

Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission

December 3, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Approved January 7, 2026

Department of Planning and Community Development
Building 3, 2403 Courthouse Drive, Conference Room 110

Attendance

Officers: Chair, Christi Lyons; First Vice-Chair, Glenn Carwell; Secretary, Bobbie Gribble
Members: Derrick DuBay (arrived 5:40), Sharon Felton, Harriet Frenzel, Richard Klobuchar, Becky Livas, Vincent Lyons, Florence Reese
Student Members: Grace Curran
Staff Liaison: Mark Reed
City Staff: Ellie Dauernheim
Presenter: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Welcome/Introductions/Remarks/Announcements – Christi Lyons, Chair

Prior to the meeting being convened, Glenn Carwell presented the chair, Christi Lyons, with a gavel for convening and adjourning the meetings. The meeting was convened at 5:00 p.m. by Ms. Lyons.

Ms. Lyons welcomed Mary Ruffin Hanbury from Hanbury Preservation Consulting.

Ms. Lyons noted that the Francis Land House held reopening events in November. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members were invited to the evening reception. Ms. Lyons said several members attended and the event was perfect.

Ms. Lyons mentioned HPC member Pete Morisette and noted that we lost Pete last month. Rick Klobuchar spoke about Pete Morisette. He said they had a mutual love of history. Mr. Morisette was appointed to the Commission by Vice Mayor Rosemary Wilson. Dr. Klobuchar said Mr. Morisette loved this Commission and enjoyed attending the events.

Weblin House NRHP Nomination Update

Mary Ruffin Hanbury made a presentation on her project to update the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the Weblin House. Ms. Hanbury showed some historic photos taken of the Weblin House, including those taken in the 1930s by Frances Benjamin Johnston. She also noted the 1958 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), which included the Weblin House.

Ms. Hanbury said the Weblin House was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in February 1974 and in the NRHP in November 1974. She noted that, excluding the map and photo

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documentation, the 1974 nomination was four pages long. The revised nomination is 32 pages in length.

Ms. Hanbury said the updated nomination includes a full inventory of resources; an up-to-date description of all resources, including the interior of the house; documentation of changes made to the house since it was listed in 1974; and a full photographic record.

Ms. Hanbury said the two areas the Weblin House will now be listed under are architecture and agriculture. She noted the building represents a transition from wooden to brick dwellings and it has a wonderful “Virginia chimney.” She noted the parcel, with the buildings situated there, is important as it represents a spectrum of agricultural activity.

Ms. Hanbury said the original boundary was 149 acres. Most of that is now subdivisions, shopping centers, and portions of Wesleyan Drive and Diamond Springs Road. The current parcel is 6.54 acres, so the nomination update includes a boundary decrease.

Ms. Hanbury said the next step will be review of the nomination update by the State Review Board and Virginia Board of Historic Resources at their December 11 meeting at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond.

Ms. Lyons thanked Ms. Hanbury for her presentation.

Approval of October 1, 2025 Minutes

Ms. Lyons asked the members to review the minutes of the October 1, 2025 meeting. Dr. Rick Klobuchar moved to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Carwell seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Presentation of 2026 Slate of Officers

Harriet Frenzel presented the slate of officers for 2026 from the Nominating Committee. The slate is:

- Chair: Christi Lyons
- 1st Vice Chair: Glenn Carwell
- 2nd Vice Chair: T.J. Morgan
- Secretary: Suzanne Camden

Mark Reed said a vote for the 2026 officers will be taken at the next meeting on January 7. He noted that nominations for any of the offices could be made at that time.

Nimmo Church Request for Removal of Zoning Overlay

Mr. Reed noted that there is an ordinance in the meeting packet, which is a request from Nimmo Church to have the Historic and Cultural District zoning overlay removed from their property. He said that the action for the HPC to consider today is whether the members wish to write a comment letter to the Planning Commission.

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Mr. Reed said the Historical Review Board HRB reviewed the ordinance at their October meeting and voted to write a letter to the Planning Commission and City Council to recommend they deny the request. He said the ordinance will be heard by the Planning Commission on December 10. Their action would be to recommend approval or denial to City Council.

Mr. Reed said we have never had this type of request before. The intent of the Historic and Cultural District is to preserve and protect the property. He said the Executive Committee requested him to prepare a draft letter to the Planning Commission to urge them to recommend denial to City Council.

Mr. Reed showed a slide of the church and noted that the original section was built in 1791. He said the steeple was added in 1893. The building also has multiple 20th-century additions.

Dr. Carwell made a motion for the HPC to send a letter to the Planning Commission to request them to recommend denial of the ordinance. Dr. Klobuchar seconded the motion.

Sharon Felton asked if the area where the Skirmish at James's Plantation ceremony was held is the old section. Mr. Reed said it is. He said the sanctuary is the oldest section of the church. The motion was called and the HPC voted unanimously to approve writing a letter to the Planning Commission.

Annual Public Meeting

The HPC had a brief recap of its November 5 Annual Public Meeting. Mr. Reed noted that this was a different facility from the previous two meetings. He said there had been concerns voiced that the previous location was not in a central location.

Ms. Lyons said there was a larger video screen in this location and the room was bright. She said people could walk in and see the historic church prior to the meeting. The church's Historic Group did a great job of explaining the church's history.

Dr. Klobuchar suggested we write Old Donation Episcopal Church a thank you letter.

The HPC members said they would like to use the facility again next year for the meeting.

Committee Reports

Grace Curran reported for the Student Leaders Committee (SLC). She said the SLC met on October 8 at the Lynnhaven House. She said many members attended the HPC Annual Public Meeting. Ms. Curran said several members assisted the Virginia Beach VA250 Committee at the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event. Their next meeting will be December 10 at the Surf and Rescue Museum.

HPC Letter of Support for 3 NRHP Nomination Updates

Mr. Reed noted that the members had heard the presentation on the Weblin House earlier in the meeting. He said the Weblin House is one of three NRHP nomination updates that will be on the Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board agenda on December 11. Mr. Reed said the

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other updates that are moving forward are the Holland - de Witt Cottage, which was presented to the HPC in September, and Pleasant Hall, which was presented to the HPC in October.

Mr. Reed asked the HPC if they would like to write a letter for support for these nomination updates. Dr. Klobuchar made a motion for the HPC to write a letter of support for these three submissions to the Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board. The motion was seconded by Dr. Carwell. The motion was unanimously passed.

Project and Program Updates

Mr. Reed provided several project updates. He said the 2025-2026 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant project is to update the NRHP nomination for Seatack Life Saving Station/U.S. Coast Guard Station. He noted that Debra McClane, Architectural Historian, has been selected to prepare this update.

For the 2025-2026 Cost Share grant project the Locality Agreement for the developers and builders historic context project has been signed by the City of Virginia Beach and sent to DHR. Mr. Reed said DHR will perform the procurement process.

Mr. Reed said we also have the NRHP nomination update under contract for Upper Wolfsnare. He said the consultant's initial site visit has been completed. The consultant took photos and examined the property. Additional research is underway.

Mr. Reed said we were also planning on performing a dendrochronology analysis at Upper Wolfsnare to support the NRHP nomination update. We had Michael Worthington visit the site while he was in town for the Annual Public Meeting. His examination of the building determined that it is a poor candidate for identifying the tree fell date. Staff decided not to proceed with the project.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

Under New Business, Mr. Reed said one of the HPC members had asked to discuss the Riddick House, which was recently demolished. Mr. Reed said the building was built circa 1948 by Walter and Lillian Riddick and was designed by Henry Livas, Sr. and Hilary Wright. The family and house were featured in the August 1958 issue of Ebony Magazine.

Mr. Reed said Riddick was the principal person involved in the planning and development of L&J Gardens. He said the building was a contributing resource to the NRHP Historic District and may have been eligible for individual listing in the NRHP. The Riddick House was purchased by Norfolk Academy in January 2021, and a demolition permit was issued in July 2024.

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Becky Livas expressed distress that a historic resource could just be torn down. Mr. Reed explained that designating a building as a historic resource in the NRHP does not prevent demolition.

Mr. Reed said we have a flag in the system for individually recognized properties. He said he didn't think we have flagged all of the contributing properties in the NRHP historic districts. It was suggested we should have flags on that type of historic property, so we are at least aware of demolition requests when they are made.

Ms. Lyons said she would like to accomplish three things in the coming year.

- Have a sign or marker that documents the importance of L&J Gardens and the Riddick House.
- Complete the project for signs at the old Courthouse, including the "For Katherine" sign about the enslaved woman sold at the Courthouse.
- Ensure the cottage behind the Lynnhaven House is rehabbed with the funding the City has appropriated for it.

Ms. Lyons took a few minutes to recognize the service on the HPC for three members who have served all of their allotted terms. She recognized Harriet Frenzel, Sharon Felton, and Bobbie Gribble and thanked them for their many years of service.

Adjournment

Ms. Lyons said the next meeting will be on January 7, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.