

Del Ray Citizens Association Membership Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2024 - 7:00pm

Virtual via Zoom

7:00 pm: DRCA Board Introduction and Welcome by President Katie Waynick

Contact the DRCA Executive Board: execboard@DelRayCitizen.net

[Del Ray Citizens Association](#)

- President: Katie Waynick president@delraycitizen.net
- Vice President: James Miceli vp@delraycitizen.net
- Membership Chair: Elizabeth Reyna membership@delraycitizen.net
- Activities Director: Rachel Lazarus drca_activities_director@delraycitizen.net
- Treasurer: Jim Wallace treasurer@delraycitizen.net
- Secretary: Lisa Quandt secretary@delraycitizen.net
- Chief Information Officer: Elena Hutchison admin@delraycitizen.net
- Immediate Past President: Tim Laderach pastpresident@delraycitizen.net

7:05 pm: Crime/Traffic report from Captain Dennis Andreas

Contact Captain Andreas: dennis.andreas@alexandriava.gov 703.746.6872

[Alexandria Police Department](#)

- Citywide
 - Preliminary end of year findings - crim up Citywide 32%, Del Ray followed the same pattern and increases
 - Larceny
 - Stolen autos
- Del Ray specific from the time of the last DRCA meeting
 - 6 part 1 offenses
 - 4/6 were CVS on Richmond Highway
 - Captain has engaged with them for crime prevention
- Traffic
 - Focused more on Commonwealth
 - Working on enforcement for new stop signs installed last month
- Spring Citizens Academy coming soon
 - 10 week program in Spring, Wednesdays
- Questions:
 - None

8:42 pm: Sheriff's office report from Sheriff Sean Casey - given by Katie Waynick

Contact Sheriff Casey: sean.casey@alexandriava.gov

[Alexandria Sheriff's Office](#)

- The Sheriff's office manages the jail, secures the courthouse, serves warrants and civil process in the City of Alexandria, helps the police department when called upon.
- Operation Elf: Thank you for donating to Operation Elf, helped over 200 children and 78 families receive gifts
- <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sheriff/sheriffs-office-welcomes-donations-for-operation-elf>

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7:20pm: Preservation Options for the Town of Potomac Historic District

[Slide Presentation](#)

Jim Parajon, City Manager

Karl Moritz, Director of Planning & Zoning

Bill Conkey, Historic Preservation Architect

Tony LaColla, Land Use Services Division Chief, Department of Planning & Zoning

Contact Jim Parajon: jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov

Contact Karl Moritz: karl.moritz@alexandriava.gov

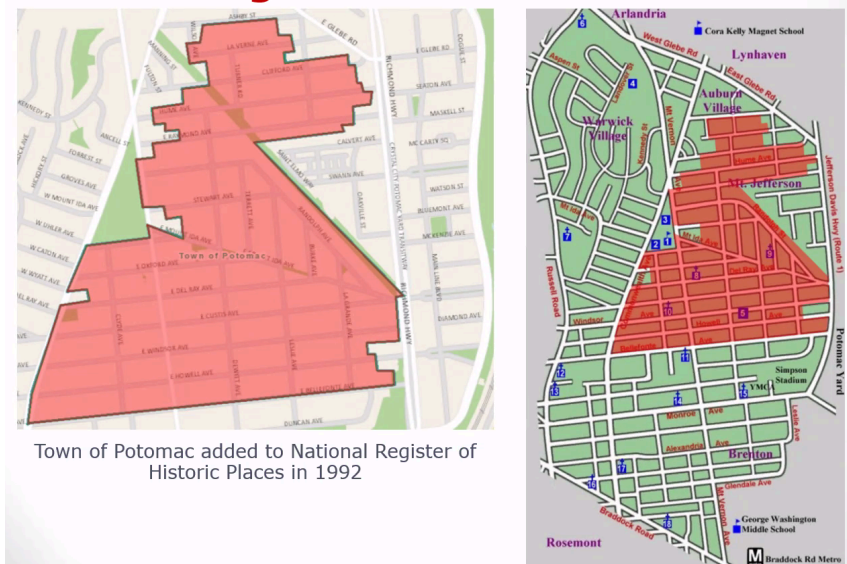
Contact Bill Conkey: william.conkey@alexandriava.gov

Contact Tony LaColla: anthony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov

Karl Moritz

- Character of Del Ray and Town of Potomac is cherished
- We all notice when a building is torn down and what is put in its place
- Some may be concerned about the pace of development, others wondering if they should be concerned
- Locally regulated historic districts in other parts of the City with an appointed Board of Architectural Review (BAR)
- Rules would apply to everyone in a district
- What is Del Ray's view on this
- 2019 some options were presented by Tony LaColla for
- Boundaries of Town of Potomac Historic District - National Register of Historic Places in 1992

Town of Potomac and Del Ray Neighborhood Boundaries



Town of Potomac added to National Register of Historic Places in 1992

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- Need to be deliberate about deciding to do this
- Currently an unregulated Historic District
- List of contributing buildings to the Town of Potomac - monitor impact or change to the contributing structures
- Del Ray pattern book: guide to additions and alterations “in character” with the neighborhood - City refers people to the guide, but is voluntary and not required
- DRCA hired a consultant to update the National Register - 2020 City staff did a walking assessment
 - 569 of original 690 are still contributing (most that lost contribution status were a mix of demolish and renovations - done with permit, primarily reno/ add)
 - 23 tear downs and building permits issued in Del Ray total
- 2023 Preservation Virginia added Town of Potomac to “Most Endangered List”

Bill Conkey

- Options for local historic districts - all would require action by City Council
 - Local Historic District
 - Similar to Old and Historic Alexandria District and Parker-Gray District
 - Regulated by BAR
 - Any improvement to the exterior of the property visible from a public right of way could require approval
 - Any new construction, demolition, or significant addition could require review and approval
 - Design Guidelines for the district specific to Del Ray
 - Neighborhood Conservation District
 - Focus on historic character of the neighborhood and less on the individual buildings
 - New construction, bigger things would be reviewed but not all
 - Demolition Delay Ordinance
 - Does not require BAR
 - Delay of demolition allows property Owners to work with staff to find other options
 - Period of delay would have to be developed
 - Requires establishment of Historic District
 - Require Pattern Book for Homes Built Through SUPs
 - Only required for homes requiring SUP
 - Cannot be required for projects that are by-right, a change in the ordinance could allow it to be applied to properties that require SUP

Next Steps

- Would need to be added to the City work program
- Justified by substantial community support
- Neighborhood needs to begin thinking about questions and how we take the pulse of the Community
- One option is a survey, but not the only option
- DRCA public outreach

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Questions / Comments

- Carol Black: Only member of Historic Alexandria Resources Commission that lives in Del Ray
 - What type of zoning changes could be made to discourage development of properties like the one across from Duncan Library. What happened to the FAR to allow that over development of a lot?
 - Karl Moritz: The zoning ordinance is available for potential change
 - Tony LaColla: Market economics have shown developers are trying to go for the maximum square footage allowed
 - Katie Waynick: Concerns regarding windows, HVAC - newer energy efficient models that do not meet guidelines. Are there ways to incorporate lessons learned from other districts so that the livability of the structure outweighs the design requirement.
 - Tony: BAR can make changes to the requirements at any time. When developing a new historic district that may be something put into the guidelines.
 - Bill Conkey: Sometimes contractors go rogue and create a problem by not contacting the City to determine what is allowed per the design guidelines. We would be looking at what is compatible with the norms and values of the neighborhood - how is this neighborhood different than Old Town. What are the character defining features of the building, that is what is trying to be saved.
 - Bill Hendrickson: Organized Del Ray History conference in 2012 which led to pattern book, survey of art deco buildings, former chair of HARC. We have some distinguished architectural buildings - Craftsman, Bungalows, Mail Order, some are more distinctive than others. We should not preserve every single structure, but the more important ones. How do we go about doing that? Could it work within a neighborhood conservation district? Designate top preservation priorities and buildings worthy of preservation - hierarchy of importance.
 - Karl: Don't want to be arbitrary in selection of things to consider and regulate. Period of historic significance can be codified, maybe 1970s are not as important as earlier times. Houses created as a craft rather than mass produced.
 - Bill Conkey: Different styles have come in and out of favor. It's an ever changing thing.
 - Tony LaColla: 100 year old building list, properties can be added. Structures are usually architecturally significant or historically important. Not every building that is over 100 years old automatically gets put on this list. Zoning overlay that then takes on same review properties as the BAR
 - Flora Buckalew: Affordable housing - reasonable houses torn down to build large houses that are out of scale and affordable reach of most. More done by developers rather than individual homeowners, is there a way to curtail this type of development that no one specifically asked for?
 - Karl: Current rules allow you to build to maximum allowable floor area within that zone.
 - Tony: Could change the zoning ordinance to take away current development rights, but we live in a market based economy. Hard for a City to regulate a developer or home owner differently.

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- Monica Parry: Live in a 1923 Sears House, used to live in Old Town. Was happy to work with BAR staff on Old Town property. Living in an historic district helped preserve the value of my house. How do you think the changes occurring from zoning for housing will affect the ability to implement the options in this presentation?
 - Karl: Conscious of wanting to limit the impact that Z4H would have on the size and shape of what is currently allowed. Does the additional value radically stimulate tear downs? City hired real estate economists to study this. Came to the conclusion that the financial value is not so great to change a lot of people's behavior - may change someone's plan who already was going to tear down and build a new house to build 2 units instead. Same size structure limits ability to change the character of the structure.
- Lisa Quandt: Can the survey that was already done to list the Town of Potomac on the National Register be used in creation of a new historic district that only reviews the properties listed as contributing, or that has a lower threshold of requirements for properties considered non-contributing that fall within the district boundaries?
 - Bill: Subjectivity. Application for the National Register that lists contributing versus non contributing is already available, but we would need to sit down and carefully lay out new criteria. Becomes a subjective judgment unless we can come up with tight criteria to judge it by. May create a natural breakpoint once we start looking at the survey.
 - Karl: Depends on what the community cares about - we hear a lot about the overall change in character to the neighborhood.
 - Bill: What is the area that we are considering. Is it just the Town of Potomac or a larger boundary? Would need to do more survey work for additional areas.
- Kristine Hesse: What does substantial community support mean? Are petitions enough? I imagine not everyone would be for this.
 - Karl: I don't want to pick an arbitrary number. Discuss that with your new Historical Committee. Does it represent the geographic diversity of the neighborhood, people in different stages of ownership of property are equally interested. It needs to go beyond people who are naturally drawn to this idea. Must include a variety of different folks of Del Ray. Can discuss more metrics in follow up. Would like to work with the City and neighborhood collectively to establish the baseline for moving forward. We do not have a specific metric available at this time.
- Kristine Hesse: Some budget numbers were included in the 2019 document. Can you explain how this would get into the Planning and Zoning work program and if the City would fund this moving forward.
 - Karl: Work Program allows the community and City Council to know what we are working on. Staff would need to tell City Council Del Ray has given broad support, would need to tell City Council what they would have to trade from the current Work Program in order to do this instead. Currently have a 2 year cycle for work program, but that does not mean other things cannot be discussed. Currently resources are allocated to a bunch of projects, any new project would need to bump something. Time is available now to work with DRCA on the initial phases of figuring out if this is viable and determine what the neighborhood

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wants, but implementation of the details and creation of the district would require that it be added into a work plan .

- Carol Black: Can any threshold steps be taken in the meantime while we are determining the long term plan?
 - Karl: Could discuss what zoning currently is in Del Ray and what we are seeing happen. We do not have authority to put a moratorium on demolition while we deliberate.
- Katie: What has the Preservation Virginia designation changed?
 - Karl: It puts a spotlight on the Town of Potomac and prompts meetings like this for discussions to start.

8:11pm: Vote on Modification to 2024 Budget for Wild Apricot Membership Fees

- Elizabeth Reyna, Membership Director
- Wild Apricot is our membership database and it limits to 500 contacts, not able to stay below that number.
- 64 households have joined within the past few months, we hope to continue see the growth
- We want to be able to represent more of our neighbors
- Increase contacts from 500 to 2,000 in Wild Apricot, about \$1,000 more per year
- Have already paid for it with new members we have gotten recently
- No smaller step up in membership levels

Motion from the Executive Board

- Modify the 2023/24 budget to accommodate the fees (approximately \$1,000) required for additional capacity in the Wild Apricot membership management system .

Discussion

- Is downgrading easy? Yes, but we use this as our email software as well. Holds membership database and emailing list. We can't mail a full mailing list of 1,000 right now because of the limitations at our current membership levels.
- Having a large database is allowing us to coordinate and speak with and network with 10-11 other neighborhoods around us
- House and Garden Tour will be back this year and can help some of our budget costs

Vote Called on Wild Apricot

Motion passed with 100% yes votes

8:17pm: Traffic Calming Committee Introduction and Vote: Elena Hutchison / James Miceli

Join the Traffic Calming Committee: [please sign up here.](#)

- Stop sign at Commonwealth / Windsor is going to traffic and parking board retroactively to support it

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- Needed to be installed because of danger
- DRCA is restarting the Traffic Calming Committee
- First meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan 17th at 7pm via Zoom
- New stop sign

Motion from the Executive Board

- The Del Ray Citizens Association supports the all-way stop installation at Commonwealth and Windsor.

Discussion

- We strongly encourage the City to quickly study and implement something similar at Windsor and Mount Vernon Avenue as well, given that this intersection has a similar dynamic with even more pedestrian traffic, and is now positioned to be an east-west route of choice through the area.
- Joe Stead: Can we include Windsor and Leslie in the support letter

Vote Called on Commonwealth / Windsor stop sign with amended language to include Windsor / Leslie

- The Del Ray Citizens Association supports the all-way stop installation at Commonwealth / Windsor and Windsor / Leslie.

Motion passed

8:22pm: Stormwater Committee (City of Alexandria) Update from James Miceli

- The Cities Ad-Hoc Stormwater Advisory Committee is changing status to a Permanent Committee
- Katie Waynick is currently serving on the Stormwater Ad-Hoc Committee, and has been elected to serve as Vice Chair of that committee for each of the past three years
- Other applicants were solicited via email, and no one stepped forward

Motion from the Executive Board

- The Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) supports appointing Katie Waynick to the City of Alexandria Stormwater Committee.

Discussion

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Vote Called on Stormwater Committee

Motion passed with 100% support

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8:20pm: Land Use Committee Update from Kristine Hesse, co-chair

Contact the LUC Committee: drca-land-use@delraycitizen.net

- There will be a meeting on January 30th via Zoom regarding Junction Bakery putting a covering over outdoor patio on the parking lot side - permanent structure with lights and fans. Classified as a building and needs to increase to the FAR to do this.
- No vote this month

8:25pm: Historical Committee Introduction: Lisa Quandt

Join the Historical Committee: [please sign up here.](#)

- The Historical Committee is one of the standing committees outlined in our bylaws
- First meeting will be held this winter at a time TBD
- Discuss History of Del Ray and the Town of Potomac
- Work with the Town of Potomac Historical Association for review and distribution of the Town of Potomac Residential Plaques
- Help educate neighbors and developers about the Del Ray Residential Pattern Book
- Survey residents to gain an understanding of the desire for the potential creation of a protection zone for contributing structures located in the Town of Potomac
- Report findings to Executive Board and DRCA members

8:30pm: Parks Committee Update from Peter Garafalo

Contact the Parks Committee: parks@delraycitizen.net

- Adopt a park volunteers thank you meeting on Feb. 7th at Pork Barrel
- The money earned from Adopt- a- Park has kept the DRCA running through the pandemic
- Please say thank you to all volunteers and especially Peter
- No vote this month

8:34pm: Arena Committee Introduction from Katie Waynick

Contact the Executive Board: execboard@delraycitizen.net

- Pull as many areas of expertise together as possible to respond to the Monumental sports arena proposal
- Email will be coming out with more information about the Committee
- Be more inclusionary than exclusionary
 - Any member of the Executive Board
 - 4 members of Land Use Committee
 - 4 members with pedestrian / parking and traffic expertise
 - 4 members with historic preservation expertise
 - 4 members representing business community
 - 4 members at large not covered under the above group
- Please send in a write up of your experience and interest in the committee to the Executive Board
- Keep on top of developments

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- Debate concerns / solutions
- Report back to membership
- Take a formal opinion and vote on the process
- The timeline is fuzzy, the Bill goes to Legislation in Richmond on March 9th to establish the authority. It will come back to the City and a vote from City Council after that.
- Advisory Board for people outside of membership with expertise on specific areas that may not be able to serve long term on the Committee or has an area of expertise specific to a portion

8:42 pm: Sheriff's office report from Sheriff Sean Casey - given by Katie Waynick

Contact Sheriff Casey: sean.casey@alexandriava.gov

[Alexandria Sheriff's Office](#)

- The Sheriff's office manages the jail, secures the courthouse, serves warrants and civil process in the City of Alexandria, helps the police department when called upon.
- Operation Elf: Thank you for donating to Operation Elf, helped over 200 children and 78 families receive gifts
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8:43pm: Announcements

- Rachel Lazarus, Activities director
 - DRCA [Holiday decorating contest](#) winners announced
 - 107 Stewart Ave – First place for judges' choice, peoples' choice and winner of the inaugural Clark W. Griswold Award
 - 3103 Russell Ave – First place tie for judges' choice
 - 206 E Alexandria Ave – First place for judges' choice – cards
 - 226 Burgess Ave – First place for people's choice - cards
 - Chili Cook Off scheduled for February 24th
 - Commonwealth Academy 5-8 pm
 - Getting website up and ready, tickets will go on sale soon
 - Getting sponsors now
 - Port City Beer
 - More food will be added this year
 - 50/50 raffle
 - Proceeds will go to Alive food pantry on Mount Vernon Ave
 - Working on setting up the band
 - Information to enter competition available soon
- Gayler Reuter: DRBA Liaison
 - Sending out requests for nominations for Heart of Del Ray
 - Del Ray Dogfest April 14th

8:47pm: Meeting adjourn