

## MEETING NOTES

Charlottesville Historic Resources Committee<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

Friday, August 13, 2021; 11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Remote meeting via Zoom

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### HRC Members present

Phil Varner, Chair  
Sally Duncan, Vice-chair  
Kay Slaughter  
Dede Smith  
Genevieve Keller  
Jalane Schmidt  
Jessica Livingston  
Rachel Lloyd

### HRC Members not present

Heather Hill  
William Clay III  
Margaret O'Bryant

### Staff present

Jeff Werner  
Robert Watkins

#### 1. Call to order:

- a. Virtual introductions
- b. Public comments

*The HRC receives no public comment.*

#### 2. Approval of the agenda:

*Dede Smith moves to approve agenda, Kay Slaughter seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*

#### 3. Approval of meeting notes:

- a. July 9, 2021 HRC Meeting Notes

*Smith moves to approve notes. Slaughter seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*

#### 4. Engagement of the Descendant Community for Court Square/Slave Auction Block site:

- a. Determine next steps (develop an online survey form, establish dates and locations for in-person meetings, coordinate a moderator, etc.) and review Rubric for Engaging Descendant Communities (found in the packet).
- b. Establish the project's goal. Staff suggests: *The engagement process is a listening process only, not a design process, which only City Council can authorize and initiate. From the descendant input, the HRC will develop and present to City Council recommendations for how the City might memorialize the legacy of slavery, particularly as it relates to Court Square.*

*HRC members plan to reach out to Mabel Wilson for question session and work session.*

*Staff expects that any in-person engagement is off the table for any foreseeable future.*

*Update from Jalane Schmidt regarding Memory Project at UVA: project to fund student researchers to do archival research of sales of enslaved people at Court Square, to build some sort of database. This research project would have periodic presentations and culminate in a written report to present to City Council.*

*Committee should urge Council to include engagement and historic research regarding sales at Court Square in future parks redesign requests for proposal (RFP).*

*Committee's letter to Council can encourage memorialization as well as including acknowledgement of enslavement at other places encompassed in RFP.*

*Priority should be a short online conversation with Wilson, to know what the big picture is, before planning more intensive work session.*

*Over the next few months, Phil Varner suggests HRC develop specific points for each park location that should be considered in the plan.*

*A history teacher at Charlottesville High School contacted Varner about potential student involvement at Court Square memorialization, looking at history and possible memorialization proposals.*

5. Downtown Walking Tour Map Update:

- a. Review sites and organization of new walking tour map
- b. Discuss using HRC funds to hire a designer.

*Walking tour map subcommittee had met with designer Anne Chesnut after last meeting. Important to design map to understand how much text to draft at each map stop.*

*Subcommittee advises that reducing review periods will keep costs down. If most edits/reviews happen intra-committee, it'll be cheaper and more efficient.*

*Smith recommends going ahead with hiring designer before discussion on who will bear printing costs. Once we have a design going, HRC can market it to other organizations to see if they want to contribute.*

*Genevieve Keller has concerns about digital format: in addition to print format, will these be designed for digital engagement as well?*

*Slaughter moves that we allocate up to \$8,000 for the design and printing (so we don't have to re-allocate for printing later), in agreement that we would ask other organizations later. Staff will also investigate digital options with map designer.*

*Lloyd seconds motion. Motion passes unanimously.*

*Varner moves to move rules of procedure discussion to next on docket. Lloyd seconds. Passes unanimously.*

6. Amend Rules of Procedure:

- a. Discuss proposed amendments regarding public comment and membership (as seen in packet)

*Purpose of discussion: to bring by-laws in compliance with actual operations of committee. Clarifying that there are 12 voting members appointed by councils, with two official ex-officio members (members because of the position they hold within City government). Jeff Werner is a member, as well as City Council member. HRC can also appoint additional ex-officio members so they can operate within committee.*

*Previously, bylaws stated they can appoint unlimited ex-officio members who vote, Varner suggests limiting to two.*

*Varner also recommends amending by-laws to actually include public comment policy.*

*The agenda in the by-laws is significantly different from agenda that committee follows. HRC should move approval of agenda to before public comment.*

*Add line that ex-officio members do not contribute to quorum.*

*At September meeting, motion to approve amendments.*

7. Vinegar Hill Park Signage:

- a. discuss proposed signage at Vinegar Hill Park

*Park has previously been established, at urging of committee, with recommendation for signage.*

*Park signage would include wayfinding signs, metal banners for light posts, monument sign. \$15,000 budget floated in staff report to council for signage.*

*Before staff gets current estimates for signage costs, committee should determine what is to be estimated, and if they need additional funding from Council.*

*Committee members remark that historical interpretation on proposed signage is not extensive.*

*Members propose that HRC wait until after Downtown Mall study and park redesign, since there's never been a park design: right now, primarily consists of signs. Recommendation that committee table it, until there's strong sentiment to claim it as Vinegar Hill space.*

*Committee should consider value in claiming space now with some sort of markers, to make sure it doesn't get lost in the future.*

8. Resolution Thanking Ellen Wagner for Service on Committee:  
*Slaughter moves to approve the following resolution:*

*WHEREAS, Ellen Wagner was appointed in June 2013 by City Council to the serve on the Historic Resources Committee and continued to serve through July 2021; and*

*WHEREAS, the Historic Resources Committee was established by City Council to advocate for historic preservation; to promote an appreciation of local historic resources, both tangible and intangible; and to encourage and coordinate, with appropriate municipal agencies, civic organizations, institutions and individual scholars, the documentation and interpretation of local history; and*

*WHEREAS, during Ellen's eight years of service, the Historic Resources Committee accomplished its charge through projects that include the repair of the Fairfax Taylor headstone and rededication of the gravesite, facilitation of the initiative to restore and interpret the Daughters of Zion Cemetery, rededication ceremonies for the Maplewood and Oakwood cemeteries, establishment of the Vinegar Hill Park and the installation of a temporary exhibit expressing the history of Vinegar Hill, development of the Downtown Walking Tour Map, and providing funding and support for the historic survey of the 10<sup>th</sup> and Page Neighborhood and for the examination of the unmarked graves of enslaved persons at Pen Park; and, in many other ways, successfully promoted the Committee's educational and advocacy mission;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Charlottesville's Historic Resources Committee thanks Ellen Wagner for her service to the City and its citizens, all of whom have benefited from her dedication and service.*

*Keller seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*

9. Staff Updates:

*Staff updates committee about Pen Park descendant discovery, and Downtown Mall landscape study.*