

MEETING NOTES

Charlottesville Historic Resources Committee
Friday, February 12, 2021; 11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Remote meeting via Zoom

HRC Members Present

Rachel Lloyd, Chair
Sally Duncan, Co-vice-chair
Phil Varner, Co-vice-chair
Genevieve Keller
Alissa Diamond
Jalane Schmidt
Heather Hill
Margaret O'Bryant
Ellen Wagner
Dede Smith
William Clay III
Jordy Yager
Kay Slaughter

Staff Present

Jeff Werner
Lachen Parks (Communications, Zoom coordinator)

2. Call to order:

11:00 AM: Chair Rachel Lloyd calls the meeting to order. Lloyd opens the floor up for public comment, but the HRC receives no public comment.

3. Approval of the agenda:

Dede Smith moved to approve meeting agenda; William Clay III seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Approval of meeting notes:

Dede Smith moved to approve the January 8, 2021 HRC meeting notes; Heather Hill seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. WORK SESSION I:

Lloyd offered overview of the meeting plan.

Genevieve Keller: Considering developing themes to get a sense of the City's chronology organize by theme. Adapt to similar to what is used by the NPS and DHR, although these themes might not yet accurately reflect our local values. Need to understand operating principles used in Virginia for historic surveys. Seems inherently top-down.

Lloyd: Some issues relate to place, some to events, some to individuals, etc.; therefore, some themes rely heavily on grassroots development, some do not. Not inherently a top down process.

Keller: Surveys are currently too design oriented, focused on architecture. What do we see as our current view of history?

Lloyd: So many projects, studies, surveys and currently located (stored) in so many places. There is value in pulling things together on a map—a GIS based system linked to the parcels. Linking architecture, individuals, events. Adaptable and updatable.

Heather Hill: How would it come to fruition? (GIS plan.) Can we create an accessible platform?

Lloyd: Two uses: City Planning system and Publicly accessible system.

Jordy Yager: Overlap with work being done at the Jefferson School/Heritage Center.

Jeff Werner: Information that the City has. Need to make it accessible. People are interested. Do not need more research right now—need to post what we have.

Hill: Can we use HRC funds to hire a consultant to help develop infrastructure?

Kay Slaughter: Access would be helpful for the public. List the properties that are historic because of their stories.

Werner: We have oral histories from old intern work from 10th and Page.

Dede Smith: Two ways to use in the GIS format--research and interpretation.

Werner: The County Historic Preservation Comm completed the GIS data entry for the County.

Lloyd: 1) research and facts; 2) planning--what is where; 3) interpretive function—what are the themes, etc.; and 4) community access and documentation--the public can add information.

Alissa Diamond: Asked staff to explain City's Certified Local Government designation.

William Clay III: Asked staff to circulate HRC bylaws and mission statement.

Werner: HRC charged with interpretation and presentation of City's history.

Lloyd: We need a 21st century version of signs and markers.

Keller: Should discuss our mission and purpose, should we revisit them, go through that process, maybe we need to reexamine would help better articulate our role and help better articulate our mission.

Diamond: What do we do with stories that have been repressed? The mission statement does not instruct us on that.

Lloyd: The mission statement does not preclude that.

Keller: Preservation Virginia is going through process of re-examining. Useful to revisit our foundational documents.

Phil Varner: What are our ways to make decisions, what do we use to guide our decisions and outcomes, what criteria to focus on and why?

Lloyd: For revisiting decision making can we scope out a framing plan?

Werner: What we have. What we need. What can people add. What is new/missing.

Varner: Is what we have [in City archives] representative of only white/wealthy people. For example, "88 keys," where does he fit into the local story. He an ordinary person with a story.

Keller: Look at the Clio program as a possible crowdsourced tool. Invite people to contribute add to stories that have not been represented in the past. (www.theclio.com)

Slaughter: Look at what we've available, be able to express/share it, then invite people to tell their stories. Staff is asking what can be done with the information that we already have.

Lloyd: Scoping-- what do we want the tool to do to. Gather. Represent what we have. The ability to add information.

Re: BRC recommendations

Slaughter: What about the slave auction block situation? Enhancements to the Drewery Brown bridge?

Jalane Schmidt: Request to the Mellon Foundation submitted by the Jefferson School/African American Heritage Center. Request includes recommendation from BRC. Mentions how HRC had met with descendant community and the planned outreach. Need to find resources to move forward with that. Asked staff: Are we able to do community outreach remotely?

Werner: Outreach is difficult with COVID. The city is maxed out [ability to manage on-line meetings]. Suggest a consultant might help; now, but even later. (Also asked committee about the courtyard at the new courts, using it for memorial space. Response: Fine, but something should happen at/near Number Nothing. Might space the current handicap parking spaces be used for an installation. What is the process for that request?)

Lloyd: Review projects [opportunities] that impact City property.

Brief discussion about the Discovery Center's hope to acquire the L,C,&S monument. Included Jeff School/Heritage Center request to the Mellon Foundation, but unrelated to HRC.

Werner: Important to let people know what the committee has accomplished relative to the BRC goals.

Schmidt: Things are being accomplished by others, not all efforts are related to HRC.

Slaughter: Drewery Brown Bridge. We have the Bridge Builders books, developing communications info, and the bridge itself needs assistance West Main Streetscape project may change, but there are still things about the bridge and neighborhoods that can be done.

Keller: Bridge is a monument to the man.

(Note: Consider updating the West Main HD NRHP listing to include the bridge.)

Werner: HRC needs to be an advocate for these things. If HRC wants council to do certain things, it should express that.

Slaughter: BRC recommendations referred to the bridge.

Schmidt: Everyone wants to do these things, it takes help to make this stuff happen, need public and private efforts.

Slaughter: What is the status of Vinegar Hill Park. (Staff explained that CODE Building should wrap up this summer. Need to have signs and banners ready to install. If HRC wants to change plan, need to take that to Council.)

Keller: People do not know the boundaries of Vinegar Hill, so we should delineate them, especially at the western end of the Mall. People don't know when they are in it.

Updates on other initiatives

Coordinating with Visitor's Bureau

Note: Staff met last Friday with CACVB staff. They asked about progress on the Downtown Walking Tour map.

Mellon Monuments Fund Grant

Note: See discussion notes above.

Developing a GIS-based database of historic sites in Charlottesville

Note: See discussion notes above.

6. Announcements:

Margaret O'Bryant: mentioned performance by Oratorical Society. Celebration of Rita Mae Dove work.

Jalane Schmidt: Mentioned Freedom and Liberation Day. Coordination of church bells.

Dede Smith: Mentioned work on oral histories for African American sites/markers.