

North Ridge Citizens' Association
Minutes for March 15, 2021
Virtual "Zoom" Annual Meeting

NRCA President Chuck Kent called the meeting to order at 7:33. An attendance list is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Kent reviewed the Association's achievements for the past year. An outline of Mr. Kent's presentation is attached.

Mr. Kent summarized the report of Treasurer Amy Krafft. Ms. Krafft's report is attached.

Mr. Kent introduced Garrett Fesler, City Archeologist, to discuss what he has found out about the home and property at 506 North Overlook Drive.

Mr. Fesler noted that his office has been contacted a couple of times over the years about the house. "It is an unique and unusual place, one of the few of the standing structures in the City that we believe to have been built by a freed black man."

Mr. Fesler recommended that the house not be referred to as the "Civil War house." So far, his office had not found any evidence that it was standing during the Civil War.

Mr. Fesler explained that the City has put together a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping system. This digital atlas allows historical maps of City areas to be overlaid with the current streets of Alexandria. Mr. Fesler showed a slide of an 1861 "Defenses of Washington" map showing what is now the several blocks around 506 North Overlook. No structure is shown near 506 North Overlook, though, as Mr. Fesler pointed out, these types of military maps were quite thorough in identifying existing structures.

Mr. Fesler then showed an 1861 “Ground of Occupation” map. No structure is shown in the vicinity of 506 North Overlook. The same is true of an 1861 map titled “Right Bank of the Potomac.” A late Civil War map shows a road or trail where the lower portion of North Overlook now is.

Mr. Fesler showed an “G. M. Hopkin” 1878 map of the area. That map shows a building near 506 North Overlook on property owned by Hampshire Fractious. The map shows the house near what is now the corner of North Overlook and Halcyon, but Mr. Fesler said that the map was not exact and appears to be the first appearance of a structure on the 506 North Overlook property.

A 1901 real estate map shows 13 acres belong to Mr. Fractious with a house on it. Though Mr. Fractious died in 1888, his family appears to have lived in the house, or at least have owned the property, until the early 1900s.

A 1927 flyover map shows the house “right where it is today,” and a 1937 aerial photo shows a working farm around the house.

According to a real estate deed, the land around the house was sold to Mr. Fractious at an auction in 1875. The deed referred to “a lot of ground” and there is no reference to a house. Mr. Fesler said he believes there is a plat of the property that was done at that time, but it resides in the Arlington courthouse and he has not yet had time to search for it. R. Fesler said that he had looked at other deeds in the area from that period and the price Mr. Fractious paid for the property indicates it was for land without a dwelling.

Mr. Fractious mortgaged the property twice. The first time, in 1880, he was required to take insurance out on a dwelling, so it appears there was a house on the property at that time. On the second occasion, in 1883, he took out more insurance, indicating he was expanding the house.

Mr. Fesler said that Mr. Fractious was born in Clark County Virginia (which became part of West Virginia during the Civil War) around 1810. He made his first appearance in Alexandria records in 1865. Mr. Fesler had not been able to find him in the 1860 census record, but found him listed as living in Alexandria in 1870

with the occupation of plasterer. In the 1870's the Hampshire Fractious household included an individual named Cyrus Fractious. A Cyrus Fractious had been sent by the Alexandria slave trading firm Franklin and Armfield to New Orleans in 1834. Mr. Fesler said that Cyrus Fractious could well have been Hampshire Fractious's brother and, if that were the case, it would suggest that Hampshire Fractious had also been enslaved.

Alexandria's tax records show Mr. Fractious as a high taxpayer in the late 1860s.

Mr. Kent noted that - in addition to North Ridge's request that the City defer the subdivision request for 506 North Overlook - there is a petition signed by more than 1,000 individuals asking for deferral. He said that a new purchaser of the property, Mr. Brian Thomas, has recently acquired the property from the developer who filed the subdivision application. Mr. Thomas has asked North Ridge to drop its opposition to the subdivision request if it is shown that the house did not exist during the civil war. Mr. Kent said that he had written Mr. Thomas that the house still seems to have historical value, and that the Association would like Mr. Thomas to give the City's archeology team an opportunity to assess the property. Mr. Kent copied Mayor Justin Wilson and Council member John Chapman on his correspondence with Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Kent suggested that perhaps the house could be moved to another location if it could not be kept on its existing site. He noted that from a lot size and FAR point of view, Mr. Thomas's subdivision request is on solid ground.

John Fehrenbach asked what the next steps are. Mr. Fesler replied that the building does not fall under the City's archeology protection code, but he is nonetheless hoping that his office will have a chance to assess the site. He said it is hard to make a case that the site should be excavated as the house has been occupied so long after the Fractious family occupied it that it is unlikely that items linked to the family would be found. But, Mr. Fesler said, the house was potentially built by African Americans who were freed slaves, which could make it unique in Alexandria.

Russell Bailey then introduced Andrew Macdonald, the president of the Environmental Council of Alexandria (ECA) and a former vice-mayor of Alexandria, to discuss the City's plan to reconstruct Taylor Run.

Mr. Macdonald said that the fundamental problem with the City's reconstruction proposal is that it does not address the cause of the erosion of the Taylor Run's banks, i.e., the runoff of waters from impervious surfaces in the stream's watershed. If the City does not address the runoff, he said, the efforts to reconstruct the stream will fail.

Mr. Macdonald explained that the purpose of the project is to help the City fulfill its obligations to reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment that the City contributes to the Chesapeake Bay. He said that there is a question about whether the reconstruction would, in fact, achieve the pollution reduction estimated by the City.

Mr. Macdonald also noted that there is a rare type of wetland adjacent to the stream and a large number of Alexandria-rare plant species that live in the wetland or along the stream. The project would raise the stream bed three to nine feet. If the bed were to be raised to that extent, the stream would overflow the wetland during high rains, potentially damaging it, as well as many of the Alexandria-rare plant species. (This is because the wetland is a groundwater-fed wetland, not a stream-fed wetland.) Mr. Macdonald said that ECA had hired Dr. John Field, a fluvial morphologist, to assess the potential effect of the project on the stream. Dr. Field has concluded there is a high likelihood the reconstruction project would fail, just as similar projects at Strawberry Run (in Alexandria) and Donaldson Run (in Arlington) have failed. Mr. Macdonald showed "before and after" pictures of the Strawberry Run project that showed how the project there had failed.

Mr. Macdonald reiterated that the reconstruction would not address the runoff that has caused Taylor Run to erode and that the way to reduce that runoff is to do water retention projects in the stream's watershed. He also noted that approximately 250 trees will be cut and the project will denude a 80 by 1900 foot swath of the forest along the stream. In concluding his presentation, he said that

the ECA and others opposing the project are looking at other ways for the City to meet its pollution reduction obligations such as tree planting, buying reduction credits on the credit market, and doing upstream projects.

Mr. Kent thanked several individual for their contributions to the Board, including Mike Oliver, the Board’s longest serving member, who is stepping down after forty years of service; Bruce Johnson, a past president, who is leaving the Board; and Bill Clayton, who is stepping down from his role as parliamentarian.

Mr. Kent then put up a list of candidates who had had been nominated to serve on the Association’s Board for the 2021-2022 term. This list was approved by acclamation. The officers for 2021-2022 will be John Fehrenbach, President; Amy Burwell, First Vice President; Jennifer Dougherty, Second Vice President; Tack Richardson, Treasurer; Kay Stimson, Scribe; Russ Bailey, Parliamentarian; and Chuck Kent, Immediate Past President. The list of the entire new Board is attached.

Mr. Fehrenbach thanked Mr. Kent for his service in “unusual times.” He said that Board is giving a gift of two white oaks to Mr. Kent for his service. They will be planted in the fall, one in Beverley Park and one in Mr. Kent’s yard.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Russell Bailey
Scribe

Attendance:

Chuck Kent	Jennifer Dougherty	Sean Gallagher
John Fehrenbach	Mike Oliver	Sandra Byrne
Amy Burwell	Linda Oliver	Ellen Parkhurst
Amy Krafft	Glenn Thomas	Bob Orr
Russ Bailey	Meghan Rainey	Brett Liddell
Kay Stimson	Moira Buzby	Mary Jean Kane
Bill Clayton	Libby Johnson	Beth Handler

Bruce Snapp
Jeanne Snapp
Lyn Gubser
John Winstead
Bob Miller
Lee Guerry
Sunny Yoder
Rachel Colangelo
Tack Richardson
Julie Porter
Mimi Saunders
John Baker
Karla Horn
Joe Sacco
Michael Kelly
Ellen Almond

Bruce Johnson
Kate Crawley
Jay Friedman
Julia Dols
Ashley Berrang
Chris Guy
Garrett Fesler
Andrew Macdonald
Rachel Newhouse
Jenny Ware
Laurie Hieta
Bruce Schmid
Joe Costigan
Nancy Pitcher
John Cardone
Troy Thomas

Rodney Schmidt
Paul Byrne
Blair Thompson
Christopher Burke
Abby Curran Harrell
Jackie Coleburn
Brad Kinder
Susan Burkhead
Peter Kuhmerker
Helga Kelter
Carter Flemming
Jane Stilmar
Linda Durand
Sandy Calhoun

Budget Report from Amy Krafft

Operational Expenditures	2017	2018	2019	2020 (Proposed)	2020 (Actual)	Notes
Description						
USPS box rental	\$134.00	\$136.00	\$140.00	\$140.00		150 (May 1 year)
ASAP newsletter	\$2,715.65	\$2,715.61	\$2,650.00	\$2,700.00		0 (COVID - no newsletter)
Insurance - liability	\$1,274.00	\$1,274.00	\$1,292.00	\$1,300.00		1302 (Sept 1 year)
VA Corporate Commission	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00		25 (Dec)
Alex Federation of Civic Assoc			\$30.00	\$30.00		30 (July)
Operational Expenses Subtotal	\$4,148.65	\$4,150.61	\$4,137.00	\$4,195.00		1507
Discretionary Expenditures						
Event Description						
Website Maintenance & Upgrade				\$2,000.00		2524.98 Nov 20 (\$1769) - Feb 21 (\$755)
Membership campaign/google doc	\$180.00		\$300.61			0 (???)
ACPS auditorium rental			\$300.00	\$400.00		400 (Paid Jan for Feb 10 & Mar 10)
Annual meeting(s) promo			\$36.52	\$232.69		158 (Paid Apr Jeanne SnappFeb)
Wheel Day	\$467.27	\$338.05	\$181.89			0 (May ?)
NNO Expenses (minus donations)	\$1,007.16	\$2,007.30	\$3,257.45	\$350.00		0 (Aug ?)
TCW Scholarship	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00		1000 (April)
BHUMC donation	\$800.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,800.00		1800 (Payment for 2019 and 2020 pd in April)
TCW student citizenship award	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00			0 (Jun)
Citizenship awards (3@30 ea)	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00			0 (Jun)
Tree Canopy project/Beverly Park	\$591.74	\$448.50				0
Holiday/Deck the Hills event promo			\$428.57	\$200.00		211.46 paid Feb to R Colangelo
Christmas Tree expenses/hats	\$29.67	\$556.00				0
Projector purchase				\$491.31		491.31 (Paid Apr to Chuck Kent)
COVID Hometown Heroes BBQ						911.91 paid Apr & Dec to Kay Stimson
COVID - ZOOM						141.66 Feb to Chuck Kent
Discretionary Expenditures	\$4,265.84	\$5,539.85	\$5,695.04	\$4,474.00		7639.32
Total Expenses	\$8,414.49	\$9,690.46	\$9,832.04	\$8,669.00		9146.32
Revenues	2017	2018	2019	2020		
Description						
City of Alex Parks & Rec	\$767.34	\$710.75	\$983.04	\$711.36		0 Projected amount paid for previous year
Spring newsletter ads	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00		0
NNO Donations	\$1,160.00	\$1,750.00	\$2,500.00	???		0
Xmas Tree sales	\$2,931.33	\$2,673.43	\$3,104.80	???		3080.6
Memberships and Donations	\$5,598.72	\$3,650.00	\$5,309.50	\$2,000.00		assumes 100 checks
PayPal			\$2,763.59	\$2,880.00		assuming 150 Paypal
Total Revenues	\$10,957.39	\$6,610.75	\$15,160.93	\$6,091.36		conservative estimate

NRCA Treasury Balance as of Jan 31

	Balance	Net Change	
Projection for 2021	\$16,363.35	-\$2,577.64	Projection based on proposed budget
2020	\$18,940.99	\$4,577.77	
2019	\$14,363.22	\$1,355.03	
2018	\$13,008.19	\$3,377.88	
2017	\$9,630.31		
2016	\$8,153.94		

Description	Year	Notes
Operational Expenditures	2020	
	(Proposed)	
USPS box rental	\$140.00	
ASAP newsletter	\$2,700.00	April (once a year)
Insurance - liability	\$1,300.00	
VA Corporate Commission	\$25.00	
Alex Federation of Civic Assoc	\$30.00	
Operational Expenses Subtotal:	\$4,195.00	
Discretionary Expenditures		
Website Maintenance & Upgrade	\$2,000.00	Pending estimates from vendors
Membership campaign expenses	-	Printing and Envelopes
ACPS auditorium rental	\$400.00	Paid Feb & Mar
Annual meeting(s) promo	\$232.69	Paid Feb
Wheel Day		Cancelled
Natl Night Out Expenses (above donations)	\$350.00	Unlikely
TCW Scholarship Fund	\$1,000.00	June
BHUMC donation	\$1,800.00	(Payment for 2019 and 2020)
TCW student citizenship award		suspended
Citizenship awards (3@\$30 ea)		suspended
Tree Canopy project/Beverley Park	\$600.00	pending proposal from Jeanne/Russ
Holiday/Deck the Hills event promo	\$200.00	Dec
Projector purchase	\$491.31	Paid in Mar
Discretionary Expenditures Subtotal:	\$7,074.00	
Total Projected Expenses	\$11,269.00	
Revenues (Projected)	2020	
City of Alex Parks & Rec	\$711.36	pending receipt for 2019; program suspended
Spring newsletter ads	\$500.00	can we sell more?
National Night Out Donations	???	depends on business conditions
Xmas Tree sales	???	normal supplier may not be available
Memberships and Donations	\$2,000.00	assumes 100 checks for dues
PayPal	\$2,880.00	assumes 150 dues via Paypal
Total Projected Revenues	\$6,091.36	Conservative revenue estimate
NRCA Account Balance as of Jan 31	Balance	Net Change
Projected for 2021	\$13,763.35	-\$5,177.64
2020	\$18,940.99	\$4,577.77
2019	\$14,363.22	\$1,355.03