

VIRGINIA BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

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

Approved April 5, 2023

Members Present: Chair, Sharon Prescott; First Vice-Chair, Christi Lyons (remote – personal); Second Vice-Chair Glenn Carwell; Secretary, Bobbie Gribble; Immediate Past Chair, James Wood
Derek DuBay; Sharon Felton; Harriet Frenzel; Natalie Hubbard; Richard Klobuchar; Becky Livas; Lee Lockamy; Jenna Morris; Mac Rawls

Members Absent: Timothy Oksman; Katie Paulson

Staff Liaison Present: Mark Reed

Staff Present: Elizabeth Nowak

Council Liaisons Present: Joash Schulman; Rosemary Wilson

Public Present: Casey Finn

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Sharon Prescott, at 5:00 p.m. Ms. Prescott welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that a new City Council liaison, Joash Schulman, was present and she welcomed him. She asked Councilperson Schulman if he would like say a few remarks. Councilperson Schulman said he has been a Council member for two months and he represents District 9. He commended the City staff for the work they do and he said he is appreciative of all that the Commission has done. Councilperson Schulman said he looks forward to learning more about the work of the Commission and finding out how he can assist us.

It was noted that Christi Lyons is attending remotely. Ms. Lyons said she was attending from home for personal reasons.

Approval of February 1, 2023 Minutes

Ms. Prescott asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting and provide any corrections or additions. Richard Klobuchar made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Jimmy Wood. The February 1, 2023 minutes were unanimously adopted.

Committee Reports

Jenna Morris reported for the Student Leaders Committee. She said the members are wrapping up their Clio entries. Ms. Morris said they are now working on their project for Historic Preservation Month. She said they are looking at a new format from the previous scavenger hunt. Students will follow a trail near the Brock Environmental Center to discover information about historic sites near there.

Ms. Prescott asked how many Clio entries they had done. Ms. Morris responded that they have done ten. She noted that their next meeting will be on March 8.

Councilperson Schulman asked the student members what schools they attend. Ms. Morris said she attends Kellam High School. Natalie Hubbard said she attends Catholic High School.

Derek DuBay introduced a member of the public, Casey Finn, that was in attendance. He said she has attended several of the Commission's public meetings and has a great interest in history.

Project Updates

Mark Reed provided updates for several projects.

For National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations, he said that the Woodhurst Neighborhood Historic District has been listed on the National Park Service (NPS) website in the pending category, which means the nomination has been received by NPS. He said it was posted as pending as of January 28 and noted that it is expected to be listed in the NRHP in approximately 45 - 60 days from that date.

Mr. Reed noted that the Seatack Historic District nomination is nearing completion but has been delayed. He said the required public hearing was held on February 13. At the public hearing, several property owners said they had not received the notification letter. Mr. Reed said property owner notification is a critical part of the nomination process, so this was concerning. Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff later checked and found at least 30 mailing labels had incorrect addresses. Due to this error, DHR postponed the review of the nomination from the scheduled March 16 Board of Historic Resources meeting.

Mr. Reed said that several attendees at the Seatack meeting complained their properties were not included in the proposed district. He said that city staff and the consultant explained that due to a high number of non-contributing resources between the proposed district and those areas, as well as some physical distance, it is difficult to include them based upon NPS criteria. Mr. Reed said that the delay for review of the nomination gives us an opportunity for DHR staff and the consultant to review the areas not included in the district boundaries to see if they could be included.

Sharon Felton commended Mr. Reed for how he handled the issues that were raised at the meeting. She noted that some of the people living in Seatack are 7th generation members of the community. Ms. Felton said she has talked to members of the Seatack community to ensure they understood the City of Virginia Beach is advocating for their community to be placed on the

National Register. Both Ms. Felton and Mr. Reed said they want to make sure that Seatack residents feel respected. Ms. Felton thanked the Commission for showing it cares.

Mr. Reed briefly discussed other NRHP nominations that are currently in progress. He said for the Chesapeake Beach Historic District that research is underway, and the field survey has been completed.

He said research is also underway for the Newsome Farm Cemetery nomination. He said the consultant is scheduled to make a presentation to the Commission at their May meeting. Jimmy Wood asked about the meeting with the Newsome Farm Civic League. Mr. Reed said the Executive Committee met with them last week and Sharon Prescott has followed up with a letter. Mr. Wood asked if they had discussed City ownership of the cemetery with them. Mr. Reed said that they did not, but it is addressed in the letter.

Mr. Reed said the Pleasant Ridge School nomination isn't quite in process, but it is getting close. A proposal for the project was received March 1 and it came in within the projected project cost. Mr. Reed said staff has requested a few minor adjustments to the proposal and they should be able to get this one under contract soon.

Mr. Reed continued with updates on the Preliminary Information Forms (PIF) that are underway. He said drafts have been completed for the Gun and Hunt Club MPD and the Pocahontas Hunt Club individual nomination. He said they will be submitted to DHR soon. A presentation to the Commission by the consultant is currently scheduled for June 7.

Mr. Reed said the Beach Carousel Motel PIF is under contract. He noted that the site visit has been completed by the consultant.

Mr. Reed then updated the Commission on the Historic Preservation Plan. He said the final draft has been received and reviewed by staff. He said there were just two minor corrections that needed to be made. He said that with those corrections made it will be ready to print and be posted on the Commission's web page.

Historic Preservation Month

Sharon Prescott discussed the progress for Historic Preservation Month and the Pints for Preservation activity. She noted that two brewery partners are on board, Reaver Beach Brewing and Vibrant Shore. Pleasure House Brewing has been invited to participate again and we are waiting on their confirmation.

Ms. Prescott said we will be doing the Virginia Beach History Trivia Night events again. One has been scheduled for May 25 at Vibrant Shore. She asked the Commission members to begin thinking about who they can ask for gift cards for prizes at the trivia nights.

Ms. Prescott noted that the Executive Committee and staff are working to finalize the 2023 design and get koozies and glassware ordered.

Christi Lyons noted that the Student Leaders Committee event will be on May 20 at the Brock Center.

Mr. Reed reviewed some of the other ideas that had been discussed in the Executive Committee and by the Commission for Historic Preservation Month. He said he didn't expect that this could happen this year by May, but they would like to coordinate with VBTv and do stories on the Cape Henry Lighthouse and the restoration work – both that which was completed on 2019 and the upcoming project that is supposed to start construction in 2025.

He said they will try to partner with the Historic Houses to do something like a Historic Fact of the Day that could get posted on their Facebook page and/or the City's Facebook page.

Mr. Reed noted that the Executive Committee had discussed the Antiques Roadshow Event idea that had come forward at the February Commission meeting. He said that the consensus had been that the amount of work involved did not seem to be viable in this time frame. He also noted that staff did not see a project focused on artifacts as mission centric for the Commission or the preservation program.

Historic Properties Glimpse

Mr. Reed said that there are no agenda items for the Historical Review Board in March. He noted that he did have several items as information for the Commission.

Mr. Reed showed a couple of slides to show the installation of the new fire suppression system at the Francis Land House. He noted the penetrations for piping through original brick walls and through an original floor joist. He said that neither staff with Cultural Affairs nor he had an opportunity to review the plans prior to the installation. He said he believed there were better alternatives for the system, both from an aesthetic standpoint and a preservation perspective, that were not pursued. He said that Cultural Affairs is working with Public Works staff to figure out how to fix the damage.

Mr. Reed said the owner of a 19th-century property just north of Pungo has offered to sell their house to the City. It is located at 1868 Princess Anne Road and is owned by Kitty Boshier. Known as the Chaplain House, it is listed in the Virginia Beach Historical Register. He said Ms. Boshier offered it to the City for \$800,000, although the assessed value is just \$317,300. Comments are due to Public Works/Real Estate by March 8. He said the response that staff recommends is that it is listed on the local Historical Register, and it is worthy of being saved. Staff does not recommend acquisition by the City.

There was some general discussion about the property. Mr. Reed said the property owner wants to preserve the building. Mac Rawls suggested we offer to assist the property owner in finding options that will work for them, much like we did for the owners of Briarwood when we worked with the buyers letting them know about available incentives, etc. He said personal contact helps.

A motion was made by Jimmy Wood for the Commission to approach the seller to talk about options for preserving the house. The motion was seconded by Derek DuBay. There was no additional discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Reed then discussed the Cutty Sark Motel. He said Mrs. Koch informed him that she has received an offer on the Cutty Sark and the cottages on 37th Street. She said it is a woman that wants to preserve them. Mr. Reed said he understands that Billy Almond is involved and Mrs. Koch mentioned Paige Pollard being involved.

Old Business

Under Old Business, Mr. Reed said the L & J Gardens City Council Resolution was read on February 21. He said the resolution presentation went well. Rebecca Saunders, the Civic League President, received the resolution. Mr. Reed said the L & J Gardens video was played prior to reading the resolution. He commented that, unfortunately, the video creator did not have permission to use the music in the video and YouTube has made the City pull the meeting video.

Mr. Reed noted that there is forward movement on establishing a VA250 Committee for Virginia Beach. He said the City Attorney's Office is working on drafting the resolution for City Council. The resolution will provide for creation of a local committee. The chair of the committee will be Jimmy Wood.

Mr. Reed also noted that there is a VA250 conference in Williamsburg that will take place March 10 – 12. He said three Commission members and one staff member will attend.

Mr. Reed provided a follow up on the DAR Chapters' Historic Trail proposal presentation that the Commission had heard in February. He said Florence Reese contacted him and provided a revised required date for installation of the marker to February 2025. He met with Parks and Recreation and Cultural Affairs administration staff to discuss the potential for developing a park at the Thoroughgood House site. Parks staff said there is no funding for the trail. That location is one of 40 undeveloped parks sites that they have with no funding identified for development. They also said that placing a kayak launch at the Thoroughgood site is not a feasible option.

Mr. Reed said he suggested to Cultural Affairs that if they want a park developed that should submit a CIP request in the next cycle. He also requested Parks to address the bamboo issue on the Thoroughgood site. He said he suggested channeling the marker initiative to the Patriot's Park location.

Mr. Reed reminded Commission members to vote in Virginia's Ten Most Endangered Artifacts for the Thoroughgood House's 18th-century glazed indigo calamanco quilt. He said voting can happen once a day through March 3.

Jimmy Wood brought up the C&P Telephone building on 22nd Street. Mr. Wood said he thinks it would behoove us to send another letter to Council that they take steps to try to preserve the building. He said the letter should request the City to issue an RFP for adaptive reuse of the buildings. Mr. Reed said that the letter the Commission submitted to Council had included that recommendation. Mr. Wood said that he thought the Commission should reiterate that request in a new letter. Vice Mayor Rosemary Wilson said that an additional letter that stressed the opportunity of adaptive reuse might be helpful.

Jimmy Wood made a motion for the Commission to write a letter to City Council to encourage them to issue an RFP for adaptive reuse proposals for the C&P Telephone building. The motion was seconded by Harriet Frenzel. There was no additional discussion. The motion was passed unanimously.

New Business

Under New Business, Mr. Reed said he wanted to make the Commission aware of the Historical Society's program coming up on March 5 at 2:30 p.m. in Building 20-A at the Municipal Center. The subject of the program will be the 1963 merger of Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach. He said the program will focus on the 1962 arguments for and against the proposed merger of Princess Anne County and the oceanfront city of Virginia Beach, and the degree to which the new city, born on January 1, 1963, addressed the objections of the anti-merger movement.

Jimmy Wood said he and Mac Rawls attended the reception of the Embassy Suites opening, which completes the restoration and redevelopment of the historic Cavalier Hotel property. Mr. Wood said Bruce Thompson mentioned the Historic Preservation Commission many times expressing his thanks. He said Mr. Rawls spoke at the event

Glenn Carwell said there is a grant for historic restaurants, and he encouraged Commission members to recommend Tautogs for the funding. Mr. Reed said he will send out the link for voting.

Vice Mayor Wilson welcomed Joash Shulman to the Commission and thanked him for serving as a liaison.

Adjournment

The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be on Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.