



Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group DRAFT Minutes

Date: Thursday, February 14, 2019
Time: 8:30 – 9:30am
Location: Town Hall Annex, 2nd floor conference room
Attendees: Pete Howard, JoAnn Robinson, Dianne Schaefer, Steve Makowka, Ann LeRoyer, Richard Duffy, Jenny Raitt, Erin Zwirko, Ali Carter, Kelly Lynema, Kathy Broomer, Wendy Frontiero

After a brief period of introductions, Kathy and Wendy thanked the group for their careful review of the Phase 2 draft and provided a summary of what they had heard. Kathy and Wendy will be revising the threats section to talk about threats at a higher level, after which they will send another iteration of that section to the group. In March, the group will have the opportunity to review all components of the report together as a final complete draft.

Wendy noted that the threats section was not meant to serve as an introduction to Phase 2, but rather that the introduction to the entire report will be amended to incorporate elements of the Phase 2 section.

JoAnn stated that she wants some of the concepts in the comments to be maintained. Wendy said that they will acknowledge where comments are coming from and note differences in opinion where appropriate.

The group discussed how the Survey Master Plan will approach the Arlington High School building. Wendy said they will take it out as a specific example of a threatened building, although they feel it is important to recognize as a building in a group of municipally owned properties. The group agreed that because the building sits on multiple parcels and has different addresses, when described in the report the range of addresses (853-869) should be used. Wendy and Kathy will revise the paragraph on the high school and share with the group for additional comment.

There was a discussion of whether the High School should be documented with an Inventory Form B, as the HCRWG has not expressed a desire for the high school project to be subject to the demolition delay bylaw. Steve mentioned that the high school is municipally-owned and of historic significance. He suggested that the Master Plan recognize the resource, but recommends that existing historical documentation be consolidated so that individual pieces aren't lost. In general, there were a number of

buildings in town that were not seen as old or historical when the town originally embarked on survey efforts in the late 1960s, but now (50-60 years later) they are historically important. JoAnn said that a report by the Arlington Historical Commission on the building's significance can be issued without the creation of a Form B. This report could be saved at the library, shared at Town Meeting, etc. It would serve the purpose of documenting the building without subjecting it to demolition delay.

Pete brought up the High School Memorial Committee and asked whether the HCRWG would be interested in working with them as a broader initiative to document the building. The group determined that the Survey Master Plan should recommend some form of documentation.

A related discussion was had regarding the impact of surveying any resource. Kathy pointed out that Arlington has an unusual process for determining which resources are on the Historical Commission's demolition review list. Due to the Arlington Historical Commission's practice of adding all properties with a Form B to their inventory list, when a resource is surveyed there are consequences regarding demolition delay. Kathy has spoken several times with Mass Historical Commission (MHC) about the public's confusion over this issue. Kathy and Wendy clarified to the group that they are making recommendations for additions to the MHC inventory, not additions to the AHC list. The group needs to have a common understanding about what a Survey Master Plan does.

Kathy noted that properties on the MHC inventory and properties on the AHC inventory are not one and the same. The Arlington Historical Commission inventory is a protection inventory. About 500 properties are both on the MHC/statewide inventory and the AHC inventory. Kathy noted that the MHC building form does not trigger demolition delay automatically, but does so only when the AHC votes to add it to its inventory. Kathy noted that Arlington's practice of considering buildings to its demolition review list as significant without additional review is highly unusual in the state and recommended being clear to the public about the consequences of their home being added to the AHC inventory.

JoAnn stated that the AHC works in a different way than Kathy's description. Kathy reiterated that the consultant's scope of work is to provide recommendations for the MHC inventory, not the AHC list. The Arlington demolition delay bylaw makes clear that Arlington's is a list-based bylaw, not an inventory-based bylaw. JoAnn indicated that there was a vote at Annual Town Meeting to enact the process, and that there was an initial list of 682 properties that accompanied the approval of the demolition delay discussion at Town Meeting. Since the initial approval at Town Meeting, the AHC votes to accept new inventory forms and to add the properties to the local inventory and thus they are subject to demolition delay.

Jenny noted that there is general confusion among residents. After the recent inventory update, the Town Manager's office and DPCD received calls from property owners asking for clarification on how the inventory is managed. JoAnn indicated that the AHC is going to issue another letter to address the recent additions.

Kathy noted that MHC wants to know what steps the AHC is taking when it finds a property is significant or whether the AHC accepts the form by voting to add it to the inventory.

All in attendance agreed that there are two inventories, and that adding a property to the Arlington inventory requires some sort of action by the AHC. The group also agreed that there needs to be more clarity around that process.

The group moved on to a discussion about prioritization of the Phase 2 recommendations. Steve agreed with Pete's recommendation to focus on areas, although he stated that we need clarification on what inclusion on an area form means. He also suggested that Mill Brook by Cooke's Hollow should be prioritized, as well as any municipally-owned buildings. Richard said that if a property is going to be subject to demolition delay, then it should have an individual form, and that a priority should be completing an inventory form for all properties on the local list. Properties included in area forms may not all be significant or contributing to the historic nature of an area. JoAnn said she doesn't want to revise the town's demolition delay bylaw. Richard said that area forms aren't contemplated in the bylaw as being on a local inventory.

Ali recommended that having a publicly available scoring rubric or some clear method for determining whether a property is historically significant would be helpful.

JoAnn said that the AHC is not interested in amending the demolition delay bylaw and would need additional financial resources to expand the work of AHC including communication and education, yet the AHC does not have the capacity to expand that work or justify the additional financial resources.

In general, the group agreed to prioritizing a cleanup of the inventory and clearing up address discrepancies, along with prioritizing municipally owned properties. Group members were instructed to send any additional recommendations for prioritization to Kelly; she will consolidate comments from the group and submit them to the consultants.

The next meeting will be to review the draft of the final consolidated report. Kelly will share a Doodle poll with the group to set the meeting.

Kathy noted several corrections to the October meeting summary; all in attendance voted to approve the meeting summary with the requisite amendments made.

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