



The Old Town Crier

**The Monthly Newsletter of the Old Town Civic Association, Inc.
April Program and Notice of the Meeting**

DATE: Wednesday, April 14, 2010
TIME: 7:00 p.m., Socializing with Neighbors; 7:30 p.m., Program
LOCATION: The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street

PROGRAM AGENDA

- 1) **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** also *City Council Members wishing to speak*
 - 2) **POLICE REPORT**
 - 3) **REPORT FROM THE ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMITTEE**
 1. *Townsend Van Fleet*
 - 4) **POTOMAC RIVER WATERFRONT MITIGATION PROPOSALS**
 1. *Presentation by Craig Perl*
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The City of Alexandria frequently experiences flooding from the Potomac River, because flood plains tend to do that. The irony is that the City sought and received legal approval to lower the flood plain line (height) by three feet in the mid 80s in order to facilitate development. In retrospect, the more prudent approach would have been to raise the flood plain line instead. However, the reality today is flooding that affects residences, businesses, and infrastructure along the City's waterfront. In response to the flooding problem, the City commissioned the Potomac River Waterfront Flood Mitigation Study in 2006 to identify and assess flooding issues, as well as to recommend solutions to reduce flood damages. The City Staff will give a presentation on some of the proposed solutions, including the buying of affected properties and the construction of three permanent structural flood barriers:

- ◆ 100-year Floodwall along the Potomac River Waterfront
- ◆ Elevated Walkway in the Lower King Street Area
- ◆ Jones Point Berm

How will this affect the Waterfront area and how will this affect you? Come see the entire repertoire being considered by the City. It is definitely worth your while.

To: Old Town Civic Association Members

From: Charles Trozzo, Chair of the Nominating Committee

Date: March 22, 2010

The Nominating Committee has been constituted to make nominations for the election of Officers and Directors of the Association for the coming year. The Committee will report its nominees in advance of the May 12 Members Meeting. Nominations from the floor will be in order at that meeting, and the election will take place at the Annual Members Meeting June 9.

The offices to be filled at this year's election include the five officers and the following Directors: South of Franklin-East (east of Washington Street), South of King-West (west of Washington Street), and one At Large director. Four of the current officers (President Poul Hertel, Vice-President Douglas Thurman, Treasurer Bert Ely, and Corresponding Secretary Linda Couture) are completing their second terms in those offices, and thus are not eligible for renomination to those offices. Recording Secretary Tim Elliott and Directors Chip Carlin (South of King-West), John Gosling (At Large) and Alan McCurry (South of Franklin-East) are completing their first terms in those offices and are thus eligible for renomination. The terms of three of the present Directors continue until June 2011: John Kester (North of King-East), Christa Lyons (North of King-West) and Ignacio Pessoa ("Central," the area east of Washington Street between King and Franklin Streets).

Of course, all incumbent officers and directors would be eligible for nomination and election to any other office, as are all members of the Association.

Any OTCA member who wishes to suggest consideration of him- or herself for nomination—or to recommend consideration of another member for any of these offices—is invited to contact the Chairman or any other member of the Nominating Committee. The members are:

Charles Trozzo, Chairman (Central)
209 Duke Street
(703) 549-5176
c.trozzo@att.net

Charles Huettner (West)
218 South Fayette Street
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Bob Feldkamp (South)
1250 South Washington Street, #804
(703) 548-8865
rfeldkamp@aol.com

Susan Pettey (North)
220 North Royal Street
(703) 548-8209
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Michael Hobbs (Past President)
419 Cameron Street
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BAD DAY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Anyone listening to the Public Hearing on Saturday, March 13 would be justified in wondering why City Council Members were suddenly discussing significant changes to the Historic Preservation policy in the City. Baffling, as that may seem, the obvious question is how did a seemingly innocuous discussion about a roof replacement evolve into a possible dissolution of historic preservation?

The case involved an appeal from the owners of an historic property, which in this case is a two story, freestanding brick Queen Anne Victorian home built between 1877 and 1891 at 211 North Patrick Street. The owners wanted to replace the original slate roof with aluminum plates, which are a 1920s invention, but the owners were denied by the BAR because the aluminum plates were not period appropriate.

Staff noted, “There have been remarkably few modifications to the original building over the last 120 years. The house retains many of its original exterior features, including the patterned molded brick; carved window trim, gable vent and exposed rafter tails; an elaborate wood double front door; and the slate roof. As a freestanding building in the Queen Anne style, this building has one of the more complex hip and gable roof forms found in the historic district. The color, texture and scale of individual slate shingles complement the detail and complexity of the roof design”. Meaning, this is a uniquely contributing structure to the fabric of the Old Town Historic District.

The appeal proposed a substantial change in the manner to which historic preservation is carried out in this City by supposing that if alternative materials can be found, it is a sufficient condition for eliminating the need to use the historically correct one. A complication to the issue was a last second proposal by the appellant to use synthetic slate made out of reused rubber tires.

The City Council discussion culminated in a decision to send the appeal back to the BAR to consider the rubber material. However, before getting there, several Council Members made statements that we cannot ignore and would like the elected officials to explain further, because they were quite inconsistent with historic preservation. For that reason, we extend an invitation to Council members who are more than welcome to attend our April 14 meeting to clarify their position on this matter

- ◆ Poul Smedberg urged that in the future, we should allow cheaper materials to be used as replacements on historic buildings instead of the historically correct ones.
- ◆ Rob Krupicka urged the use of “recycled materials” instead of the historically correct irrespective of data that shows historic materials have lower carbon footprint as was pointed out at the hearing.

- ◆ Kerry Donley suggested that we need to create a market for alternative products and that we should do it in the historic district by eliminating the requirement for historically correct materials on historic buildings.
- ◆ Frank Fannon urged that property owners be allowed to do what they want.
- ◆ Alicia Hughes agreed with Fanon to a certain extent

The Historic District is unique because of its authenticity, and it would be an indignity to the hallowed past to start down the path suggested by the appeal.

In the meantime, what happened to the preservation movement in Alexandria? Last year I asked the rhetorical question; Is Historic preservation worth preserving, because the members of the City Council are interpreting the quiet response to the winds of change as tacit support for whatever. That is likely to continue unless there is an awakening, because the only wasted voice is the silent one. So let's get to work.

The BAR hearing will be on April 7 at 7:30 Pm at the City Hall.
