SPECIAL CALL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING (HPC)
FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016 9:30 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION**

   A) **Proposed Modifications to CLG Grant**

3. **STAFF COMMENTS**

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

This is a Public Meeting. Should any interested party seek to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Anyone who needs a special accommodation for this meeting may contact the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at 978-4920 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting

CITY OF VERO BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT
2016 Proposed CLG Grant Application - Grant Start Date: July 1, 2017

Requesting:

(1) Letter from City Council to allow HPC to Apply for CLG Grant Funds from the State of Florida for the project as outlined below.

(2) Letter of Commitment from City Council to purchase grant related equipment as outlined in the description below if the grant proposal (Option #2) is awarded by the State of Florida.

CLG GRANT PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The City of Vero Beach became a Certified Local Government (CLG) in November 2014. As such, the City is eligible to apply for special monies from the State of Florida that are set-aside for CLG's for the purpose of survey and education projects in historic preservation. A cash match is not required.

In 2015, the City's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) submitted a grant request to the State of Florida asking for $35,000 to hire a Planning Consultant to conduct a historic resources survey of McAnsh Park, a historic neighborhood not included in the original 1990 survey. Although the proposal was received well by the grant panel, the field was highly competitive, monies were limited, and in the end only the top three ranked applications received funding. Each of the top-ranked projects featured a dynamic education component, in-kind match or unique aspect that made their application stand out more prominently than the average grant request.

At the time of this report, Vero's HPC had agreed to move forward in 2016 with a CLG grant request for $35,000 to hire an outside consultant to conduct a traditional historic survey of McAnsh Park and other downtown neighborhoods. Although a match is not required, it was also discussed and agreed upon that to be competitive in the grant process in 2016 and to cover the consultant costs, the HPC would ask the City of Vero Beach for a cash match of at least $25,000.

Meanwhile, the Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission became aware of a different opportunity for survey that would cost less than the previous proposal, have long-term benefits and still be dynamic and unique enough to impress the grant committee. This proposal, known as Option #2, will be presented for consideration to the HPC at a special call meeting scheduled for Friday, April 15, 2017. Please find a summary outlined below:

OPTION #2-CLG GRANT SUMMARY

In 2016, the HPC seeks to apply for grant funds to further the City of Vero Beach's Historic Preservation program by improving ongoing management of the city's historic inventory process, while increasing community engagement in the local history.

A unique opportunity has been identified that will not only elevate the City of Vero Beach as a pioneer in the State of Florida in the way CLG's gather and maintain inventory information, but this grant proposal would also provide the HPC with a method of collection that can be implemented for years to come with less effort and expense as compared with the traditional survey method.

The proposal involves a partnership with the City of Vero Beach, the National Association of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) and the State of Florida working together to further develop the **CRSurveyor App**, a mobile historic survey application being developed by the National Park Service (NPS). As a partner, the City of Vero Beach would be contributing to further development of this tool with the overall goal of expanding its utility and functionality. The City would also participate in the final stage of the grant, by coordinating a small team of trained volunteers to test the application in the field using mobile devices, preferably Ipads.

Although the CRSurveyor App remains in development phase, this modern, user-friendly technology already offers a more efficient means for gathering valuable cultural and historic resource data. After the grant period ends, if desired, the City could continue to use the App to help manage updates to their historic inventory and local designations with the aid of volunteers. Since the data collected would also integrate with the City's GIS and permitting systems, it would make it easier to share this information across departments and with the public, whether it be via mapping or on the city website. Those features coupled with the public's involvement in the program would also greatly benefit civic and community engagement in the city's historic preservation program.

Please find below a summary of expenditures being requested and donated for this project:

PROPOSED GRANT REQUEST DETAIL

CLG Grant Ask Amount from State of Florida: Between $20,000 - 30,000 (To be determined)

CLG Grant (Match) Request from City for In-Kind Services & Labor: $5,000

[GIS and Planning and Development Department Staff]

Volunteer & Professional Services In-Kind (Services & Labor): $5,000

City of Vero Beach Cash Amount Requested for Purchase of Equipment: Up to $6,000

[Equipment would consist of 6 Tablets & 6 Protective Cases]

TOTAL REQUEST FROM CITY: $6,000 (cash) and $5,000 (In-Kind Services & Labor)

A Quarterly Journal of
the National Alliance of
Preservation Commissions
Winter 2016

the Alliance review

Follow us

Lessons From The Field

4 Establishing a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance

10 Should all Standards be Met for a Preservation Project?

14 What Activities Should a Preservation Commission Review?

18 CRSurveyor: Mobile Technology Tool for Cultural Resource Surveys

24 Staff Profile

26 NAPC-L Users' Top Preservation Resource Links

31 Heads Up

34 State News

***Deidre McCarthy**, GISP, is Chief, Cultural Resource GIS Facility with the National Park Service and Michele Oaks is an Urban Planner in the Department of Planning and Zoning, and Historic Preservation with the City of Alexandria, VA.*

CRSurveyor: Mobile Technology Tool for Cultural Resource Surveys

By Deidre McCarthy and Michele Oaks

Credit: J. Todd Scott

Volunteers testing the application in Old Town Alexandria.

Like a census, cultural resource inventories deliver a snapshot of the universe of cultural resources in any given area. The accuracy and completeness of the inventory, including resource locations and significance, determines its utility, identifying what exists on the landscape. Applications, like geographic information systems (GIS), provide access to this data, ways to visualize trends, means to c oordinate activities and tools to analyze, leading to better decision making as well as resource management. Importantly, the value of any analysis produced depends entirely on the quality of the underlying data.

Typically, these critical inventories are created at state and local levels through cultural resource surveys conducted for the purposes of meeting state and federal laws, such as the National Historic Preservation Act, and may greatly vary in data utility as well as scope of survey, making them difficult to combine into a single inventory in some cases. These historic resource surveys require significant hours in the field collecting data, often using paper survey forms, hand-drawn maps and photos. Completing the transfer into state or local inventories can similarly take significant time in the office. Today's budget restrictions and minimal staffing make it difficult for cultural resource professionals to carry out these traditional surveys, particularly with large survey areas containing potentially thousands of resources. Several jurisdictions have developed proprietary survey software for their individual needs, but a standardized model has not been created to enable unified data collection and sharing among agencies at local, state and federal levels.

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S SOLUTION

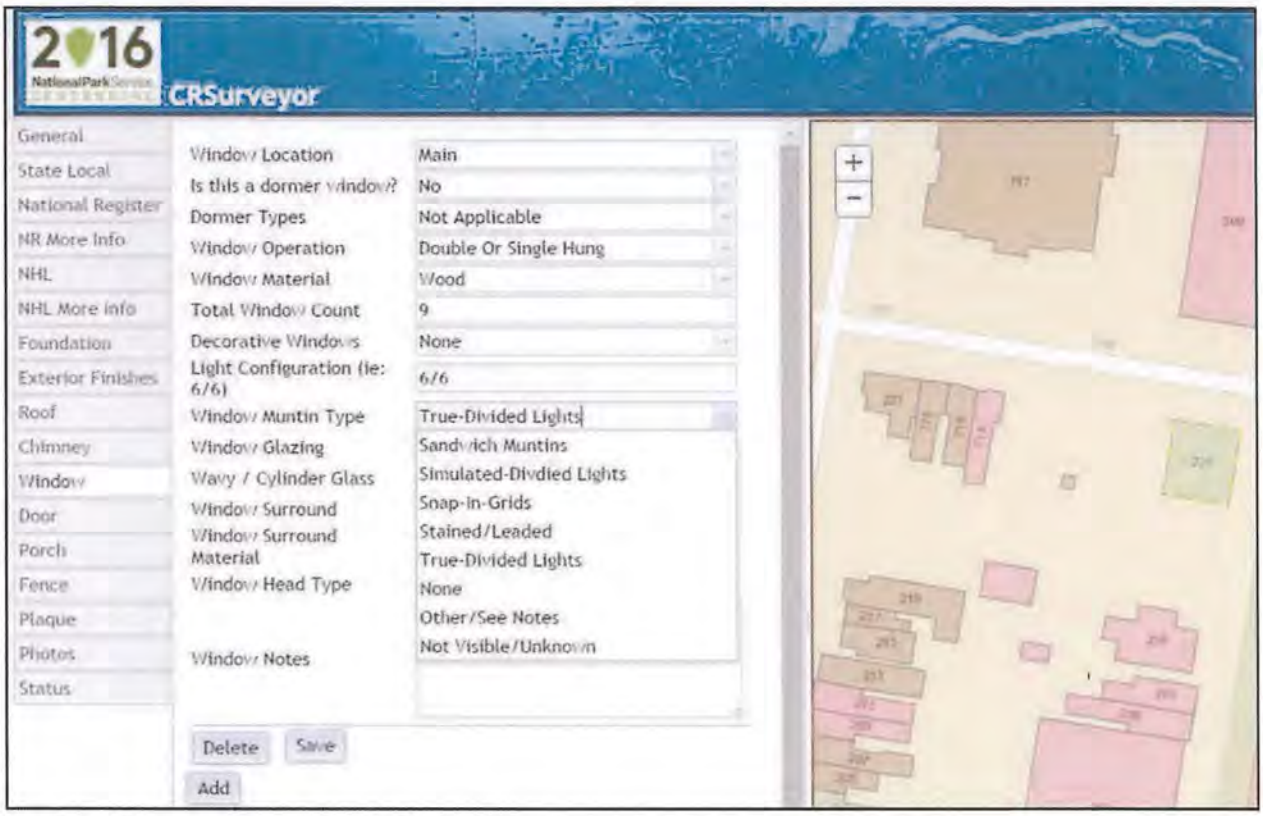
With the advancement of GIS and more sophisticated mobile devices, the city of Alexandria, VA, saw an opportunity to streamline the field survey workflow and create a new system with the intention to provide local, state, and national agencies, as well as preservation organizations, with a tool to share information quickly with each other and the public. The project's main objective was the development of a new historic resource survey methodology that reduced field time, cultivated volunteer participation and generated a creative solution using modern technology to gather valuable cultural resource data.

Alexandria's Old and Historic District is the third oldest locally-designated district in the country, its ordinance adopted by the city council in 1946. Included within the local district boundaries are the Alexandria National Historic Landmark District and the Alexandria National Register District, which contain one of the largest intact collections of late 18th and early 19th century structures in the United States. However, the city preservation staff lacks the survey and inventory documentation for most of the historic resources that they must manage. Alexandria's Old and Historic District then makes a perfect location to pilot a mobile survey application designed to generate a dynamic database for its architectural resources that will be linked to the city's existing public websites, as well as integrate with the city's GIS and permitting systems, in addition to sharing that inventory information with state and national agencies.

ENABLING DATA SHARING AND BUILDING A MOBILE SURVEY APPLICATION

This spatially-enabled, mobile, tablet-based survey strategy is being developed through a partnership with the City of Alexandria and the National Park Service's Cultural Resource GIS Facility (CRGIS) and its Certified Local Government (CLG) programs. Using funds from the CLG program and data standards created by CRGIS, Alexandria can build a more flexible, portable and user-friendly survey tool to help assist their own city planning, as well as provide valuable information for state and national inventories.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) asked CRGIS to develop a digital tool to help them comply with National Historic Preservation Act requirements. Katrina highlighted deficiencies in our existing inventories, survey methods and response strategies, as well as data sharing capabilities. CRGIS created a methodology to help identify and evaluate damaged properties with global positioning systems (GPS), in



How the application appears on a hand-held device.

addition to providing a means to determine the integrity and significance of each property through GIS. Incorporating cultural resource spatial data transfer standards imposed structure on the data, allowing the GIS to further serve as a management tool and promoted the critical exchange of cultural resource data throughout the disaster recovery.

Born out of adversity, the data standards created, and the database template produced in parallel, now in use throughout the NPS, enable data sharing between the many cultural resources databases that the NPS maintains. The Alexandria and NPS staff believe that this NPS database template makes a perfect foundation for a cultural resource field collector application. Ten years after Katrina, the basic survey methodology, the standards and the template remain relevant and useful, but the GIS tools they work in tandem with have greatly improved, opening up many new possibilities for field data collection and integration of that data with existing local systems.

Alexandria leveraged its CLG status and obtained CLG and Cost Share grants from the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); ESRI, a GIS software company; the Historic Alexandria Foundation; and the Office of Historic Alexandria. With these grants, Alexandria selected a consultant, GIS Inc., to assist in the development of a prototype application, using the CRGIS standards and database template as a starting point. The application, later named CRSurveyor, is a web-based, architectural survey form, designed to be used on a tablet. The database and application contain fields that satisfy either an intensive or reconnaissance level field survey, along with National Register and National Historic Landmark information.

Spatially enabled, CRSurveyor relies on a dynamic map containing building footprints and parcel boundaries to select and track the buildings being surveyed or having completed surveys. Using color-coding, surveyors select the individual building to be surveyed on screen and answer

questions organized around standard architectural survey practice, from foundation to roof, using easy-to-use menus. As the surveyor completes and saves the data collected, the building footprint changes color, updating live to other surveyors working in the vicinity, as well as staff back in the office monitoring the data collection process. Surveyors may also use the tablet to take photographs of the resource being surveyed, or upload historic photographs, to attach to the descriptive information.

Data collected by surveyors in the field is transmitted via wifi connection to a central database holding tank. Here, historic preservation staff can check the data for accuracy and completeness, selectively or comprehensively, comparing the descriptive information to the photos transmitted. Once accepted, the data can be incorporated into the final live GIS database for the City, updating, correcting and adding to the inventory information already on hand.

THE FUTURE OF CRSurveyor

During the summer of 2014 following a two-day training class, Alexandria historic preservation staff and trained volunteers researched and surveyed more than 400 buildings in 4 weeks within Alexandria's Old and Historic district to test the prototype application. City staff received positive feedback from the volunteer surveyors and continues to work to refine and develop the application. The goal of the project is to create a standards-based, spatially enabled, mobile survey tool that can be adapted to other jurisdictions, resource types and circumstances, such as disaster response. Ultimately, the project partners hope to provide the web-based

Photo credit: Michele Oaks

Volunteer field training in Old Town Alexandria.

application without any initial cost, allowing jurisdictions too spend their scarce funding on customizing rather than recreating the survey tool.

Currently, Alexandria, NAPC and the NPS are working to complete the building survey portion of CRSurveyor with additional funding from partnerships with SHPOs, CLGs, and other preservation organizations. Later phases of development for CRSurveyor will expand the tool to use with other cultural resource types (archaeological sites, structures, objects, landscapes, etc.). Tasks to be addressed in these phases include:

- Merging existing cultural resource survey data bases and adding descriptive data fields for the remaining cultural resource types;
- Enhancing the application by creating customizable data fields based on resource type or style;
- Illustrated pop-up guides to describe architectural features for volunteer surveyors;
- Developing an offline function to allow users to be disconnected from wifi and cell phone signals during survey which is critical in remote communities or locations with poor cell coverage;
- Integrating a post-disaster response function to activate if a quick damage assessment needs to be deployed on existing resources.

As a web-based application, CRSurveyor will provide flexibility for a range of users. Small organizations with limited funding could use the application and upload data to the cloud, or a large municipality with a staffed GIS departmen could host it on its local server. Because the tool is easy to use, volunteers,students and trained historic preservation professionals can quickly be incorporated into any survey project. Further, the potential danger of unintentionally releasing incorrect information with such a "crowd-sourced" data collection technique is alleviated by insuring quality controls are imposed before releasing or sharing data with partners and the public.

Photo credit: Michele Oaks

Volunteers testing the application in Old Town Alexandria.

As new components of the CRSurveyor emerge, they will be made available to current partners until the application is ready to release to State Historic Preservation Office and Tribal Historic Preservation Office partners for use in surveying their communities. If your organization is interested in more information, or assisting in the design/development of the application, contact the NPS, NAPC or Alexandria partners. Each new partner helps us to improve CRSurveyor and make it an even more useful tool for the future of cultural resource survey. ■