



**MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND
LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
Wednesday, July 17, 2024, 6:30 PM**

This was a hybrid public meeting held both in person and through electronic communication means.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Omari Davis, Chair
Kaydee Myers, Vice Chair
Nan Dreher
Robert Dudka
Andrew Fackler
Alex Foster
Gray Handley
Gerald Laporte
Rebecca Meyer
Mark Turnbull
Andrew Wenchel
Dick Woodruff

VIRTUAL MEMBERS: Gray Handley (Personal, Emerald Isle, NC)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Carmela Hamm
Joan Lawrence

STAFF PRESENT: Lorin Farris, Acting Historic Preservation Section Supervisor
Mical Tawney, Historic Preservation Associate Planner
John McNair, Historic Preservation Specialist

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

The Chair Omari Davis called the meeting to order and asked Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff to please call the roll. Ms. Farris called the roll and determined that there was a quorum. Ms. Dreher arrived at 6:37 PM after roll had been called. Ms. Meyer and Mr. Wenchel also arrived after roll had been called and both joined the meeting at 6:40 PM.

EXPLANATION OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES

The Chair explained the in-person and electronic Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) public hearing procedures. Mr. Davis described the logistics of participating virtually in the hybrid meeting via the Microsoft Teams platform and/or the call-in number.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 2024 MEETING MINUTES

The Chair asked for any comments on the draft June 20, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Laporte offered a correction to a statement attributed to him on page 19 of the minutes that he felt more accurately captured the point he was trying to make during the meeting. HPP staff reviewed the language offered and noted that it was appropriate. Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Mr. Laporte seconded the motion. Mr. Davis asked for HPP staff to call the roll. Ms. Farris called the roll and the

motion passed 5-0-4 with Mr. Dudka, Ms. Foster, Ms. Myers, and Mr. Turnball abstaining. The HALRB members that had not arrived yet were Ms. Dreher, Ms. Meyer, and Mr. Wenchel.

HISTORICAL MARKER REVIEW: DOMINION HILLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT PROJECT

Ms. Farris introduced the project as one of the 12 recipients of a Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant. She also restated an earlier HPP staff request to the HALRB via email that the HALRB read the text ahead of time to provide specific text edits to the applicants. Ms. Tawney clarified that the applicants had not yet received text edits prior to the meeting. Ms. Farris then stated that all HALRB and HPP staff edits would be submitted to the applicants later, and all together. She said that she hoped this approach would allow the discussion to focus on “high-level suggestions” and “interest questions” regarding the proposed markers, but also that this approach was not mandatory. She further stated that that the project was not up for any motions, and that the purpose of the discussion was to offer guidance for the project, which will be due for completion by the end of the year because of a project extension.

Ms. Terri Schwartzbeck, President of the Dominion Hills Civic Association (DHCA), and Mr. Peter Vaselopoulos, Dominion Hills resident and Vice President of the Arlington Historical Society, presented themselves to the HALRB. Mr. Vaselopoulos was also introduced as the project’s historian.

Ms. Schwartzbeck began with a presentation on her Association’s use of the HPF grant. She spoke about the site history of the former Febrey-Lothrop House, and how preservation in the neighborhood had been diminished with its demolition. She also said that DHCA was “feeling positive” because of the opportunity to make the property visible again through the proposed markers. In agreement with the site developers (Toll Brothers), the markers would be located at the corner of the property on land owned by the Homeowners’ Association (HOA) of the Grove at Dominion Hills. The location would be safe, maintained by the HOA and heavily trafficked by pedestrians. She further stated that the demolition of the Febrey-Lothrop House has spurred conversations about the house among residents of the neighborhood, and that the markers would continue to connect the neighborhood to local history.

Ms. Schwartzbeck then described the process used by the DHCA to develop the markers. Due to the high volume of information, they chose to make three markers. The first marker would focus, “on the peoples who have been on this particular parcel of land, and to some extent the surrounding area wherever possible,” with emphasis on the Febrey family, early settlers, urbanization, and the construction of the Dominion Hills neighborhood. The second marker would focus on the area’s Civil War history. Ms. Schwartzbeck mentioned the proximity to Fort Upton and the amount of Civil War artifacts recovered from the neighborhood. The third marker would focus on “the 20th century; the homeowners who lived on the property for the longest time,” such as the Febrey family, the Lothrop family and Randolph Rouse. The marker would also provide information on the house’s unique architecture. In addition to the markers, the DHCA plans to enhance its website so that additional information can be accessed via the markers’ QR codes.

Mr. Vaselopoulos added that his family had lived in Dominion Hills for over 40 years, and that the Febrey-Lothrop House had provided a historical neighborhood connection to his family. He explained that the process of developing the markers had led to new discoveries that are not commonly known about the area, such as a historical photograph of the “Fairmont” house and an aerial photograph that showed the remains of the Rouse horse track. Mr. Vaselopoulos also commented that the project has been a “rewarding process” working with the civic association and undergoing reviews, and that he appreciated the County’s process to make these meetings possible and encourage local public history. He further stated that as Vice President of the Arlington Historical Society, he looked forward to completing the process so that he

could encourage others to do the same to “commit to owning their local history and sharing it and figuring out a way to display it.” Ms. Schwartzbeck added that the project was also the result of extensive outreach to the Dominion Hills neighborhood residents, and credited Mark Troppy and Kathy Sullivan for their contributions to the project.

Ms. Tawney introduced Dr. Bernard Berne (virtual) as a public speaker. Dr. Berne had previously submitted the following written comment for HALRB consideration:

This project will contain three historic markers: “Dominion Hills, Past and Present”; “Upton’s Hill and the Civil War”; “Febrey-Lothrop-Rouse Property”. However, none of the markers mention a railroad line that ran through the area. Operating in the area from 1859 to 1968, the line bore several names throughout its history.

When it opened, the line’s name was the Alexandria Loudoun & Hampshire (AL&H) Railroad. President James Buchanan traveled through the area on the line when visiting his summer White House in Loudoun County before the Civil War began.

During the Civil War, the United States Military Railroad (USMRR) operated the line. Several years after the Civil War ended and the USMMR relinquished control, the AL&H’s name changed to the Washington & Ohio Railroad, the Washington & Western Railroad, the Washington, Ohio & Western Railroad, the Richmond & Danville Railroad, the Southern Railway, the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Railway, and finally the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad. The W&OD Trail now follows its route through the area.

The “Dominion Hills, Past and Present” marker should briefly describe the history of this railroad line, which had a station in Dominion Hills named Torrison where it crossed Wilson Boulevard. Development of the area began along the railroad while its trains were powered by steam. The line was electrified from 1912 to 1941, whereupon gas-electric and diesel-electric cars and locomotives provided power until it closed.

The second sentence of the “Upton’s Hill and the Civil War” marker states: “The area’s strategic importance resulted in frequent skirmishing until Confederate troops withdrew from Arlington at the end of September 1861.” The paragraph containing that sentence should state that the area was strategically important because it contained the crossing of the railroad and Wilson Boulevard, which was known at the time as the Georgetown-Falls Church Road.

Ms. Tawney informed Dr. Berne that his three minutes had begun, and he confirmed that his audio was clear. Dr. Berne stated that while one marker was specific to the Febrey-Lothrop property, the other two were concerned with general interest. Dr. Berne then read the previous written comment with minor alterations. He specified that the “Torrison” station in the statement was named for the “Torreyson” family, and that the electrification of the line was briefly mentioned in one marker. Dr. Berne further stated that the “Dominion Hills, Past and Present” marker should provide more detail about the railroad’s history, that the second sentence of the “Upton’s Hill and the Civil War” marker did not explain why the area was strategically important, and that the Skirmish at Ball’s Cross Roads did not happen at Ball’s Cross Roads; the name came from the location where Union soldiers had been stationed, and the fighting occurred along the crossing of the railroad line and Four Mile Run with Wilson Boulevard.

Mr. Davis thanked Dr. Berne for his comments, and Ms. Farris invited the HALRB to provide questions or comments to the applicants, beginning with the “Febrey-Lothrop-Rouse Property” marker. Ms. Dreher commended the applicants on the range of photographs depicted on the markers and commented that the markers were not consistent with the name of the property, alternating between “Fairmount,” the

“Lothrop Estate,” and the “Febrey-Lothrop House.” She also noted that the inconsistency also existed on the other two markers and recommended clearer language. Mr. Vaselopulos responded that this was “the most obvious issue that we had to grapple with,” due to the historical periods of the house. He stated that the Febrey family referred to the estate as Fairmount, following the convention of naming estates, and that this information was discovered while researching the marker. He also referenced work from Michael Febrey to identify people in the Febrey photographs. Mr. Vaselopulos acknowledged that they would need to reevaluate the use of names across the markers while balancing the names that were used during different historical periods. He continued to say that he wanted to establish the historical providence of the different families who occupied the house. Ms. Dreher agreed with Mr. Vaselopulos but pointed out that a photo caption from the Rouse period referred to the property as the Lothrop estate, and that the applicants might wish to conduct a final of the text for clarity. She reiterated that the information provided was great. Mr. Vaselopulos agreed that the comment was valid. Ms. Schwartzbeck stated that consistent name use for the property was a longstanding issue in the neighborhood.

Ms. Dreher also asked if “the Grove” mentioned in the sign was the name of the new subdivision being built on the former Febrey-Lothrop-Rouse estate. Ms. Schwartzbeck responded in the affirmative, and clarified that following the death of Mr. Rouse, the property was held in trust with the trustees directed to eventually sell the property for development. The sale proceeded from 2020-2021 to Toll Brothers, who have begun development zoned for 40 single family homes, roughly one-third of which are either completed or under construction. Mr. Vaselopulos commented that “the Grove” was an ironic choice of name, as development had reduced the number of trees within the site, and Ms. Schwartzbeck added that new trees were going to be planted.

Mr. Gerald Laporte commended the applicants on their work identifying new facts about the property. He said that he was unsure where the signs were going to be placed, how they related to each other, and if they were going to be in three different places. Mr. Vaselopulos confirmed that all three signs would be in the same place. Ms. Tawney zoomed in on an image of a street map provided by the applicants, which was displayed on the meeting projector for reference. Ms. Schwartzbeck noted that Toll Brothers would install a concrete platform for the signs at the location presented, which would be next to each another. Mr. Laporte clarified that his written comments were made under the impression that the three signs would be placed at different locations, and that the comments referred to each as a stand-alone sign. Ms. Schwartzbeck responded that they had investigated the possibility of placing the signs at different locations around the property but chose the single location after conversations with Toll Brothers. Mr. Laporte stated that he was not suggesting about which approach would be preferable, but that the signs assumed knowledge of each other.

Mr. Laporte also pointed out that Upton’s Hill was not identified on any of the signs, and that he had other similar comments. Mr. Vaselopulos responded that this was a fair point, and questioned why Dominion Hills was chosen as the name of the neighborhood, rather than Upton’s Hill. He then stated that this was some of the neighborhood’s lost history, and asked if anyone knew the history of Charles H. Upton. Mr. Laporte then asked why Charles Upton was also not identified in the signs. Mr. Vaselopulos answered that while the Upton’s family originally owned much of the land, he didn’t play into the narrative of the sign. Mr. Laporte confirmed that he understood Upton’s role in the history after doing his own research. He further stated that when telling a story like this, it needed to be complete, and invited the applicants to read his written comments. Mr. Vaselopulos said that he looked forward to the comments but explained the challenges for anyone starting the marker design process for the first time, such as already undertaking two extensive edits of the drafts based on comments provided from the HPP staff, and that the volume of information about the property is making its inclusion difficult. Mr. Laporte confirmed that he understood the difficulty of the process, but that the drafts could use another round of touching up to fix the lost information gaps. Mr. Vaselopulos restated the validity of revisiting the reference to Upton’s Hill, and that the information would be available via the DHCA’s website, citing Dr.

Berne's comment that the "Upton's Hill and the Civil War" sign should explain why the area was strategically important, and offered to meet to discuss his written comments if the applicants wished. Mr. Vaselopulos again stated that he looked forward to reading the comments and pointed out the significance of both the photograph of the 23rd New York Infantry and the Civil War sketch of the Febrey House to the sign's narrative.

Mr. Robert Dudka commented on the significance of the original property's architecture. He questioned if more detail could be given about the architect, who had been an architect for the Coast Guard, and how he incorporated the lighthouse form into the property's architecture. Mr. Dudka also highlighted the Queen Anne shingle style, which is uncommon for the Washington area. He then stated that whole paragraphs would not be necessary, but a couple sentences could be enough. Ms. Farris stated that she appreciated Mr. Dudka's point and offered that the original drafts had included more information about the architecture. She went on to say that the signs needed to be edited down to accommodate the attention spans of the readers, and specifically referenced the importance of this approach based on a former sign project previously led by Mr. John McNair. She expressed appreciation that a website would be available to provide additional information but noted that HPP staff would likely recommend additional text cuts. She then clarified that this would only be a suggestion, and that the HALRB's comments would also be considered. She reiterated Mr. Dudka's point about the significance of the architecture. Mr. Dudka further explained that this was one of the most unique assemblages of buildings anywhere, noting the mansion and eccentric outbuildings. He went on to say that the loss of the architecture was a tragedy, as it was gone before it could be appreciated by the public or be documented. He recalled driving to the property to take photographs of the buildings from the sidewalk and recommended that a few more details about the architecture could be included.

Mr. Gray Handley commented that there was an opportunity to incorporate a lesson about historic preservation into the markers. He pointed out that previous comments had related to the quick disappearance of the physical site, and that either the sign or the website should include a deeper explanation of the loss of the property. He explained that the loss of the property had been a painful and eye-opening decision that raised concerns about the monitoring and management of historic properties within the County. He further explained that including the story of the site's disappearance would be valuable for newcomers who would not already know why the property is gone.

Mr. Handley also commented that another lesson was the value of the HPF grant program, which enabled a team to conduct historical research, locate photographs and design historical markers. He stated that he found the work exemplary for what he would like to see in future grant projects from the community to develop signs and web content. He expressed regret the property was lost but commended the new approach to creating a positive result. Ms. Schwartzbeck responded that she appreciated the comments. She also referred to the stone gate that once stood at the entrance to the property, which had been prominently displayed to the neighborhood. She relayed that the DHCA had taken the capstones to the gate, with the developer's permission, and installed them as the base of a new memorial park bench for former DHCA president Brian Hanigan in Dominion Hills Park. She also stated that they hoped to raise funds in the future to provide interpretive text for the capstones, and that the grant project had inspired them to think about other ways to improve their neighborhood.

Mr. Woodruff added to Mr. Handley's comment that he agreed the story of the loss of the buildings was too big to be included in the marker, but that the website should go into detail about the loss of the structures, the political controversy that resulted in the demolition before documentation, and the resulting passage of the Virginia state legislation that prevents demolitions when there is an ongoing preservation process. He reminded new members of the HALRB that the body had approved a resolution to protect the property, which was before the County Board when the permit to demolish had been issued. He stated that once the permit had been issued, the County could not legally block it and the buildings were

immediately brought down. He restated that this story also needed to be told. Mr. Vaselopoulos agreed with this point and said that he believed there was flexibility to present that information in a way that would not impact their ability to place the signs in the proposed location. However, he said that they needed to consider what could go on the markers versus the website, as the information would contain the DHCA's purview. Ms. Schwartzbeck added that she liked approaching the issue from an educational perspective, as she had already heard questions about what happened to the property. She said that she believed it could be presented in the future as a civics lesson, a case study of lessons learned, and an encouragement for historic preservation. Mr. Woodruff confirmed that this approach was what he had been suggesting, and that this could be used in the County to sensitize future generations. He further stated that there were few properties of this importance and quality left in the County, and that presenting the story without offending the developers could be accomplished with a statement of facts about the process and why it unfolded so quickly.

Mr. Davis thanked the applicants for their time and efforts, stating that he agreed with the earlier comments that the project was a great use of the HPF grant program. Ms. Schwartzbeck thanked the HALRB for supporting the program. Ms. Farris also thanked the applicants for their work and stated that she would provide them with the written feedback and assist with determining the best approach to implement the changes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: LANGSTON BOULEVARD ALLIANCE'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT PROJECT PRESENTATION

Ms. Farris introduced the project as one of the 12 recipients of a HPF grant. She stated that this application was made by the Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA), which would be presented virtually by Ginger Brown, executive director of the LBA, and Bennett King, project team member. She explained they were here to present their work to the HALRB as part of their grant project scope and extended her gratitude for its inclusion. She further explained that the project had completed as of June, and they were here to present their work and answer questions.

Due a disabled share feature on Microsoft Teams, Ms. Tawney was asked to present the slideshow for the applicants, which she had previously received.

Ms. Brown introduced herself and Mr. King to the HALRB. She thanked Mr. King for his work over the previous year, and she thanked the County for providing the grants, which she hoped would continue in future phases.

Mr. King began the presentation with an overview of the work, stating that the project began the previous fall and concluded on July 10th. The project consisted of three phases: the first phase to collect and preserve the history of Langston Boulevard's renaming, the second phase to collect and share the stories of legacy businesses along the Langston corridor, and the third phase to redesign the LBA website to better convey the projects of the first two phases and other community content.

For phase one, the "Renaming of Langston Boulevard History Project," the LBA sought to create and share a historical record of the community-driven renaming process, which involved over 60 local citizens representing nearly all of Langston Boulevard's adjacent communities. The project aimed to capture the key elements of the project while they were still fresh and collect the relevant documents while they were still available. This resulted in eight oral histories from project stakeholders, a 50-page historical record, a series of video clips from the stakeholder interviews to be publicly shared via social media and the LBA website and was subsequently shared with the Center for Local History.

For phase two, the “Langston Boulevard Legacy Business Project,” the LBA sought to collect, preserve and share the stories of legacy business along the corridor. Mr. King highlighted that many of these businesses were cornerstones of their communities, and that the LBA wished to preserve their stories in the face of redevelopment threats to the businesses. He added that since completion, one documented business had already been sold. This resulted in five oral histories of the Philippine Oriental Market & Deli, Northside Veterinary Clinic, Glebe Radio & Appliance, KH Art & Framing and MacPherson Opticians. Mr. King also added the feedback had been so positive that five additional legacy business oral histories had been completed following completion of the grant. All information was made available via the LBA website.

Mr. King stated that phase two had also prompted a new LBA project called “People and Places,” wherein the LBA would continue to document and share community stories along Langston Boulevard. He invited Ms. Brown to speak further about the project, if asked.

Mr. King concluded the presentation by thanking the County for supporting the project and opened the meeting to questions. Ms. Farris thanked Mr. King and Ms. Brown for their presentation. She stated that she had worked on the Plan Langston Boulevard, and that Ms. Brown’s original proposal for the grant project was exactly the type of project she had hoped to see from the HPF grants. She stated that staff had wanted projects that were educational and made use of a lot of available resources. Ms. Farris highlighted Ms. Brown’s use of an additional grant from Arlington Economic Development (AED) to maximize the project’s output, and that the project had created enough momentum to continue. Ms. Brown responded that she found some of the legacy business stories to be inspiring and that it had been incredible to watch the project grow. Ms. Farris encouraged everyone present to visit the website, and asked Ms. Brown to mention the LBA’s upcoming public event. Ms. Brown said that they were partnering with AED to host a Business and Brunch event with a panel of three legacy business owners, moderated by Biz Launch director Tara Palacios. The panel will focus on what has made businesses successful along the corridor over the decades. Ms. Farris also thanked Ms. Brown for being a great steward of the Broadview local historic district.

Mr. Woodruff asked about which businesses had contributed oral histories after the grant had been completed. Mr. King answered that they were Sun and Moon Yoga Studio, Sport Fair, Sushi-Zen, Photo Scope Studios and Pastries by Randolph. Ms. Brown added that several businesses had also been previously documented, and that the LBA was working to incorporate those pre-existing works into the website. She cited Mr. Moore’s Barbershop and Heidelberg Pastry Shoppe as examples. Mr. Woodruff asked if they were looking into any businesses in Garden City. Ms. Brown and Mr. King could not immediately confirm, and Mr. King offered to add any recommendations to the LBA’s list. He specified that they were looking for any business that had been open for at least 25 years and has contributed to community growth and cultural heritage, and that they were in the process of adding a function to the website to allow for community recommendations. Mr. Woodruff responded that he was not sure about the age of the businesses but highlighted their ethnic diversity and offered to do further research.

Mr. Handley stated that he found the work remarkable, and that it demonstrated the value of the HPF grants. He commented that he thought it would be helpful in the next phase to talk about the communities that Langston Boulevard passes through, and how important they have been to the continuing diversity and change that has come to the County, highlighting the contributions of new waves of immigrating Americans to the area. He said that these communities have different characteristics, commenting that within Arlington you can travel five miles and go from one part of the globe to the other, and that this makes the area rich. Mr. Handley also asked the applicants their opinions on which properties or landmarks as deserving of attention and protection, given their extensive work with the community. Mr. Handley expressed his desire for their viewpoint, given that many of the sites that the applicants worked

with may not be widely known to people with decision-making power, and that he predicted the HALRB would be asked about the historic significance of properties along Langston Boulevard in the future.

Ms. Brown answered that the website currently had an unpublished portion that focused on the Langston Boulevard communities, and that she believed it would evolve over time. She mentioned that the People and Places project was already working with some of the corridor's historically black churches, which played an important role in desegregation. She said that they were currently working with another organization that was in the process of using a different grant to facilitate 30 interviews with people who went through local desegregation, and that the LBA hoped to photograph the individuals with the help of Calloway Church. Mr. King added that he viewed the buildings differently after completing the project, and that KH Art & Framing had been approached by someone who was concerned about the effect of historic designation to property values, and that other people had expressed similar concerns. Mr. King also wished to highlight the mid-century small strip malls, noting Glebe Radio & Appliance and MacPherson Opticians for their architectural style, and being legacy businesses with supportive landowners.

Ms. Farris thanked the applicants for their time and that she looked forward to their continued partnership.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Davis stated that Ms. Tawney had previously shared his two items with the HALRB. The first item was a short news article about Virginia's new preservation law. The second item was another news article about the Key Bridge Marriot, which might indicate how it will be used in the future.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Farris addressed the absence of Ms. Cynthia Liccese-Torres, who had accepted a six-month assignment as head of Arlington County's Race and Equity Division in the County Manager's office, which would continue until January. During that time, Ms. Farris would serve as acting supervisor of the HPP. She asked the HALRB for patience during the transition and wished Ms. Liccese-Torres well. Ms. Farris then welcomed Mr. McNair to the HPP staff, who would be assisting with LHD inspections and outreach programs. Ms. Farris mentioned that Mr. McNair had previously come to the HALRB for historic marker approval, and that Ms. Farris had previously reached out to him for questions about Arlington County in the Civil War and general 19th century history. She also said that any upcoming presentations from Mr. McNair would be made known to the HALRB. Mr. McNair responded that he was happy to be part of the team. Ms. Tawney added that the HPP team had also helped sponsor a new highway marker dedicated to Dr. Lilli Vincenz, which had been approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. She said that the marker was currently out for manufacture, with the hope of installation next year. She explained that Dr. Vincenz was an Arlington resident and pioneer in the national gay civil rights movements, and that this would be the first Virginia state marker dedicated to LGBTQ+ history. Mr. Woodruff asked where the marker would be located. Ms. Tawney responded that it would be located near her house on Columbia Pike. Mr. Laporte asked if it would be circulated for HALRB review. Ms. Tawney responded that it would not. Mr. Laporte referred to an earlier issue wherein the state had wanted to install a similar sign for Freedman's Village without knowing its future location or pre-existence of other markers. When he mentioned that the state sign was never installed, Ms. Farris responded that HPP staff had it in their possession. She further stated that it might be reviewed within the next six months to one year as part of a future Arlington National Cemetery project. Mr. Laporte then said he hoped the state would be in contact with local affairs. Ms. Tawney said that Ms. Liccese-Torres had stewarded the marker through the state process and made the application.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:39 pm.