

DRAFT Minutes
JOINT TRAINING SESSION FOR THE
STATE REVIEW BOARD and BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
March 20, 2024

Reynolds Room, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 428 North Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond Virginia
23220

Board of Historic Resources Members Present

Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax, Chair
W. Tucker Lemon, Vice Chair
Aimee K. Jorjani
Martin Townes
Mary Pope Hutson

State Review Board Members Present

John Mullen, Chair
Dr. Jeff Klee
Carol Shull
Dr. Jody Allen, Vice Chair

Board of Historic Resources Members Absent

Dr. Ken Rutherford
Trip Pollard

State Review Board Members Absent

Dr. Eleanor Breen
Dr. Larissa Smith
Greg Rutledge

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Staff Present

Julie Langan, Director
Stephanie Williams, Deputy Director
Chris Novelli
Angel Williams
Elizabeth Lipford
Austin Walker
Brad McDonald
Megan Melinat
Jolene Smith
Jennifer Loux
Sarah Spota
Mike Pulice
Marc Wagner

Joanna Green
Joanna McKnight
Amanda Terrell
Aubrey Von Lindern
Jen Pullen

The joint training session began at 1:00 p.m. DHR Director Julie Langan opened the meeting with a welcome.

James Gabbert, DHR's National Register Reviewer at the National Park Service, presented stats on number of nominations reviewed and returned; described current process of review of nominations at NPS. "Associative" criteria A and B both require direct and important association between the event or person. Some red flags are — "example of, representative of;" function does not equal significance. Root causes: lack of context (theme/time/place); some level of comparison is necessary; not just facts—place within context

Example properties discussed:

St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery
Pennington Gap HD: acknowledge integrity issues (roofs)
Eyreville
Gascony

The joint training session ended at approximately 3:00 p.m.

BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

3:00 p.m. March 20, 2024

Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 428 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia

BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Board of Historic Resources Members Present:

Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax, Chair
W. Tucker Lemon, Vice Chair
Martin Townes
Mary Pope Hutson
Aimee K. Jorjani

**Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
Staff Present:**

Julie Langan, Director
Stephanie Williams, Deputy Director
Sarah Spota, Deputy Director
Elizabeth Lipford
Dr. Jennifer Loux
Blake McDonald
Brad McDonald
Megan Melinat
Jennifer Pullen
Karri Richardson
Caitlin Sylvester

Board of Historic Resources Members Absent:

Trip Pollard
Dr. Ken Rutherford

The meeting resumed at 3:03 p.m.

HIGHWAY MARKERS

Dr. Loux presented the following information regarding the Highway Marker Program:

1. Marker Text Development:

- a. Receive proposed text.
 - a. Staff research all historic aspects and context for each marker.
 - b. Text usually includes broader historical context.
- b. Folder filling
- c. Text revision
- d. Fact checking
 - a. Each word of text is checked by staff.
 - b. Text is sent out for review and feedback by an outside expert.
- e. Confer with outside experts.
- f. Revisions
- g. Back and forth with applicant
 - a. Text is sent to applicant for their review – applicant can suggest revisions to convey the most important historical information.
- h. Marker Editorial Committee
 - a. Committee of five (5) outside experts for editorial review

Board Comments Summary: Board members asked how outside experts are found to review marker texts. Dr. Loux responded that she typically relies on scholars who have recently written on the subject or her own network of historians and experts. Board members also asked how the subject matter of a proposed marker is evaluated. Dr. Loux stated that subject matter is evaluated as a part of the review and system scoring process. Staff considers if the proposed marker subject is of state and/or national significance, if it will fill a gap in the Marker Program, and if it is educationally valuable.

2. Multijurisdictional Marker Programs

- Thematic trails not operated by a city, county or state.
- Multijurisdictional markers are becoming popular especially with the upcoming 250 anniversary of the Revolutionary War
- Per §10.1-2209d, DHR must approve all markers to make sure the marker text is accurate (not the writing style).
- The Board will be considering markers from the Lafayette Trail and Revolutionary America programs at the March 21, 2024 Board Meeting
- Staff is anticipating an increase in multijurisdictional markers in the future.

Board Comments Summary: Board members asked if there should be a limit on review of multijurisdictional markers given current staff capacity. Dr. Loux stated that staff's priority is focused on DHR's marker program and, when necessary, she has no issue telling the multijurisdictional programs that their markers will have to wait for approval. However, these markers have usually gone through vetting before they reach DHR so they do not typically take too much staff time because staff is only fact-checking the markers. Director Langan asked if the OAG's new interpretation for marker text approval affects the Civil War Trails markers. Dr. Loux responded that she is unsure if this applies retroactively to the existing markers and said a decision would need to be made about whether DHR should reach out to Civil War Trails for any new markers going forward. Director Langan also pointed out that Civil War Trails is developing a new trail system for Virginia 250 which could mean a large number of markers to be reviewed. Board members also asked about the number of existing trails in Virginia and expressed concern about the proliferation of these types of markers, not only on the side of the road, but also how this will affect marker staff's capacity to manage these markers and DHR's markers. Dr. Loux agreed that review of these markers could become a capacity issue in the future.

3. Update on Marker Production at Sewah Studios Foundry

- Currently 31 markers on order with the foundry.
- The foundry is currently producing two DHR markers per week.
- Last year at this time there were 50 markers on order so the foundry is making good progress on the current production backlog.
- Foundry is currently expanding its facility and hiring additional employees; this should enable them to catch up on the production backlog sooner than expected.

Board Comments Summary: Director Langan asked if the foundry would be able to start making more markers after they have cleared the current backlog. Dr. Loux responded that it is unclear at this point if that will be case and reminded the Board that the Marker Program depends not only on its partnership with the foundry but also VDOT since they are the agency that installs the markers. Both VDOT and DHR have staff capacity issues that affect how many markers can be produced and installed per year. Director Langan suggested that DHR needs to pursue funding for additional markers, possibly through Virginia 250.

Easements

Mr. McDonald and Ms. Lipford presented the following information regarding the Easement Program:

1. **Current Monitoring Issues/Challenges**

Given the current state of the real estate market, new purchasers are not fully aware the property they are purchasing has an existing easement in place. Therefore, the first they may know of the easement when contacted by DHR stewardship staff to schedule a visit. This is not a good start to a new relationship between DHR and the property owner.

Outgoing owners are not notifying DHR of a pending sale or transfer as is typically required by the easement. Outgoing owners and/or real estate agents often misrepresent the terms of the easement to prospective owners.

Stewardship staff has noticed an increase in the lack of overall care and deferred maintenance on protected properties, especially as it pertains to outbuildings. When concerns are raised by staff, responses range from indifference to statements that they lack sufficient funds to complete the work.

Owners are more frequently embarking on projects without prior review by DHR, resulting in projects that are inconsistent with accepted preservation/rehabilitation practices. The outcome may result in irreversible alteration to, or loss of historic fabric.

DHR Responses and Potential Solutions:

With the recent addition of another full-time stewardship person, DHR is now better able to visit all easement properties on a more regular basis.

Staff is now fully integrated into an online conservation easement database software which makes it much easier to track and manage progress of monitoring efforts, project review events, possible violations, and establish priorities for where to focus future efforts.

Given the challenges associated with property sales and transfers, staff now specifically asks owners about any plans for sale or transfer as part of every monitoring visit, and reminds them of their obligation to notify DHR of a transfer and inform new buyers of the easement.

To make our portfolio of easement properties more visible, staff is working internally to post the easement shapefile layer on the public version of DHR's VCRIS database.

Establish better lines of communication and relationships with building permitting or planning departments within local municipalities. Provide relevant easement shapefile data to local governments and DHR points of contact for events involving an easement property and a local building permitting request.

Inform owners of options for grant money to assist with property care. Given that grant money is often rare and limited, especially for private property owners, staff provides more detailed information about the HRTC program.

Most grant money is geared toward property acquisition with lesser amounts for stewardship. Are there opportunities for the Board to speak with stakeholders in the preservation community and elected officials about the viability of regular funding for a Stewardship Threatened Sites program?

Board members are invited to accompany staff on monitoring visits so they may have a better understanding of some of these challenges.

Board Comments Summary: Board members and staff discussed several of the current monitoring issues and challenges including notification of property transfers, deferred maintenance, and property owners doing work on the property without notifying DHR. At the request of the Board members, Mr. McDonald briefly described the project review process and who is responsible for reviewing changes to different types of historic resources. Board members suggested that given capacity and backlog issues, perhaps DHR should stop accepting new easements for a time period until additional stewardship resources are included in the budget. Director Langan stated that not accepting new easements would have political repercussions and it is not re feasible since a number of state and federal grant programs require a DHR easement. Director Langan further stated that it may be possible limit the number of new easements. With regard to asking for additional stewardship funding and staff positions, Director Langan noted that as a small agency, DHR must prioritize its funding and staff requests. Mr. McDonald stated that ideally there should be an easement stewardship position at each of the regional offices so that property owners have more accessibility to staff. Ms. Melinat commented that it is important that the property owners/community feel

connected to stewardship staff and one of the best ways to do that is to have resident stewardship staff. Board members also suggested that staff consider an annual postcard to easement property owners for a general reminder about their easements and that they need to contact DHR if they are planning any work or transfer of the property.

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Grant

Ms. Sylvester presented a review of the BIPOC grant program including eligibility requirements and a detailed review of the application and review processes. She noted that in the first grant round, DHR received 56 pre-applications. Forty (40) of the 56 applications were determined eligible for the grant program and these 40 applicants received a formal grant application to continue the grant process. Thirty-two (32) grant applicants submitted formal grant applications. DHR staff reviewed the 32 applications and concluded that 14 projects were eligible for review by the Scoring Review Panel, a separate panel made up of Director Langan and two other qualified reviewers. The Scoring Review Panel determined that the following nine projects should be awarded BIPOC funding:

1. Cantauncack Archaeological Survey

Applicants: Flagler College and College of William & Mary

Funding: \$136,497

Working alongside a Virginia Indian Advisory Counsel and marine scientists, archaeologists from William & Mary and Flagler College seek funds for surveying and excavating oyster shell-rich archaeological deposits from the Powhatan town of Cantauncack. This will be done using traditional excavation methods as well non-invasive ground-penetrating radar and magnetometry surveys to understand the nature and extent of shell-bearing deposits at the site. This funding will support the first phase of this two-phase project.

2. Chatsworth School Stabilization Project

Applicant: Chatsworth School Museum

Funding: \$86,700

Chatsworth School, a partially Rosenwald-funded school for Black children, now functions as a museum. Rehabilitation funding is sought for external sheathing and roof repairs, as well as increasing accessibility through the installation for an ADA access ramp and gravel for the parking area.

3. Drexel-Morrell ADA Access and Accessibility

Applicant: Belmead on the James, Inc.

Funding: \$450,000

Funding is sought to provide ADA compatible access to the Drexel-Morrell Center that will allow the facility to operate as a fully approved Community Center that focuses on local Black history. This will include VDOT compliant property access and ADA compliant accessibility including lift, restroom, parking, and sidewalks.

4. Germanna BIPOC Archaeology, Engagement and Research Project (GBAER Project)

Applicant: Historic Germanna

Funding: \$292,510

The GBAER project aims to deepen understanding and fill a gap in BIPOC history and community connections in a region long overshadowed by a predominating focus on Civil War history. Funding is sought for two main project objectives: archaeological investigations of already identified BIPOC sites (Spotsylvania County Courthouse, east end of the Enchanted Castle, and associated BIPOC-related sites) and outreach and engagement with the Tribal and Black communities related to those sites.

5. John Wesley Community Church Restoration Project

Applicant: Waterford Foundation, Inc.

Funding: \$225,000

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6. Rappahannock Chief Otho S. and Susie P. Nelson House Rehabilitation

Applicant: Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia

Funding: \$771,309

At the Chief Otho S. & Susie P. Nelson House, the Rappahannock Tribe launched efforts to secure state and Federal recognition, battled Virginia's 1924 Racial Identity law denying Indian identity, operated an Indian school and apothecary, and began the fight for equal rights that continues today. Funding is sought for interior finishing – walls, plumbing, interior electrical and mechanical, and fixtures, as well as an accessible bathroom building and ramp/entry area to the house.

7. Restoration of St. John Rosenwald School, Phase IV

Applicant: St. John Family Life and Fitness Center (“SJFLFC”)

Funding: \$138,480

The St. John School was built in 1923 using Rosenwald funding and served the Black community in the Cobham and Gordonsville areas of Albemarle County until 1954. Funding is sought for the final phase of a multi-phase rehabilitation project that began in 2003. The project scope involves siding and window repairs, interior and exterior paint, restoring the flooring, and repairing the roof and roof structure.

8. Salem School Stabilization Project

Applicant: Salem School Preservation Committee, Inc.

Funding: \$335,000

Salem School was constructed in 1924 for the education of rural Black students, funded by the Black community, school boards, and the Rosenwald Fund. It is an unusual three-teacher school. Due to water infiltration, funding is sought for an initial stabilization project to repair structural deficiencies, replace roofing, repair clapboarding, and restore windows

9. Woodland Cemetery/Grounds & Chapel Restoration Project

Applicant: Woodland Restoration Foundation

Funding: \$78,758

This Woodland Cemetery was built during the Jim Crow as a resting place for the Black community and many of the interred were instrumental in the growth and development of Richmond. Funds are sought to restore the stability, access, and use of the historic chapel for volunteers. This will include installing HVAC, repairing failing windows, and ensuring the walkways and chapel entrance are ADA complaint and accessible. Funding is also sought for a ground penetrating radar survey of the site to make sure the surrounding burials are identified and not disturbed.

Ms. Sylvester further informed the Board that all applicants were notified on March 20, 2024 of the awards, and funding disbursements should be complete by the end of June 2024. Staff will initiate site meetings to make sure the projects are starting.

Finally, Ms. Sylvester informed the board that DHR is expecting a second grant round of \$3,500,000 (pending budget approval) to start in early 2025.

Board Comments Summary: Board members inquired as to the types and geographical locations of the projects awarded funding. Ms. Sylvester noted that six of awards will go to stabilization of historic resources, two of the awards will go towards rehabilitation of historic resources and one award will go towards cemetery preservation. Ms. Sylvester noted that staff is pleased with the current geographical distribution of grant awards (eight senate

districts) but did note that DHR did not receive a lot of applications from western Virginia. Staff plans to review and revise their outreach strategy for this area of the state in the next grant round. Board members also asked if the five unfunded projects will be automatically eligible for the next grant round. Ms. Sylvester stated that these applicants are eligible to re-apply for the grant. Board members asked if the grant's requirement for a DHR easement is causing issues for applicants. Director Langan replied that proposed language changes for Virginia Code Section 10.1-2202.5 would give DHR more flexibility in determining if a perpetual easement is the best public benefit for the BIPOC grant awards, and if not, what type of perpetual benefit would be most appropriate. Board members commented that they are generally pleased with this initial grant round including the number, geographical distribution and types of projects.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

TRAINING SESSION FOR THE
STATE REVIEW BOARD
March 20, 2024

Collections Study Room, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond,
Virginia 23221

State Review Board Members Present

John Mullen, Chair
Jody Allen
Jeff Klee
Carol Shull

State Review Board Members Absent

Dr. Larissa Smith
Dr. Eleanor Breen
Greg Rutledge

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff present

Mike Pulice
Jolene Smith
Amanda Terrell
Aubrey Von Lindern
Angel Williams
Marc Wagner
Austin Walker
Joanna McKnight
Mike Clem
Elizabeth Moore
Joannah Green
Jess Hendrix
LaToya Gray-Sparks

The State Review Board reconvened at approximately 3:20 p.m.

Discussion and Q&A with Jim Gabbert, NPS, on integrity, boundaries, editing documents, discontinuous boundaries, archaeology.

Training concluded at approximately 5:00 PM.