultural Districts	Rank: 2.16	223 ✓
47%	Sites with historic architectural resources that have had limited or no previous assessment	Rank: 2.25	381 ✓
36%	Sites where architectural resources have been lost or are in ruin	Rank: 2.32	295 ✓
10%	Sites of significance on state or Federally- owned property	Rank: 2.37	78 ✓

815 Respondents

Online Survey

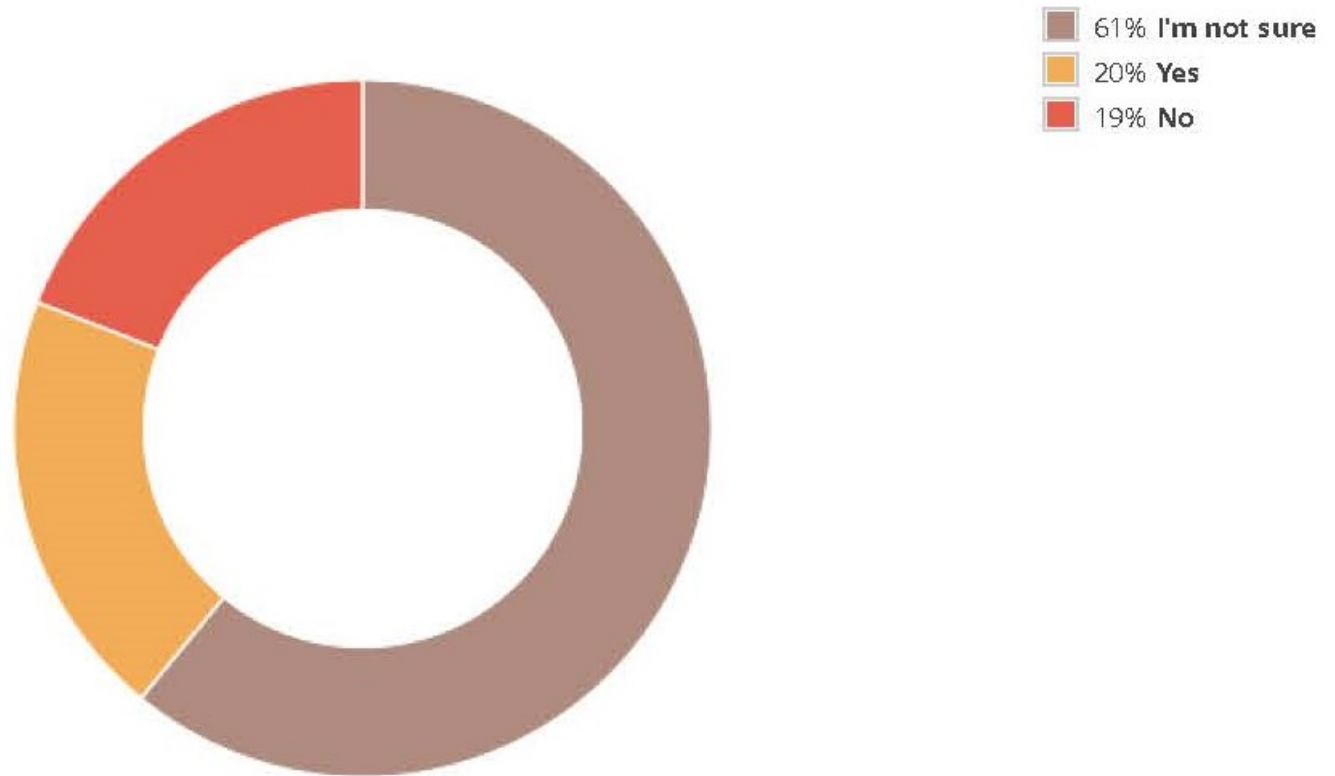
What is the greatest threat to historic resources in VB? Please select up to 3 and rank from highest to lowest risk.

83%	Development or Redevelopment Pressures	Rank: 1.52	645 ✓
39%	Sea-level-rise/Recurrent Flooding	Rank: 1.95	301 ✓
51%	Funding Constraints	Rank: 2.06	396 ✓
40%	Land Value vs. Building Value Ratio	Rank: 2.17	315 ✓
13%	Natural Disasters	Rank: 2.23	100 ✓
42%	Demolition by Neglect	Rank: 2.28	328 ✓
16%	Lack of readily available information or resources for homeowners	Rank: 2.41	121 ✓

778 Respondents

Online Survey

Do the City's current preservation programs serve underrepresented communities (racial, ethnic, and gender minorities, for example)?



827 respondents

Online Survey

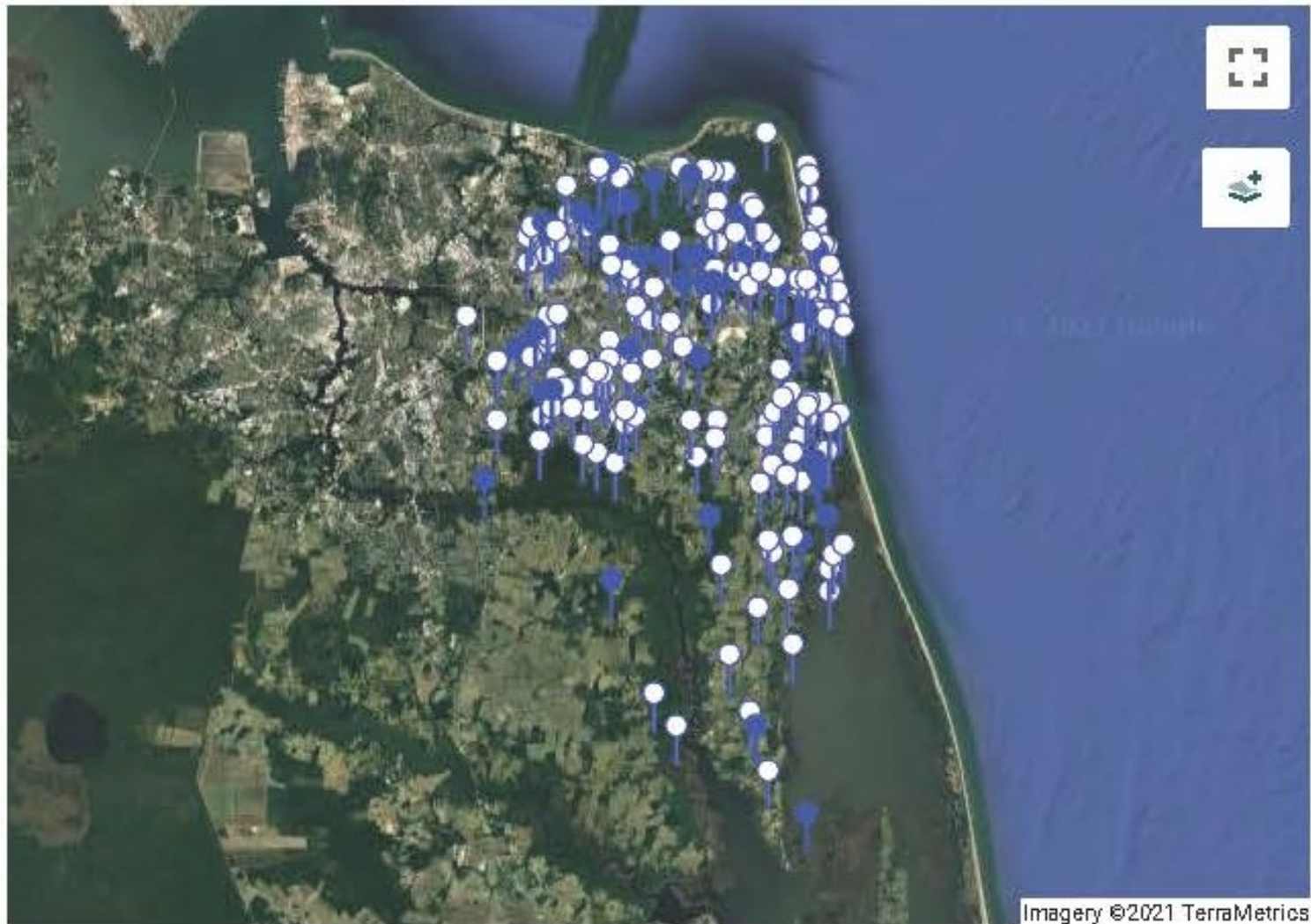
How do you learn about historic preservation programs in Virginia Beach? Please select your top 3 sources.

54%	Social media	359 ✓
47%	Word of mouth	310 ✓
45%	Local newspaper articles	298 ✓
33%	Local TV News	217 ✓
26%	Virginia Beach City Website	169 ✓
8%	Non-profit marketing campaigns	51 ✓
7%	Email subscriptions to newsletters	49 ✓
7%	Other (explain)	49 ✓
7%	Local Radio Station	47 ✓

660 Respondents

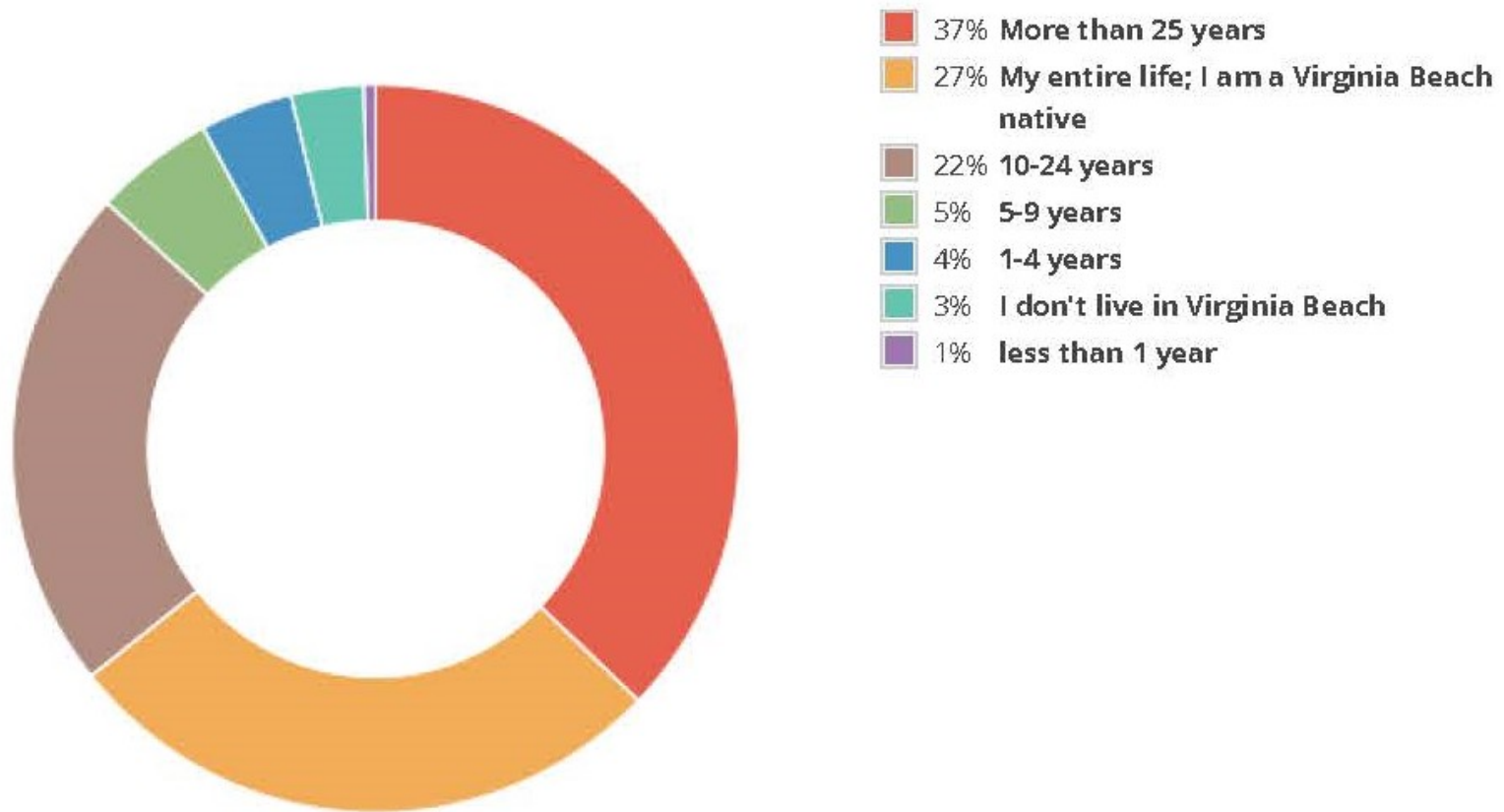
Online Survey

In which neighborhood do you live? Please drop a pin to show the location.



Online Survey

How long have you lived in Virginia Beach?



559 respondents