



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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March 6, 2012

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT: **3. Z-2554-11-1 HISTORIC DISTRICT:** Adoption of an ordinance pursuant to ACZO §31A and the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board submittal Z-2554-11-1, designating an Historic District and establishing an Historic District Overlay Zone encompassing the Calloway Cemetery, located at 5000 Lee Hwy., and which includes approximately 7,100 sq. ft. and is the portion of the property known as RPC #08-002-004 that lies west of the parking lot and driveway for the Calloway United Methodist Church. Only this portion of the property would become subject to Historic District regulations as contained in §31A of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **3. Adopt the ordinance approving the local designation of an historic district on the Calloway Cemetery, and approve the Calloway Cemetery Historic District Design Guidelines, with the modification that staff clarify the extent of the boundaries of the public rights-of-way along Lee Highway and 22nd Street North prior to the County Board meeting.**

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard this item at its February 27, 2012 meeting. Cynthia Liccese-Torres, CPHD Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff, provided background on the proposed Historic District designation and the Design Guidelines for the Calloway Cemetery. Also present were Michael Leventhal, CPHD Historic Preservation Program Coordinator, Chris Wilson, Chair of the Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), and several representatives of the Calloway United Methodist Church, including Saundra Green, Bernard Carpenter and Reverend Sonja Oliver. Ms. Liccese-Torres noted that the proposal meets three of the eleven specific designation criteria identified in Section 31A of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance, Historic Preservation Districts. She further indicated that if approved,

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Calloway Cemetery would become the first African-American cemetery designated in its entirety as an Arlington Historic District. Ms. Liccese-Torres explained that the Calloway Cemetery Historic District Design Guidelines are directly associated with the actual historic district designation and will govern future changes to and maintenance of the site.

Public Speakers

Sonja Oliver, Pastor of the Calloway United Methodist Church, spoke for the congregation and expressed gratitude and support for the proposed local historic district designation of Calloway Cemetery. She acknowledged and thanked the HALRB and congregation member Sandra Green for having the vision to realize the need for this historic designation and for providing the energy and support needed to bring it to fruition.

Chris Wilson, HALRB Chair, stated that, while this was a proposal initiated by the Trustees of the Calloway United Methodist Church, the process was very collaborative and everyone worked well together. He commented that it was a pleasure to observe and hoped that it would set a standard for other churches that have significant cemeteries. He stated that the HPP staff, on behalf of the HALRB Survey Committee, presented its findings to the full HALRB at its regular meeting on December 21, 2011. The HALRB voted unanimously to accept the findings and directed that the supporting documentation for the proposed Calloway Cemetery local historic district be submitted to the County Board for its review and consideration.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Ciotti stated that the cemetery is very impressive and it is a tribute to the church that it was able to maintain the cemetery throughout the many decades. In visiting the site, she found that there were various slopes and significant erosion and questioned if the archeologists found this in their visits. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that the focus of the probing exercise was not on the grading of the site, but revealed that several graves had concrete perimeters that have begun to sink over time. Commissioner Ciotti asked if there are public health concerns with erosion occurring at gravesites. She noted three gravestones in particular that were very vulnerable and suggested the need to maintain and protect against further erosion. Mr. Leventhal responded that staff will follow up with the church on ways to address these concerns, similar to the way the Ball Family Cemetery, which had similar conditions, was treated. Commissioner Ciotti stated that with the historic designation, and most likely a new perimeter fence, more attention may be brought to the site. She expressed a number of additional concerns, including restricting areas where people can walk in order to protect older graves, and installing a camera on the site to protect against grave-looting. Mr. Leventhal responded that the church, as with all historic property owners, would have stewardship responsibilities. The HPP staff will continue to follow-up and work with the church.

Commissioner Klein commended the HPP staff and church members, as this is a beautifully presented and very thorough report. She asked if there is a reason the cemetery is no longer in operation. Reverend Oliver responded that the cemetery is full. Commissioner Klein asked if there are plans to install a historic marker. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that while there are no immediate plans to install a marker, it will be discussed with the church as part of the follow-

up discussions. Commissioner Klein stated that it would be good to fence the cemetery to protect it and asked how tall it would be and if there would be gates. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that again this would be a part of the follow-up discussions with the church.

Commissioner Fallon inquired about the boundaries of the historic designation and if the church wanted to make renovations will a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) be required. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that at the request of the church trustees only the cemetery is located within the boundaries of the historic district and that alterations to the church would not require a CoA because it is located outside the historic district boundaries. Commissioner Fallon asked whether the historic district designation would protect the site if the state wanted to expand Lee Highway further. Mr. Leventhal responded that the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires state and local governments to undertake a Section 106 review to determine whether there would be adverse impacts on historic resources. Commissioner Fallon asked if the historic district designation would prohibit the County from making utility undergrounding improvements in the sidewalk along this stretch of Lee Highway. Mr. Leventhal responded that he believes the improvements could be accommodated.

As a follow-up, Commissioner Forinash asked for clarification regarding the cemetery's northern boundary with respect to the curb alignment of the sidewalk and Lee Highway. Ms. Liccese-Torres confirmed that the cemetery's boundary along Lee Highway as well as adjacent to 22nd Street North extends to the edge of the sidewalk where the grassy area ends.

Commissioner Iacomini thanked the HPP staff for their work on this proposal. This was one of the last proposals she reviewed as HALRB Chair and desires to move it forward. The proposal followed the rewrite of Section 31A, which included provisions requiring that Historic District Design Guidelines for the proposed historic district be included with the designation report. This is the first proposal for an historic district designation since Section 31A was amended.

Commissioner Malis commended and thanked everyone involved as this is a very interesting and worthwhile proposal. She asked about the County's interest in what happens on the site once it is designated as an historic district. Mr. Leventhal responded that the County has no responsibility for the site because it is private property; however, the County will require that the property be maintained, which is the responsibility of the property owner. Should the property owner desire to make changes to the site, it will have to come before the HALRB for review. A table that outlines the requirements for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) is provided on page 10 of the Calloway Cemetery Historic District Design Guidelines. Commissioner Malis confirmed that the County has no financial responsibilities with regard to the cemetery's historic designation.

Commissioner Harner inquired about the public accessibility of the supporting designation documents and if they would be available in the Central Library's Virginia Room or through another means. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that the documents are available in the HPP files, the Virginia Room, and on the County website. Commissioner Harner asked if there is a way to make the church's history and historical resources available to the public. Mr. Leventhal responded that church members often have such resources as old bibles and maps of church cemetery gravesites. Ms. Liccese-Torres noted that there is little historical information on the

church and cemetery, but the research conducted for the designation serves as a starting point for additional research and the gravestone survey forms can be updated accordingly as new information is revealed.

Commissioner Monfort commented that when the Planning Commission reviewed the Washington/Torreyson Farm House Historic District designation in 2010, the question arose as to whether the proposed zoning designation should have been reviewed by a Planning Commission committee prior to coming to the full Commission. He questioned whether it would require a formal understanding between the Chairs of the Planning Commission and the HALRB. Technically, since a change in the zoning district is proposed these requests should be reviewed by the Zoning Ordinance Committee (ZOCO). Commissioner Iacomini responded that the historic district designation process is outlined in Section 31A of the Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Malis referred to the Ordinance where it requires County Board action in accordance with the normal zoning approval procedures as specified in the Code of Virginia. Part of the approval procedures is review by the Planning Commission and its established applicable committee. Chair Sockwell confirmed that in the future all proposals for historic district designation must first be reviewed by ZOCO prior to review by the full Planning Commission.

Commissioner Forinash endorsed the comments of his fellow Commissioners and congratulated the HPP staff and Calloway United Methodist Church. This is a significant resource to the County. As a resident who lives adjacent to Lee Highway, he appreciates the care that others put into their properties along Lee Highway. He asked for clarification about the non-invasive probing procedure, and in response to Ms. Liccese-Torres's explanation, he concluded that it was a very shallow probing procedure.

Commissioner Cole thanked staff for their work on this proposal. He also acknowledged and thanked the Calloway United Methodist Church for initiating the process and bringing to the Commission's attention this important information about Arlington's African-American history.

Planning Commission Motion

Commissioner Klein moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board adopt the ordinance approving the local designation of an historic district on the Calloway Cemetery and approve the Calloway Cemetery Historic District Design Guidelines. Commissioner Iacomini seconded the motion.

Commissioner Malis asked for unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that staff clarify the extent of the boundaries of the public rights-of-way along Lee Highway and 22nd Street North prior to the County Board meeting. There was no objection and the amendment was incorporated into the main motion.

The Planning Commission voted 12-0 to support the amended motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Serie, and Sockwell supported the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Sockwell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Stephen Sockwell
Planning Commission Chair