



218 North Lee Street, Suite 310
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 549-5811
www.HistoricAlexandriaFoundation.org
HistoricAlexandriaFoundation@gmail.com

April 5, 2021

Planning Commission
City of Alexandria
301 King St., Room 2400
Alexandria, VA 22314

By email

Planning & Zoning Staff, PlanComm@alexandriava.gov
City Clerk, Gloria.Sitton@alexandriava.gov

**Re: April 8, 2021 Hearing, DOCKET ITEM #5,
Subdivision #2020-00009 506 North Overlook Drive.**

Dear Chairman Macek and Members of the Commission:

Historic Alexandria Foundation ("HAF") was formed in 1954 "to preserve, protect and restore structures and sites of historic or architectural interest in and associated with the City of Alexandria, Virginia, to preserve antiquities, and generally to foster and promote interest in Alexandria's historic heritage." Our membership includes citizens and property owners throughout the City of Alexandria.

The COVID-19 emergency imposes serious barriers to independent historical research associated with historic properties to fully respond to proposed demolition projects like the one before the Commission. Nevertheless, the material that has been placed before you indicates that the property at 506 North Overlook Drive is one of significant historic interest which has so far been inadequately researched and documented. Sites like this one, with significant African American importance, have been particularly susceptible to destruction with inadequate research, study and review. HAF therefore is concerned that approval of this subdivision as recommended will result in the loss of potentially valuable information about the original builder of the house on the property.

In our review of the staff report, it was surprising that comments from the Office of Historic Alexandria were not included in the report given the information that archeology staff has been able to uncover about Hampshire Fractious, and given the research of the

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA FOUNDATION

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North Ridge Citizens Association. Nor does there appear to be any input from the Alexandria Black History Museum. It was more surprising to read the City Department comments and to find the statement from Archeology that “No archeological oversight will be necessary for this subdivision.”

We urge the Commission to request that the owner allow access to the property for documentation of the historic house and any historic features on the grounds, and for archeological monitoring at the time of grading permits.

Thank you for your consideration of our statement.

Respectfully submitted,

Historic Alexandria Foundation

By: /s/ Morgan D. Delaney
President

cc. Sam Shelby
sam.shelby@alexandriava.gov
Ann Horowitz
ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov
Zachary Williams
ZGWilliams@Venable.com



April 5, 2021

Re: background for the property at 506 N. Overlook Dr.

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Garrett Fesler and I am one of the City archaeologists. I wanted to bring to the attention of the Planning Commission the historic background of the property located at 506 N. Overlook Dr. Research indicates that a man named Hampshire Fractious built the dwelling on this property in the late 1870s after purchasing a 13-acre tract of land in the vicinity. A Black man, Mr. Fractious was born around 1818 in Clark County, Virginia [now West Virginia]. He first appears in the documents in 1865 in Alexandria. His life up to 1865 remains a mystery at this time, but it is possible that his absence in federal censuses and other primary documents is because he was born into slavery. Between 1865 and the late 1870s Mr. Fractious resided in Old Town and worked as a plasterer. By 1880 he resided at the N. Overlook house with his wife Mariah, his adult daughter Harriett and her infant son, his 12 year old son Joseph, and one of his nieces, Lulla East. Mr. Fractious died in 1888 at the age of 70 years, and by the early twentieth century the Fractious family sold the old homestead. The house at 506 N. Overlook Dr. is one of the only postbellum dwellings built by Black residents still standing in Alexandria. Whether the structure itself retains historic fabric of its original construction is not known at this time.

Sincerely,

Garrett R. Fesler, Ph.D.
Archaeologist



NRCA, P.O. Box 3242, Alexandria, VA 22302

March 31, 2021

Nathan Macek, Chair
Planning Commission
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Subject: Proposed Subdivision #2020-00009 at 506 North Overlook Drive

Dear Mr. Macek:

The North Ridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) has a vested neighborhood interest in the history of the property at 506 North Overlook Drive. For the reasons provided below, we respectfully request that the Planning Commission not approve the subdivision at this time. This decision, currently scheduled for an April 8th hearing, should be deferred until the City can document the historical significance of the property and assess its value to the community.

The property at 506 North Overlook Drive has important historical significance

The historical record of 506 North Overlook should be fully investigated before the property is disturbed. The existing house, previously known in the North Ridge community as "The Civil War House," and more correctly referred to as the "Hampshire Fractious House," has long been celebrated as a unique and important symbol of the neighborhood's history. It has been featured as a historic property on the NRCA website for many years. It is also featured in both the 1981 and 2000 editions of "North Ridge Lore," a publication documenting the history and the best-known narratives about our neighborhood.

Members of NRCA and city staff have looked further into the property's history since we learned of the proposed subdivision. Records show this property as having been owned by one Hampshire Fractious, a free African-American man who owned this and other properties in Alexandria shortly after the Civil War. **Based on the research conducted to date, the City Archaeologist has stated that this house is a unique property in Alexandria due to its having been built by or for a free African American -- possibly a freed slave -- no later than 1878.** While we don't know the exact date of construction, the house is certainly more than 100 years old. It appears clearly labeled on the Hopkins map of 1878. Moreover, the property was listed in the 1992 Small Area Plan for Historic Preservation in North Ridge as the first of 37 properties designated as being a "Documented Historic Site."

In an appendix to this letter, we offer supporting documentation intended to support further research and evaluation by the City's historic preservation experts. Surely there is much more to be learned. Although the structure has been altered over time, we believe the materials and methods used originally could contain important clues to its age and its occupants. For example, the previous owner thinks that the 2-inch pine flooring in the main hallway and dining room is original. The exposed

beams in the basement may be informative. The surrounding grounds, may also contain archeological clues to the story of Hampshire Fractious and his family.

This is not just a subdivision request.

The applicant asserts that his request is solely to re-subdivide two existing lots into two lots of more equal size, proposed as Lots 500 and 501. According to the application, “The demolition of the existing dwelling is not the subject of this subdivision request.” The Staff Report states that “subdivision reviews are limited to the “... orderly division of land for development...” as stated in the Zoning Ordinance. Consideration of anticipated development or demolition is outside the purview of a subdivision review.

Yet the application states the applicant’s intent to demolish the existing house. **Approval by the City of a subdivision that would put a property line through the house would make demolition essentially a fait accompli.** We fear that any opportunity to save—or even study—this historic structure and property will be lost. We raised our objections to the earlier staff report in a February 24, 2021 letter to Mr. Moritz, which you have before you.

The topography of the proposed lots is of concern

The topography, including the steep gradient downhill towards the adjoining preschool property, is not addressed in the Staff Report. We have a report from a neighbor of a hillside spring that drains into the playground below. These and other safety concerns need to be evaluated under Section 11-1710(B) as part of the “suitability for residential use,” and under Section 11-1708(A)(2), which requires that “The subdivision will not adversely affect the public health, safety and welfare.”

The tree canopy on this property is also at significant risk

In addition to the historic significance of the property to North Ridge, these lots are important to the tree canopy of North Ridge. The loss of mature trees on this property due to demolition and construction would be measurable. Just as approval of the subdivision would be a death knell for the historic house, it also would threaten several majestic trees since two houses would be constructed on the property leaving little likelihood of saving them. We note as an important example the large white oak identified as #139 on the tree inventory with a root radius of 60 feet.

Petition from the adjacent neighbors

One hundred and four (104) neighbors on the streets surrounding 506 N. Overlook Drive have signed a petition to the Planning Commission requesting deferral of the subdivision request and asking for further research and evaluation on the history of this property and its significance to Alexandria’s heritage before the house or property is disturbed. That petition – referring to the application from the previous owner – is equally applicable to the pending identical application. Another copy of the petition is enclosed.

Requested actions

For the reasons cited above, which are supported by the factual evidence presented in the appendix to this letter, we request the following actions:

- The Planning Commission should defer any action on the applicant’s request, including subdivision, until the historical significance of this property has been properly assessed and the

community is afforded an opportunity to explore more appropriate uses for this important part of Alexandria's heritage.

- The applicant should be required to arrange for on-site inspection of the buildings and grounds by city staff experts in architectural history and archeology.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer input on behalf of NRCA and am available, with other officers of NRCA, to discuss these matters at your convenience.

Sincerely,



John Fehrenbach
President, NRCA

cc: Alexandria Planning Commission
Mayor Justin Wilson
Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
Councilman John Chapman
Garrett Fesler, City Archaeologist
Susan Hellman, Architectural Historian
Gretchen Bulova, Office of Historic Alexandria
Ann Horowitz, Office of Planning and Zoning
Sam Shelby, Office of Planning and Zoning
Zachary Williams, Attorney
Brian Thomas, Owner

Enclosures:

Appendix
Petition

Appendix to NRCA Letter of March 31, 2021

available for viewing in a shared Dropbox Folder at the following link:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u0k1l3ohwnz0un6/AAB8Y693s0xFjT_7lUsdk3TWa?dl=0

1. Petitions

- a. Original petition signed by 104 Neighbors of 506 N. Overlook Drive (with original signatures and addresses)
- b. Online petition to Planning Commission and Mayor (with 820 signatures as of 6:30 pm Feb 24)
 - i. List of signatures on the online petition to further study the history of the building
 - ii. Comments submitted to the online petition

2. Information on the History of 506 N. Overlook Drive

- a. Pictures of the house in 2021
 - i. East Side
 - ii. West Side
- b. Picture of the house in 1999 (as used on the NRCA website history page)
- c. Historical maps of the area from 1878 to 1945
- d. The 1900 map of Alexandria County for Virginia Title Co. redrawn for the 1981 North Ridge Lore on page 37 shows Hampshire Fractious owning a parcel of land in the approximate vicinity of the location of 506 N. Overlook.
- e. House listed as number 1 of 37 “Documented Historic Site(s)” on Page 61 of the North Ridge Small Area Plan for Historic Preservation of 1992. It shows 506 Overlook Drive (1878) under the name of H. Fractious Est. (1894), https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/masterplan/masterplan_historic_preservation.pdf
- f. Archaeology Preservation Code section 3413 (in 1989 amendments to Section 5-5-1 of City Code) on page 29 shows the house as having been owned by Hampshire Fractious, a free African-American
- g. A 1962 article, “The Map of Arlington in 1878- Places and People” by C. B. Rose, Jr. also shows the name “H. Fractious” in a location approximate to the location of 506 N. Overlook Dr. The map in question is the 1878 “Map of Alexandria (Arlington) County VA, reproduced from the “Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia.”
- h. What makes Alexandria Alexandria? Language from the Master Plan for Historic Preservation of 1992.
- i. Excerpts on 506 N. Overlook Drive from “North Ridge Lore,” by North Ridge Citizens’ Association, 1981

- j. Excerpts on 506 N. Overlook Drive from “North Ridge Lore Revisited,” by North Ridge Citizens’ Association, 2000.
3. Information on Hampshire Fractious, owner from 1876-1894?
- a. Taxes: He paid \$2,100 in real estate taxes on a house he owned on Queen St. in 1865. (Source: Website of The Friends of Freeman’s Cemetery, “*Alexandria Real and Personal Property Taxes Paid by African Americans, 1865*”.) This amount is the second highest amount listed in this record of 37 pages of names.
 - b. Caring for an Invalid Mother: In 1867 a list of blind Freedmen the Alexandria Superintendent of the Freedmen’s Bureau, included Page Fractious, a 90-year-old blind woman who lived at corner of West and Cameron St, whose condition was “very feeble” and “helpless” and “under charge and support of son, whose name is Hampshire Fractious”.
 - c. Legal: In 1868 there was court ruling reported in the Alexandria Gazette of September 17th in which “Dr. Davis, colored, for swindling a colored man named Hampshire Fractious, out of a watch, was discharged, his identity with the swindler not being established.”
 - d. Census: Hampshire Fractious and family in US Census from 1870, Year: 1870; Census Place: Jefferson, Alexandria (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: M593_1632; Page: 206A; Family History Library Film: 553131
 - e. Taxes: In 1872 there was a public listing in the June 6th Alexandria Gazette of the auction/sale of numerous properties for the non-payment of taxes. On that list was Hampshire Fractious, and the property for sale was at the corner of West and Cameron.
 - f. Purchase of Property: Deed recorded June 18, 1878 regarding sale at auction of 12 acres of land previously part of Roach’s Mill, sold for \$22/acre totaling \$264 paid by Hampshire Fractious to S. Ferguson Beach, commissioner of sale. There is no mention of a structure on the property in this deed. (Reference to a Plat and Survey by Thomas N. Carter done April, 26, 1869.)
 - g. Map of Arlington in 1878 taken from the *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia*, compiled by G.M. Hopkins, published in Philadelphia, 1879 – Hampshire Fractious and his daughter Sylvia are mentioned on page 28 in the article “The Map of Arlington in 1878- Places and People” by C. B. Rose, Jr.
 - h. Census: Hampshire Fractious and family in US Census from 1880, Year: 1880; Census Place: Jefferson, Alexandria (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: 1351; Page: 438C; Enumeration District: 007.
 - i. The Black History Museum of the Office of Historic Alexandria may have additional information on Mr. Fractious given the above history that might contribute to the historical importance of the property/structure at 506 N. Overlook Dr.

**Petition
Requesting Deferral
of the Application to Subdivide
the Property at 506 North Overlook Drive**

To the Alexandria Planning Commission:

You have before you a request to subdivide the property at 506 North Overlook Drive which will require demolition of a house of great significance to our community. This vertical plank wooden house is known among North Ridge neighbors as the "Civil War House," and is situated in a prominent hillside location overlooking the intersection of North Overlook Drive, Tennessee Avenue, and Old Dominion Boulevard.

Given the fact that this house was:

- built prior to the Civil War (1850 according to property records)
- owned by a free African American man named Hampshire Fractious in the years immediately after the war (spelled Fractius in the 1880 census record)
- listed as a Documented Historic Site in the 1992 Alexandria Master Plan for Historic Preservation
- cherished by residents of North Ridge community as an historic structure since the 1930's
- featured as a symbol of the historic character of the neighborhood in publications and neighborhood websites for many years

Given the longstanding neighborhood lore that this house:

- may have served as a hospital during the Civil War
- may be the site where Walt Whitman served as a nurse during the war
- is said to be a site where bones from amputated limbs have been found

We, the undersigned, request that the Planning Commission defer any action on this application, and require the owner to consult with City authorities and local residents on alternate uses of the property consistent with its historic importance.

At a minimum, any action on this property that could result in damage to the existing structure or the mature vegetation present should be prohibited until these questions involving the history of the property are resolved. The City should require the applicant, JS Investment, LLC, to meet with the Office of Historic Alexandria so that OHA can make an assessment of whether an Archeological Evaluation Report and Resource Management Plan need to be developed before the City takes action on JS Investments, LLC's subdivision application. Specific

preservation measures may be necessary to safeguard and preserve the special qualities of this unique house and its story as an important part of Alexandria's history.

Signed,

The immediate neighbors of 506 N. Overlook Drive (original signatures):

Name	Street Address	Signature
Dan Melchior	506 Tennessee Ave	Dan Melchior
Sarah Howard Schramm	511 North Overlook Dr.	Sarah Howard Schramm
Campbell Vogel	514 N. Overlook Dr.	Campbell Vogel
Dan Vogel	514 N. Overlook Dr.	Dan Vogel
Isabel Saldaña	519 N Overlook Dr	Isabel Saldaña
Sebastián Acevedo	519 N Overlook Dr	Sebastián A.
David Peapack	5417 Hancover Dr	David Peapack david@greenhaus.org
Ellen Parkhurst	601 N. Overlook Dr.	Ellen L. Parkhurst
Linda Durand	603 N. Overlook Dr.	Linda Durand
Earl Durand Jr	603 N. Overlook Dr.	Earl Durand Jr.
Scott B. McLeod	605 N. Overlook Dr.	Scott B. McLeod
Dora Hughes	605 N. Overlook Dr	Dora Hughes
John Baker	607 N. Overlook Dr	John Baker

Name	Street Address	Signature
Sara Dwyer	3603 OVAL Dr.	Sara Dwyer
Mary Jundtz	607 N. Overlook	Mary Jundtz
Nate Mc	611 N Overlook	Nate Mc
Eric Co	611 N Overlook	Eric Co
Mary E Smith	610 N. Overlook	Mary E. Smith
WILLIAM ERICKSON	609 N. OVERLOOK	William
Mary Jan Kene	606 N. Overlook	Mary Jan Kene
Keith P. Arnold	515 N. Overlook	Keith P. Arnold
Julia A. Arnold	515 N. Overlook	Julia A Arnold
Kate Arnold	515 N. Overlook	Kate Arnold
Kathy London	512 N. Overlook	Kathy London
Larry London	512 N. Overlook	Larry London
Amy Harris White	600 N. Overlook	Amy Harris White
Franklin White	600 N. Overlook	Franklin White
O. A. H.	3603 Old Dominion	David Hayes

Name	Street Address	Signature
Peter K. Tideman	414 TENNESSEE AVE	PETER TIDEMAN
Marian J. Tideman	414 Tennessee Ave.	Marian J. Tideman
Amy Long	3511 Old Dominion Blvd.	Amy Long
JULIA PORTER	3315 Old Dominion	JULIA PORTER
Jim CLARK	3315 Old Dominion	Jim Clark
Staci Rijal	3507 Old Dominion Blvd	Staci Rijal
Kathleen Hicks	3505 OLD DOMINION	KATHLEEN HICKS
Deborah Porras	3422 Old Dominion	Deborah Porras
Jose Porras	3422 Old Dominion	Jose Porras
Lori Hellkamp	3420 Old Dominion	Lori Hellkamp
Jeanifer Roda	3416 Old Dominion	Jeanifer Roda
Anthony J. Roda	3416 Old Dominion jaroda@comcast.net	Anthony J. Roda
Ulysses Billips	3414 Old Dominion	Ulysses Billips
Alex Talley	3403 Old Dominion	Alex Talley
G. F. F.	3405 Old Dominion	G. F. F.

PETER VOGEL 3408 Old Dominion Blvd.

PRUSUNDOG.
@gmail.com
Peter Vogel
[Signature]
[Signature]

Donald Claggett 3321 Old Dominion Blvd
don.claggett@yahoo.com

Sarah Martinez 3319 Old Dominion Blvd
sarah.martinez@gmail.com

Alberto Martinez 3319 Old Dominion Blvd
albert@albertomartinez.org

Nicea Berrios 3317 Old Dominion Blvd.

Tom TYLER 3404 Old Dominion Blvd

Larry & Lindy Spruill 3402 Old Dominion Blvd

Michael McBride 3400 Old Dominion Blvd

Teddy & Bill Clayton 3402 Halcyon Dr. Teddy & Bill Clayton

Hugh Vassar & Eric Wagner 3408 Halcyon Dr. Hugh Vassar
HughVassar@gmail.com

Sean A Shedock 3414 Halcyon Drive 814 574 7470
[Signature] seanashedock@gmail.com

Virginia Peabody 3417 Halcyon Dr. gingerpeabody@gmail.com

Steve Colangelo 518 N. Overlook Dr. steve.colangelo@gmail.com

Rachel Colangelo 518 N. Overlook Dr. rachel.y.colangelo@gmail.com

Sam Henderson	3503 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Sam Henderson</i>
Bruce Johnson	3508 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Bruce Johnson</i>
Libby Eife-Johnson	3508 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Libby Eife-Johnson</i>
Bridget Koway	3506 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Bridget Koway</i>
Joseph Koway	3506 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Joseph Koway</i>
Millie Pollinger	3502 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Millie Pollinger</i>
Seth Pollinger	3502 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Seth Pollinger</i>
Keri Henderson	3503 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Keri Henderson</i>
Jeanne Snapp	517 North Overlook Dr.	<i>Jeanne Snapp</i>
Bruce R. Snapp	517 N. Overlook Dr.	<i>Bruce Snapp</i>
Elaine Anderson	3411 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Elaine Anderson</i>
Mary Anderson	341 Halcyon Dr.	<i>Mary Anderson</i>

Jackie Frank
Mary Frank

720 South Overlook Dr.
720 South Overlook Dr.

Benjamin Frank
Mary Frank

Mr. ~~Frank~~

615 N. Overlook Drive

V.B. Richardson III

Russell Bailey 705 N. Overlook Dr.

Russell Bailey

Anne L. Bailey 705 N. Overlook Dr.

ANNE L. BAILEY

722 N. Overlook Dr.

Charles W. Kent

722 N. Overlook Dr.

Mary M. Kent

800 N. Overlook Dr.

Brian W. Mistretta

Angela M. Mistretta 800 N. Overlook Dr

Angela M. Mistretta
~~Angela M. Mistretta~~

**Petition
Requesting Deferral
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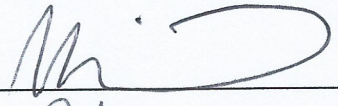
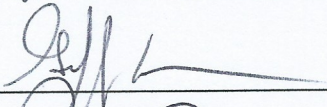
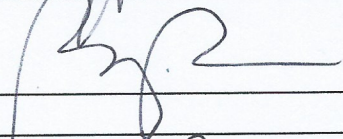
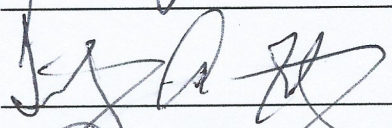
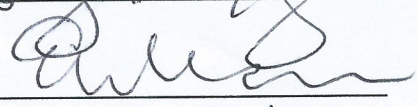
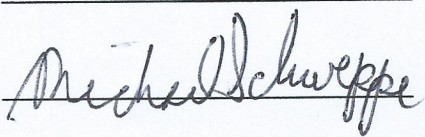
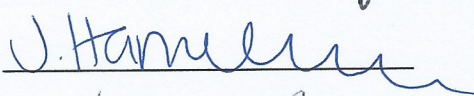
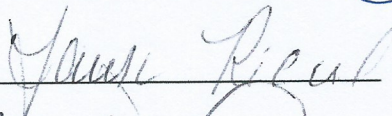
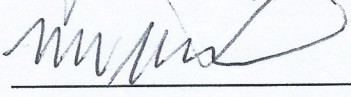
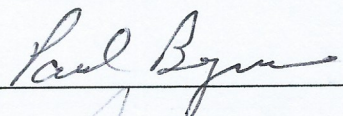

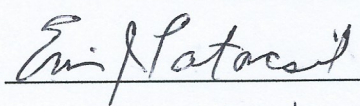
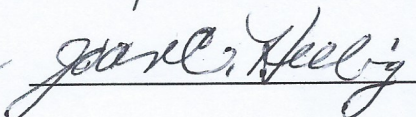
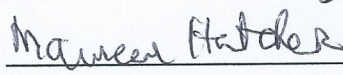
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Signed,

The immediate neighbors of 506 N. Overlook Drive (original signatures):

Name	Street Address	Signature
Michael W Kelly	513 Tenn.	Michael Kelly 2/20/21
SANDRA BYRNE	512 TENN. AVE.	Sandra M. Byrne 2/20/2021
Amy Reed	514 Tenn Ave.	Amy Reed
Dale R. Killinger	510 Tenn Ave	Dale Killinger
Rhea G. Killinger	510 Tenn Ave	Rhea Killinger
Mitchell Clark	509 TOWN AVE	Mitchell Clark
Robin Clark	509 Tennessee Ave	Robin Clark
Meredith Taylor	507 Tennessee Ave	Meredith Taylor
GARY FALWELL	411 TENNESSEE	Gary Falwell
Margaret Falwell	411 Tennessee Ave.	Margaret M. Falwell
Nicholas Mazur	408 Tennessee Ave.	Nicholas Mazur
Elizabeth Stock	410 Tennessee	Elizabeth Stock
Tessa Supper	405 Tenn Ave	Tessa Supper

Name	Street Address	Signature
MORTEN KUCEY	401 TENNESSEE AVE	
Geoff Horsh	402 Tennessee Ave	
Bryn Bausley	505 Tennessee Ave	
Tim Staley	503 Tennessee Ave	
Erin Weaver	517 Tennessee Ave	
Michael Schwapp	523 TENNESSE AVE	
JESSICA Hamilton	518 Tennessee Ave	
Laura Ricard	516 Tennessee Ave	
Michael Ricard	516 Tennessee Ave	
PAUL BYRNE	512 TENN. AVE	
Jason Miller	412 Tenn Ave	
Pete & Erin Patocsil	407 Tenn Ave	
Joan C. Helbig	501 Tennessee Ave	
Marianne Hatcher	529 Tenn Ave	

Appendix to NRCA Letter of March 31, 2021

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- c. Historical maps of the area from 1878 to 1945
- d. The 1900 map of Alexandria County for Virginia Title Co. redrawn for the 1981 North Ridge Lore on page 37 shows Hampshire Fractious owning a parcel of land in the approximate vicinity of the location of 506 N. Overlook.
- e. House listed as number 1 of 37 “Documented Historic Site(s)” on Page 61 of the North Ridge Small Area Plan for Historic Preservation of 1992. It shows 506 Overlook Drive (1878) under the name of H. Fractious Est. (1894), https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/masterplan/masterplan_historic_preservation.pdf
- f. Archaeology Preservation Code section 3413 (in 1989 amendments to Section 5-5-1 of City Code) on page 29 shows the house as having been owned by Hampshire Fractious, a free African-American
- g. A 1962 article, “The Map of Arlington in 1878- Places and People” by C. B. Rose, Jr. also shows the name “H. Fractious” in a location approximate to the location of 506 N. Overlook Dr. The map in question is the 1878 “Map of Alexandria (Arlington) County VA, reproduced from the “Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia.”
- h. What makes Alexandria Alexandria? Language from the Master Plan for Historic Preservation of 1992.
- i. Excerpts on 506 N. Overlook Drive from “North Ridge Lore,” by North Ridge Citizens’ Association, 1981

- j. Excerpts on 506 N. Overlook Drive from “North Ridge Lore Revisited,” by North Ridge Citizens’ Association, 2000.
3. Information on Hampshire Fractious, owner from 1876-1894?
- a. Taxes: He paid \$2,100 in real estate taxes on a house he owned on Queen St. in 1865. (Source: Website of The Friends of Freeman’s Cemetery, “*Alexandria Real and Personal Property Taxes Paid by African Americans, 1865*”.) This amount is the second highest amount listed in this record of 37 pages of names. The City Archaeologist thinks this entry might be a mistake, due to the exaggerated amount of taxes supposedly paid.
 - b. Caring for an Invalid Mother: In 1867 a list of blind Freedmen the Alexandria Superintendent of the Freedmen’s Bureau, included Page Fractious, a 90-year-old blind woman who lived at corner of West and Cameron St, whose condition was “very feeble” and “helpless” and “under charge and support of son, whose name is Hampshire Fractious”.
 - c. Legal: In 1868 there was court ruling reported in the Alexandria Gazette of September 17th in which “Dr. Davis, colored, for swindling a colored man named Hampshire Fractious, out of a watch, was discharged, his identity with the swindler not being established.”
 - d. Census: Hampshire Fractious and family in US Census from 1870, Year: 1870; Census Place: Jefferson, Alexandria (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: M593_1632; Page: 206A; Family History Library Film: 553131
 - e. Taxes: In 1872 there was a public listing in the June 6th Alexandria Gazette of the auction/sale of numerous properties for the non-payment of taxes. On that list was Hampshire Fractious, and the property for sale was at the corner of West and Cameron.
 - f. Purchase of Property: Deed recorded June 18, 1878 regarding sale at auction of 12 acres of land previously part of Roach’s Mill, sold for \$22/acre totaling \$264 paid by Hampshire Fractious to S. Ferguson Beach, commissioner of sale. There is no mention of a structure on the property in this deed. (Reference to a Plat and Survey by Thomas N. Carter done April, 26, 1869.)
 - g. Map of Arlington in 1878 taken from the *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia*, compiled by G.M. Hopkins, published in Philadelphia, 1879 – Hampshire Fractious and his daughter Sylvia are mentioned on page 28 in the article “The Map of Arlington in 1878- Places and People” by C. B. Rose, Jr.
 - h. Census: Hampshire Fractious and family in US Census from 1880, Year: 1880; Census Place: Jefferson, Alexandria (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: 1351; Page: 438C; Enumeration District: 007.
 - i. The Black History Museum of the Office of Historic Alexandria may have additional information on Mr. Fractious given the above history that might contribute to the historical importance of the property/structure at 506 N. Overlook Dr.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 8, 2021

TO: CHAIR NATHAN MACEK AND MEMBERS OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: DOCKET ITEM #5 - SUBDIVISION #2020-00009 –
506 NORTH OVERLOOK DRIVE

Based on Commissioner Brown's inquiry regarding whether there was a process that could be undertaken to preserve the dwelling at 506 North Overlook Drive, staff provides the following information.

Buildings over 100 years old that meet certain criteria may be placed on the City's 100-year-old building list. Listed buildings are subject to protection measures within the Board of Architectural Review's authority as granted in the Zoning Ordinance. Under the Zoning Ordinance, the City Manager or City Council may submit a list of 100-year-old buildings to Planning Commission to be considered for designation on the 100-year-old building list. First, staff must conduct an on-premises inspection to determine that the buildings are at least 100 years old. The list must include a report that demonstrates how the buildings would comply with at least two of the criteria in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-303 as follows:

- (A) Is it entered upon the National Register of Historic Places as called for by the United States Congress in the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966?
- (B) Is it entered upon the Virginia Landmarks Register?
- (C) Does it exemplify or reflect the architectural, cultural, political, economic, social or military history of the nation, state or community?
- (D) Is it associated with persons of national, state or local prominence or with events of national, state or local historical significance?
- (E) Is it a good example of local or regional architectural design or does it exemplify local craftsmanship, making it valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction?
- (F) Is it the work of a nationally recognized architect or can it be attributed to a local architect or builder of local prominence?
- (G) Does it foster civic pride in the city's past or enhance the city's attractiveness to visitors?

Following this, the Planning Commission would hold a public hearing to consider the list provided and make recommendations to City Council on whether buildings should be added. City Council

would then hold a public hearing on the matter to make a final determination as to whether the buildings meet the criteria outlined in Section 10-303. The approval process would require the adoption of text amendment and rezoning ordinances at subsequent City Council public hearings.

Once listed as 100-year-old buildings, the Board of Architectural (BAR) must approve any proposed exterior alterations visible from the public right of way and demolitions, like the review for buildings in the historic districts.

The Zoning Ordinance limits Planning Commission's actions on a subdivision request at public hearing. Planning Commission may only approve; approve with conditions required revisions, additions or changes or disapprove the request. Unless an applicant requests it, Planning Commission cannot defer a decision on a subdivision.

STATEMENT Planning Commission 8 Apr 2021
Subdivision #2020-00009 506 North Overlook Drive
Sunny Yoder, 2422 Farm Road

Good evening. My name is Sunny Yoder and I have lived on Farm Road in North Ridge for 37 years. I bought my house because of its character and also the character of the neighborhood. I chose Alexandria because I loved that it has a real history and character, unlike the 1950s housing developments where I grew up.

I hope that you will defer action on the proposed subdivision or take any other steps available to you that will allow the structure, its history, and the story of its occupants to be researched by experts.

As you deliberate on this application, I ask you to consider: What makes Alexandria, Alexandria? I started to write down what makes Alexandria, Alexandria but then I found that the city had done that, better than I could.

Here's the city's own language from the 1992 Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

“The unique identity of any locality derives from its geographical setting, its early development pattern, its familiar architecture and settings, and its people, all of which combine to provide a city [and— I would add—a neighborhood] with its special sense of place. The preservation and conservation of early buildings, streetscapes, vistas, landscapes and neighborhoods serves to maintain and enhance the unique character of a city....” **Does the 1878 Hampshire Fractious house—surrounded by mature canopy trees— not contribute to Alexandria’s unique identity?**

These are the four goals set forth in the Master Plan: “1. To identify historic resources throughout Alexandria. 2. To protect and preserve historic resources through sensitive management that prevents their destruction, damage and neglect. 3. To guide development in a manner that is compatible with the historic character and resources of the site and surrounding neighborhood. 4. To promote public awareness and appreciation of historic resources and Alexandria's heritage...”

Does the Hampshire Fractious house not perfectly illustrate the importance of these goals?

The Master Plan notes that preserving the historic character of the city and its neighborhoods depends on decisions on individual projects. **Decisions you make—one by one—like this one.**

I very much fear that, project by project, the city is losing its character and heritage. I ask you, Planning Commissioners, to give full consideration to how the house at 506 North Overlook contributes to what makes Alexandria, Alexandria and what makes North Ridge, North Ridge.

Thank you.

Good evening.

My name is Jeanne Snapp. I have lived at 517 North Overlook Drive, 3 houses from the 506 North Overlook property under discussion, for 45 years. Immediate neighbors as well as the larger community have appreciated having this unique historic property within our midst, anchoring us in the larger context of the Alexandria story.

When we learned of the recent plan to re-subdivide the property and subsequently demolish the house widely referred to as “the Civil War House,” neighbors sought to pursue possibilities for preserving this part of our community history. We created a petition requesting that the Planning Commission defer any action on the application for re-subdivision of the property and require the applicant to meet with the Office of Historic Alexandria to make an assessment of whether an Archeological Evaluation Report and Resource Management Plan need to be developed before the City takes action on the subdivision application.

Neighbor Mike Kelly and I personally went house to house on the immediate blocks surrounding the 506 North Overlook property asking residents whether they were interested in signing the petition. To my amazement, in just a few days, we gathered 106 signatures from 77 different households in support of the petition. Neighbors were shocked at the possible loss of this cherished property and enthusiastically agreed the property should be evaluated by the City’s historical and archeological experts.

A summary version of the petition was published online for the larger community to give their input about the need for an historical review of the 506 North Overlook property prior to any development. 1,045 people responded in support of the online petition before it closed. In disbelief, I looked at the signatures, which came in from all around the country and even from overseas, recognizing names of many kids who grew up in the City, as well as former residents who moved away. This property has been valued by a lot of people for a long time.

Lots of neighbors, City residents, and City staff have been researching the facts of this property since the subdivision request became public – and since we created our petitions. Many aspects of the common beliefs about the property turn out to not be true. It turns out that the house was most likely not built before the Civil War, was not a Civil War Hospital, nor was Walt Whitman a nurse in the structure. However, discoveries tell us that the house is most likely 143 years old, is featured as a Documented Historic Site in Alexandria’s 1992 Master Plan for Historic Preservation, and was owned and perhaps the only structure built in Alexandria during that period by a free African American named Hampshire Fractious.

Even as we learn more about the property the intent of the hundreds of in-person and online petitioners remains: Please defer action on this subdivision request until this important assessment can be completed. At a minimum, place a contingency on any approval requiring access to the property and sufficient time to complete the historical research.