

VIRGINIA BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Planning and Community Development Conference Room, 2875 Sabre Street, Suite 500

June 1, 2022, 5:00 p.m.

Approved September 7, 2022

Present

Officers: Chair, James Wood; First Vice-Chair, Sharon Prescott; Second Vice-Chair, Christi Lyons; Secretary, Bobbie Gribble, Immediate Past Chair, Mac Rawls

Members: Glenn Carwell, Campbell Clay, Derek DuBay, Sharon Felton, Natalie Hubbard, Richard Klobuchar, Ian Lichacz, Becky Livas, Lee Lockamy

Staff: Mark Reed, Elizabeth Nowak

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

Purpose The purpose of the Commission is to advise the City Council and the Department of Planning and 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.

Welcome/Introductions/Remarks

Chair Jimmy Wood began the meeting at 5:10 p.m. He welcomed everyone and noted that there are two presentations scheduled and said he wanted to get right to them.

Mark Reed introduced the first presentation. He noted that we have Debra McClane and her team to tell us about their project to prepare a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the L & J Gardens neighborhood. He briefly introduced Edna Hendrix, Dr. Joanne Lucas, and Kristin Kirchen. Mr. Reed then turned the floor over to Ms. McClane.

Presentation – L & J Gardens Historic District NRHP Nomination

Ms. McClane stated that L & J Gardens is a mid-20th century neighborhood that was designed and developed by Blacks for professional Black families. At the time there were very few housing options for upwardly mobile Blacks. Originally platted in 1946, the first buildings were constructed in the mid-1950s. Walter Riddick had the vision for the neighborhood and convinced several others, including his sister, to partner in the development. The neighborhood is named after his parents, Lizzie and John. L & J Gardens is located in the northwest portion of the city, fronting on Northampton Boulevard and Wesleyan Drive. It consists of approximately 75 to 76 acres and 123 properties.

Ms. McClane said the impetus for the nomination was in 2018 when the historic architectural survey update of the northern half of the city was done. It was determined that L & J Gardens should be further documented, and it could be potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP. Ms. McClane said that in 2020 the City of Virginia Beach received an Underrepresented Communities grant from the National Park Service (NPS) to partially fund this nomination and one for Seatack.

Ms. McClane said that she and Kristen Kirchen did the survey work to document each of the properties in the neighborhood. It involved creating an architectural description, researching background information, taking photographs, and drawing a description of the site for each resource. These were put together on the required state forms and submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). Ms. McClane said that through this process they determined if a property was a contributing resource for the district or a non-contributing resource. She said 80% of the resources in L & J Gardens are contributing. The non-contributing buildings were built outside the period of significance.

Ms. McClane said every team member did some level of background research. The sources for research included city land records and plat maps. She said they looked at newspapers for articles about residents and the neighborhood. Ms. McClane noted that they received great guidance from NPS regarding framing the historic context and statement of significance. She said NPS has published a framework for identifying sites significant for civil rights and just recently published a study on racial discrimination in housing. She said her team also looked at post-war African American neighborhoods in other states to get a feel for similarities and differences between L & J Gardens and other neighborhoods.

Ms. McClane said that Ms. Hendrix and Dr. Lucas did 20 interviews of people who lived through this history. She said it added an immediacy and a depth to the narrative and illuminated the economic and societal conditions to give a better understanding of the impact of what this development meant at the time. The interviews were transcribed and given back to the interviewees for approval.

Ms. McClane stated that L & J Gardens is eligible for listing in the NRHP under both Criterion A and Criterion C. Criterion A is for buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Criterion C is for those that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Ms. McClane said the areas of significance for L & J Gardens are Architecture, Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage (Black), and Social History (Civil Rights). The period of significance is 1946 to 1969. She said the historic district is significant at the state level.

Ms. McClane said there were covenants for the neighborhood that restricted land use. Only residential housing could be constructed, no commercial, and there was language that addressed the minimum value of houses, required all brick construction, and specified no rentals. Originally it was required that one of homeowners have a college degree. Ms. McClane said that although it does not appear to have been a universal requirement, it does appear that it was a gauge for the type of person Mr. Riddick wanted to develop the property for.

Originally, many of the houses were designed by an African American developer and builder from Portsmouth, Herolin DeLoatch. There were 4 main models designed by DeLoach. There were 3 ranch houses that were characterized by an integrated and attached garage, a chimney, and on the back was a shed roof screened in porch. The 4th model was a split level design.

Ms. McClane described the next steps for moving the nomination forward. She said that on June 16 the nomination will go to the joint meeting of the State Review Board and Board of Historic Resources. If approved, it will immediately be listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register. Then it would be forwarded to NPS for review and listing in the National Register of Historic Places, which would likely be in late August or early September. She said all property owners in the district will be notified by letter after the federal listing.

The Commission then viewed a short video on L & J Gardens that was produced by Dr. Lucas.

Jimmy Wood thanked Ms. McClane and her team for their great work on the L & J Gardens nomination and for the presentation.

Mac Rawls noted that Dr. Roy Woods lived in L & J Gardens and was the first Black member of the Virginia Beach School Board. He said that information on Dr. Woods should be included. Ms. McClane said she would make sure that was done.

Mr. Reed then introduced Kristin Kirchen for her presentation on the National Register nomination for the Crest Kitchenette Motel, which is called the Cutty Sark Motel & Efficiencies currently. He noted that this nomination is going forward under the Oceanfront Resort Motels and Hotels MPD that was approved by NPS in May of 2021.

Presentation – Crest Kitchenette (Cutty Sark) Motel NRHP Nomination

Ms. Kirchen said she has completed the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Crest Kitchenette Motel and, as Mr. Reed noted, it is going in under a multiple property document. This offers prestige and recognition. She said she had worked on the MPD, and the Preliminary Information Form (PIF). She noted that the nomination is going forward under the Crest Kitchenette name because that is what it was called during its period of significance.

Ms. Kirchen said that the property is located at 37th Street and Atlantic Avenue in the northern end of the thematic area. She noted the registration requirements under the MPD are:

- Constructed along the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort Area between 1955 and 1970
- Eligible under National Register Criterion A and/or C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture

- Intended to provide overnight accommodations for tourists
- Retention of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and association

The Period of Significance for the property is 1963 to 1970. It was designed in 1963 by William Burton Alderman for Mr. & Mrs. William T. Winner as the Crest Kitchenette Motel. The Winner's purchased the property in 1963. Alderman was hired to design the hotel and it was completed in a 6 month period and opened in 1963. The kitchenette feature made the motel popular for short term rentals in the off season and the units were built with central heat.

The property was sold in 1973 as Mr. Winner desired to return to the construction industry. By 1974 the name was changed to the Cutty Sark and was again put up for sale. It was bought in 1977 by Melvin and Jimmie Koch. Mrs. Koch ran the front desk, she had been the first manager of the Wind Jammer Motel at the oceanfront, and her husband did the maintenance. They had one maid. Mr. Koch has passed away. Mrs. Koch still runs the hotel.

Ms. Kirchen said the Crest Kitchenette exhibits remarkable integrity. It is an excellent example of small motels at this time. It retains its original footprint and size and scale, including the exterior stair, corridor, etc. It has extensive use of concrete in the construction, including the exposed concrete beams in each room. There are the original 13 guest units plus one owner unit. The interior is intact with spacious rooms and an attached bath. Each room has the original kitchenette units manufactured by Dwyer Kitchens.

Ms. Kirchen said the inclusion of kitchenettes is an example of investors getting into motels to consider rental throughout the year. She said it is remarkable that so much is original, to include light fixtures.

Ms. Kirchen said the next steps are the review by City of Virginia Beach and Department of Historic Resources staff. Once that is completed, it will go to the DHR Board meeting scheduled for September 15, 2022. Once approved it will be submitted to NPS for final listing.

Jimmy Wood thanked Ms. Kirchen for her presentation and for her work on preparing the nomination.

Approval of May 4, 2022 Minutes

Jimmy Wood asked the members present to review the minutes of the May 4 meeting and to provide any recommended changes or corrections. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented by Rick Klobuchar. The motion was seconded by Glenn Carwell. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

Historic Preservation Month Recap

Sharon Prescott provided a recap of the recent Historic Preservation Month activities.

Ms. Prescott said that the Pints for Preservation initiative was very successful. It included Virginia Beach History Trivia Nights at each of the partner breweries. These were well attended. Ms. Prescott acknowledged Christi Lyons amazing job of creating 90 questions and answers for

the trivia. Ms. Prescott said that at each event there were two rounds of 15 questions each. She said the great thing was at the end of each round, people really wanted to know the answers. The Commission gave out great prizes for the trivia night participants.

Ms. Prescott said that the sale of the commemorative glassware went very well during Trivia Night events. A total of \$840 was collected by Preservation Virginia for the sale of 89 of the 2022 glasses and 23 of the 2021 glasses. An additional \$240 was collected in donations.

Giveaways were the pint glass koozies with the 2022 Historic Preservation Month/Pints for Preservation logo and personalized for each brewery. Ms. Prescott expressed special thanks to Commission members who donated so Gift Certificates could be purchased. There were also great donations of prizes by local community businesses. The breweries all said the prizes for our trivia nights were excellent and much more than their normal trivia nights.

Ms. Prescott said the events were so successful that there were people who followed the Trivia Night events from brewery to brewery. The breweries all said there were more people in their establishments on those nights than was the norm for that night of the week.

Committee Reports

Cape Henry Historic Site

Mac Rawls provided a report for the Cape Henry Historic Site committee. He said that the committee has a meeting coming up on June 6 at 10:00 a.m. He said the CEO of Preservation Virginia is scheduled to remote in for the meeting. She is expected to thank us for the work on the TAP Grant and Pints for Preservation.

Student Leaders Committee

Campbell Clay and Natalie Hubbard reported for the Student Leaders Committee. Ms. Hubbard said that the Scavenger Hunt went well. She said 58 students registered and 8 completed it. The first prize winner won a 30-minute plane ride in a vintage airplane from the Military Aviation Museum.

She said their next meeting will be held on June 8.

Threatened Buildings and Sites

Mac Rawls reported for the Threatened Buildings and Sites committee. He said they will be doing site visits in the southern part of the city on Friday, June 3 at 10:00 a.m. They will be meeting here and any Commission member that wants to come is welcome. He said they expect to visit some of the hunt clubs, including Horn Point, Pocahontas, and Drum Point. He said they also plan to visit Munden Store and the Pleasant Ridge School.

Project Updates

Mark Reed and Elizabeth Nowak provided updates on various projects that are underway.

National Register Nominations and PIFs

Mr. Reed said that for the Seatack historic district, staff has reviewed the draft nomination and provided comments to the consultant. The submittal of a revised draft to staff is pending.

For the Woodhurst historic district nomination, research is underway to put together the historic context and statement of significance. In this neighborhood, the contemporary mid-century architecture tells much of the story, but additional research will provide a more complete context for the nomination.

Staff has reviewed the draft nomination for the Blue Marlin motel and has provided comments to the consultant. Submittal to DHR is expected next week. It is a mid-century modern hotel going forward under the Oceanfront Resort Motels MPD. Mr. Reed said it should be on the September agenda for the state boards.

For the Pleasant Ridge School PIF, staff has reviewed the draft nomination and provided comments. The consultant has made revisions and it is ready to submit. We are just waiting for the property owner to sign the PIF.

It was noted that the Gun and Hunt Clubs MPD and the accompanying Pocahontas Hunt Club individual property nomination PIF project is under contract to Debra McClane, Architectural Historian. Research is underway.

On the C&P Telephone Building PIF, the firm that had indicated interest decided not to submit a proposal. That caught us without time to get another proposal under contract this fiscal year, so will need to do that in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Reed said there are two National Register nominations that we plan to initiate in FY23. Both of these had determinations of eligibility by the State Review Board in March. These are:

Ms. Nowak reported on the status of the Newsome Farm Cemetery nomination. She said staff has issued a Request for Quotation (RFQ) and we should be able to get it under contract in July.

Mr. Reed updated the Commission on the Chesapeake Beach Historic District nomination. He said staff is developing the RFQ and it is expected to be issued in early July.

Mr. Reed noted that we also have an archaeological assessment under contract for the Pleasant Ridge School. He provided these details:

- James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc. (JRIA) is under contract for the project
- JRIA will perform sensing with Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR), probably in June
- JRIA will perform ground truthing based on GPR data and additional shovel tests up to 35, plus 3 test units (if they find a feature in the shovel test they open it up to a 2.5 x 2.5 unit)
- There were earlier church buildings and an earlier schoolhouse that burned on the site
- There is also a cemetery on the site

Historic Properties Glimpse

Elizabeth Nowak provided the glimpse of upcoming issues with historic properties. She noted that the next meeting of the Historical Review Board is June 15. The only item is the City's West Neck Creek facility temporary structure located in the Courthouse Historic and Cultural District at 2533 West Neck Road. Public Works is expected to request an extension for the timeframe for the temporary shelter COA. Staff is recommending approval.

Old Business

Jimmy Wood reminded everyone that there are no Historic Preservation Commission meetings in July and August.

New Business

Sharon Felton said she gave a talk to Norfolk Academy students about historic preservation and the work of the Commission. She said the students were interested and happy about it. She thanked Mr. Reed, Ms. Lyons, Edna Hendrix, and Debra McClane for assisting her with her preparations.

Mr. Wood thanked Mr. Clay and Ms. Hubbard for their service on the Commission and for their leadership on the Student Leaders Committee.

Mr. Wood congratulated Ian Lichacz on his graduation from Hampden-Sydney College.

Christi Lyons said they will conduct interviews for the Student Leaders Committee for the coming year on the 20th and 21st of June. Let her know if you want to participate.

Lee Lockamy said there will be the Nansemond Pow Wow on August 20 and 21 in Suffolk.

Adjournment

Mr. Wood said the next Commission meeting will be on Wednesday, September 7, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. He adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.