



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

DRAFT MINUTES

JOINT MEETING

STATE REVIEW BOARD and BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

9:00 a. m. March 17, 2021

This meeting will take place online.

DHR Register, Historical Highway Marker, and Easement Programs
Training for Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board Members

State Review Board Members Present

Chair Jody Lahendro
Vice-Chair Sara Bon-Harper
Dr. Jody L. Allen
Dr. Carl Lounsbury
John Mullen
John Salmon
Carol Shull

Historic Resources Board Members Present

Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax, Chair
W. Tucker Lemon
Karice Luck-Brimmer
Trip Pollard
David Ruth

State Review Board Members Absent

None.

Historic Resources Board Members Absent

Dr. Ashley Atkins-Spivey, Vice-Chair
Jeffrey "Free" A. Harris

Department of Historic Resources Staff Present

Julie Langan, Director
David Edwards
Jim Hare
Jennifer Loux
Brad McDonald
Lena McDonald

Stephanie Williams, Deputy Director
Megan Melinat
Wendy Musumeci
Jennifer Pullen
Karri Richardson
Meagan Coward

Other State Agency Staff Present:

Andrew Tarne, Office of the Attorney General

These minutes summarize the activities that took place at this meeting. The meeting began at 9:02 a. m. , with a welcome and introduction of the agenda by Director Langan.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST TRAINING

Andrew Tarne provided an overview of the Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) that is designed to insure that public business is transacted in a transparent manner. COIA terms such as "direct benefit" were discussed, as well as membership in private preservation organizations. Mr. Mullen, Ms. Schull, and Mr. Pollard asked follow-up questions related to membership in organizations that support historic preservation. Mr. Tarne emphasized that

recusal or seeking guidance from the COIA council can be done on a case-by-case basis as needed. Director Langan noted that she could not recall a situation where recusal impacted quorum.

BYLAWS OF BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES AND STATE REVIEW BOARD

Deputy Director Williams presented a summary of the bylaws for the BHR and SRB and reminded members that conflict of interest is one of the topics covered in the bylaws. The bylaws are tailored to the duties of each Board. She explained differences between the Boards' bylaws, such as the BHR's role as a policy-making board and the SRB's role as an advisory board and length of term for elected officers.

REGISTER PROGRAM

Jim Hare, Director of Special Projects, provided an overview to updates to this year's edition of the Boards' Register Program Manual. He highlighted sections of the manual that are designed to provide Board members with the information they need to understand Register criteria and to review nominations effectively.

SRB Chair Jody Lahendro thanked Mr. Hare and DHR staff who prepared the manual and complimented the manual's informative content.

Community Services Division Director David Edwards explained how CSD staff work together on nomination projects. He thanked Jim Hare and everyone involved in this year's updates to the Register manual. Mr. Edwards presented the topic of levels of significance. He explained the three aspects that make up "significance" in the Register program – area, period, and level of significance. A property or district can have more than one area, period and/or level of significance. He provided examples of different types of properties with two or more levels of significance. He explained that all properties listed in the Registers have the same status. Additional protections are not assigned to properties listed at the state or national level of significance versus local significance.

Comments Summary: Mr. Lemon inquired if there was a way to recognize speech or language in nominations. Ms. McDonald responded that language is not a cultural category usually dealt with at DHR and suggested Virginia Humanities as a possible source.

National/State Register Historian Lena McDonald presented about the state law concerning war memorials that went into effect on July 1, 2020. She summarized the Virginia Landmarks Registration and National Register program regulations that address removal or moving of an individually listed property and a contributing resource within a historic district. Examples of how war memorials may or may not be moved from their current listing and retain Register listing were provided.

Comments Summary: Mr. Lemon asked if the Board could be proactive and reach out to jurisdictions to make them aware of these processes. Ms. McDonald responded that DHR has a fairly comprehensive inventory of monuments in Virginia and tracks publicity regarding removal and hopes in the future to notify local governments with this information. Director Langan noted DHR developed a best practices document that touches on this subject and deals with the topic of war memorial removal. Mr. Lemon asked if the absence of a monument was historically significant. Ms. McDonald responded yes and that removal of monuments was noteworthy and there needs to be more contemplation and comparative analysis done to understand the significance. Mr. Lahendro asked if the guidelines apply to other statutes considered to be offensive. Ms. McDonald said it was specific to war memorials. Several board members asked for another session to be scheduled to discuss topical issues with staff.

A five-minute break was taken at 10:37 a. m.

At this point, State Review Board members Mr. Lahendro, Ms. Bon-Harper, Dr. Allen, Mr. Lounsbury and Mr. Salmon left the training session. Mr. Mullen and Ms. Shull remained in the training session.

The training session for the Board of Historic Resources resumed at 10:43 a. m.

THE VIRGINIA HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKER PROGRAM

Dr. Jennifer Loux presented an overview of the history of the Highway Marker Program and the application, research and review process. Dr. Loux also provided information on the review process for replacement markers.

Comments Summary: Mr. Lemon asked if there is a schedule for statewide unveilings so Board members can be aware of any ceremonies in their areas. Dr. Loux responded that there is a schedule but due to the Covid-19 virus there have not been any marker ceremonies in the past year. However there are a couple of unveilings scheduled for later this month and she anticipates that more will be scheduled as Covid-19 related restrictions are lifted. Dr. Loux will work with Jen Pullen to distribute the schedule to Board members in the future. Mr. Lemon also asked if DHR prefers that markers be located on roads with a particular vehicular count. Dr. Loux stated that generally DHR does prefer that markers be located in areas where they will be seen by the most people possible and that this sometimes requires the markers to reference a historic location not in the immediate area of the marker. Generally DHR tries to place markers relating to historic architecture directly in front the building(s) in question. When possible, DHR also makes every effort to place markers where the sponsor wants them to stand. Mr. Lemon asked if DHR notifies localities before the agency-sponsored markers are installed. Dr. Loux stated that DHR does notify all localities as DHR needs their agreement, especially when markers are not installed in VDOT rights-of-way. She noted that locality approval of historic markers can be a time-consuming process. Mr. Ruth asked if other states have as robust a highway marker program as DHR. Dr. Loux noted Texas and North Carolina had robust and active programs. Director Langan observed that Ohio and Tennessee also have well established programs but the age of DHR's program and the number of markers is what separates it from others. Mr. Ruther noted he supported the focus of the diversity marker program particularly during the Jim Crow period and Green Book service sites for African-Americans. Director Langan said there would be a related marker in Chester coming to the Board for approval soon. Mr. Pollard asked if there was any other process to review marker text other than during the replacement process. Dr. Loux responded that given the capacity of staff time as well as the foundry, they can only review text for markers that are in poor physical condition and DHR had not yet implemented a systematic review.

EASEMENT PROGRAM

Megan Melinat provided a brief introduction to the Easement Program, Board of Historic Resources Manual and easement program staff and their job duties.

Karri Richardson summarized the easement application process and provided an overview of the Easement Acceptance Committee review process.

Wendy Musumeci reviewed the Easement Acceptance Committee's (EAC) criteria for evaluation of new easement offers, the easement template and the baseline documentation report

Comments Summary: Dr. Fairfax asked if easement program staff ever referred prospective applicants to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's easement program. Ms. Musumeci responded that DHR will refer to applicants to other easement holders, including VOF, if the EAC determines that the integrity of the property and its associated conservation values are not consistent with our criteria.

Ms. Melinat presented a summary of the project review process detailing how she and Joanna Wilson Green work together to review proposed projects and their effects on historic resources both above-ground (Melinat) and below ground (Wilson Green).

Brad McDonald gave an overview the stewardship process and provided the Board with a graph summarizing stewardship site visits and project reviews completed since 2015. McDonald also stressed the importance of good landowner relationships as well as keeping good archival records on all easement properties. Finally, McDonald reviewed violation types and gave examples of reversible and irreversible violations.

Comments Summary: Deputy Director Williams remarked that the Easement Program should have its own full-day training session due to the amount and depth of the material covered. Mr. Pollard commented that he found the presentations and the Board Manual very helpful.

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p. m.