



## HFFI Happenings | Spring 2022

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

The Annual Membership Meeting was held on Sunday March 27, 2022 in the historic Renwick Courthouse. In case you missed this highly informative meeting, here's a brief recap:

#### **Review of 2021**

The progress made by Dan Becker of Heritage Arts was discussed. Becker provided expert feedback on planning documents related to local preservation and made suggestions for new initiatives, such as a study on the economic impact of preservation activities.

Accomplishments of 2021 were also reviewed, including tours, outreach events, publications, and the completion of six marker reports, with eight more in progress and seven on the waiting list. The Marker Program Online includes more than 270 summaries of the 400+ properties that have been researched. It can be accessed through the HFFI website.



In financial matters, income for last year was \$84,986 and expenses totaled \$73,947, for a total income of \$11,039. The Doris Buffett Endowment had unrealized gains and losses of \$155,855.00. HFFI also received another very generous donation from Rebecca Campbell Light (see award list on the next page).

#### **The Preservation Awards**

The annual awards were given as follows:

Patrick Sullivan — The Dr. Edward Alvey Jr. Education Award, for work in researching and presenting local history through the Spotsylvania Memory blog and social media

## ***Annual Membership Meeting, cont.***

Gari Melchers Home and Studio with Dominion Traditional Building Group & Stokes of England — The E Boyd Graves Preservation Award, for the restoration of the circa 1850 horseshoe staircase at Belmont in Falmouth



Sue Stone — The Lillian D. Reed Volunteer Award, for exceptional service and dedication to HFFI, especially to the Marker Program and the new Marker Map Online project

Tom and Ann Smith — The President's Exceptional Service Award for their support of preservation in the community

Central Rappahannock Regional Library IdeaSpace Team — Preservation Spark Award, for enhancing the city's Creative Maker District with cutting-edge technology for use by young and old

Rebecca Campbell Light — HFFI Board of Directors Preservation Champion Award, for her exceptional donation in 2021 that will permit HFFI to vigorously support and advocate preservation in Historic Fredericksburg

Barbara Pratt Willis — Pillars of the Community Award, for her long-standing support of preservation in the community

## **Goals Moving Forward**

1. To increase preservation awareness through education.
2. To financially grow the organization so it can support programming and more staff.
3. To recognize threats to the historic district and to be respected and effective advocates of preservation.
4. To stabilize the Lewis Store building and establish it as a resource to the community.
5. To protect and preserve historic Fredericksburg.

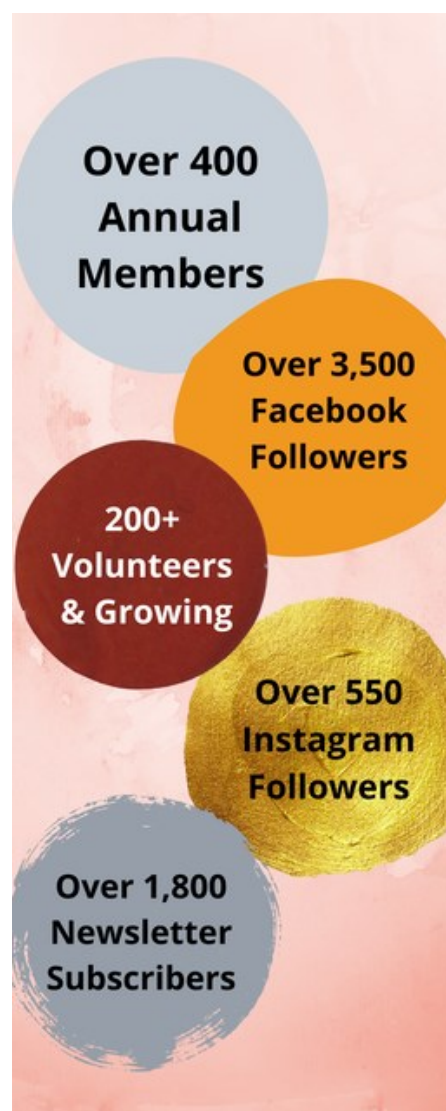
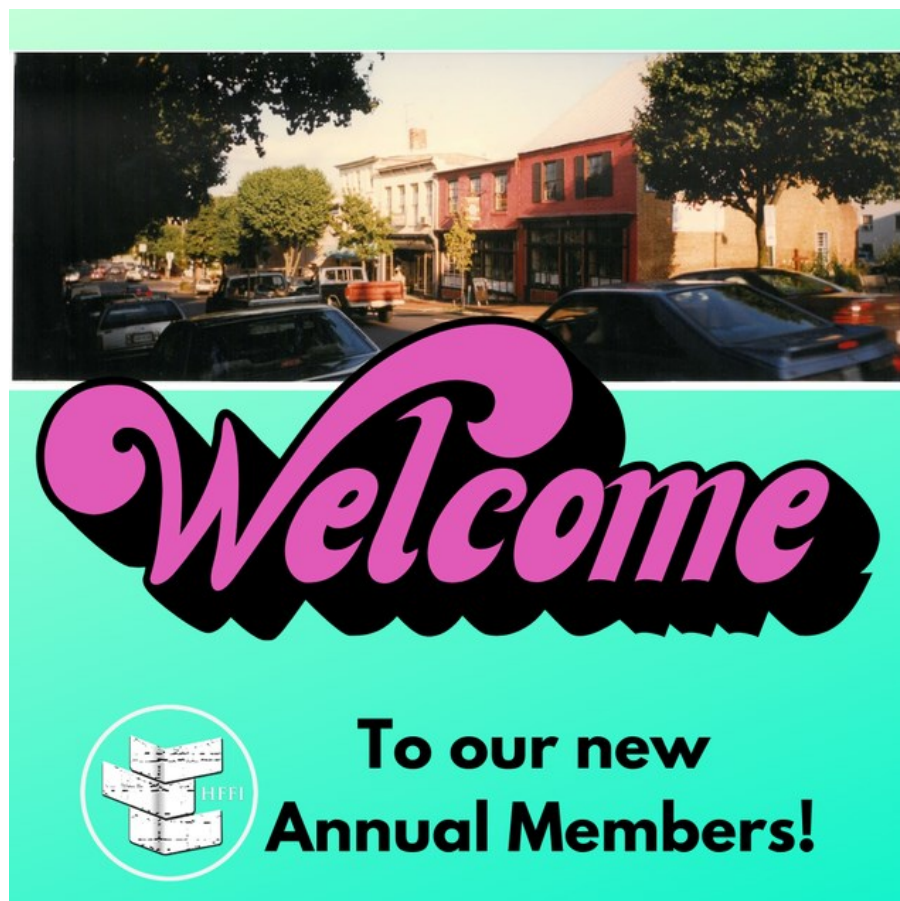


A great deal of progress has been made on Goal 4, including plaster repair and an interior paint job. Work continues in the basement, on the chimney, and on mortar repointing.

Regarding Goal 5, attendees viewed images of many historic buildings that have been lost over the years through “demolition by neglect”(read more on this topic in David James’ article below and in the June issue of Front Porch). Recently, the city of Fredericksburg reviewed a certificate of appropriateness to have a building facing Lewis Street demolished. (Learn more about this historic structure in the Research Corner in this newsletter.) HFFI would like the city to develop “standard operating procedures” to stop demolition by neglect.

In service of its five goals, HFFI is seeking people to serve on the Board in the following capacities:

- Social Media Guru (Goal 1)
  - Funding (Goal 2)
  - Loan program for Endangered Historic Structures (Goal 3 = Carrot)
  - Endangered Historic Buildings Project (Goal 3 = Stick)
  - Architectural Salvage (Goal 3)
  - Historic Tax Credit Liaison (Goal 3)
  - Legal Advisor
- 



**Board President David James wrote an article explaining demolition by neglect for the June issue of Front Porch.**

Demolition by Neglect is alive and well across the country. Last week, in New Castle County, Delaware, permits were requested to demolish two historic properties. How could this happen in a county that has a strong Architectural Review Board (ARB)?

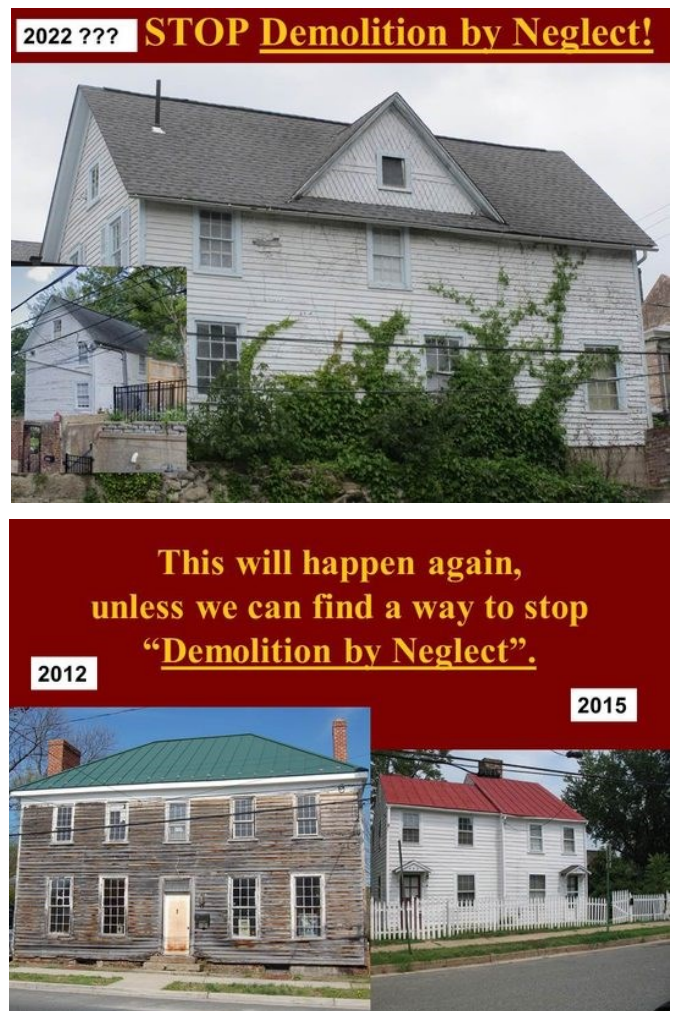
I have news for you—it happens right here in good old Fredericksburg, Virginia, too. In 2012, our ARB chairperson resigned because the circa 1700s house at 1407 Caroline Street was torn down. The demolition permit was issued on a Friday, and on Saturday, the building was demolished. The ARB was never notified. Later, in 2015, a historic duplex on Sophia Street was torn down. The demolition was not endorsed by the ARB.

How could this happen?

The demolition permits were not subject to ARB approval because a Fredericksburg Building Maintenance Code official deemed the structures unsafe. The building code official was quoted as having said about the Caroline Street house: “The building, in my opinion, met the definition of an unsafe structure....Once that happens, according to the statewide unified building code, an owner is allowed to do three things; repair it completely, do an exterior renovation, or they can demolish...the structure. We have no control over which option they choose.”

We, the people of Fredericksburg, **MUST** change this thought pattern. We need a new requirement that allows the ARB chairperson and our city Historic Resources Planner to halt a demolition if the building official is not following the guidelines and the public is not truly in danger.

This past month, another landowner asked for a demolition permit to raze a historic building in the historic district to build a workout room. The landowner’s engineer said it was a “danger to life and safety.” Sound familiar? City staff recommended that the ARB approve the request to demolish the building—even after the city had hired a structural engineer who reported that the structure could be renovated. The report, paid for by the city, says the structure could be repaired. However, believe it or not, the ARB approved the demolition. Perhaps our city ARB and staff should look at the city’s goals, one of which reads: “Demolition must and shall be a last, unavoidable resort difficult to realize.” Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI) is now considering appealing the ARB decision to City Council for review.





## Demolition by Neglect, cont.

HFFI hired an outside consultant, Dan Becker of Heritage Arts of North Carolina, to review the Historic District Handbook. He suggested that programs should be available to identify “inordinate hardship” and provide gap financing, incentives, and, if necessary, regulatory procedures to prevent the demolition by neglect of historic resources. I think he is right.

Obviously, the problem is how to write an effective ordinance. I understand that the city has since agreed to take a closer look at the Demolition by Neglect issue, using Dan Becker as a resource. My goal is a demolition by neglect ordinance, endorsed by Dan Becker and approved by City Council. Wish me luck.

View the article in June’s Front Porch: [issuu.com/frontporchfredericksburg/docs/fpfjune2022](https://issuu.com/frontporchfredericksburg/docs/fpfjune2022)

### ***In Case You Missed It***



#### **Spring Home Tour**

Members were treated to a free tour of 909 Madison Street to see the transformation of a modest Cape Cod into a stunning Mediterranean compound. Attendees ascended turrets, met a friendly cat, and strolled poolside to sample refreshments.



#### **Hats Off to Jinxie**

HFFI held a fashion show and tea with a lecture to honor local women who have had significant civic involvement. The March 20 event at Freedom Society on Caroline Street featured the hat collection of the late Barbara Forbush,



better known as Jinxie, worn on HFFI models.

## **Events**

### **Alleys of Fredericksburg—Saturday, June 25 from 6-8pm**

Join HFFI for this evening tour exploring the alleys of Fredericksburg.

### **Summer & Fall Walking Tours**

Keep an eye on the HFFI event calendar for other special walking tours and events:

Urban Renewal Walking Tour, Pub Tour, Coffee Crawl, and so much more!

### **52nd Annual Candlelight Tour—December 9 - 11, 2022**

Mark your calendars for this annual tradition!

**\*Stay up to date on upcoming events this spring & summer through**

**Facebook or through the HFFI Events Page ([hffi.org/events](https://hffi.org/events))**

**Visit the Lewis Store at 1200 Caroline Street | Phone 540-371-4504\***

## ***Awards, Gifts, and Membership***

### ***Grants***

*HFFI is proud to have been awarded a grant by the Fredericksburg Savings Charitable Fund of The Community Foundation. The grant award is \$1,000 and was designated for general use.*

*HFFI was also awarded a grant by the Mary Wynn Richmond McDaniel Fund. The amount of the grant is \$500 and is intended for General Operating Support.*

### ***Memorial Gifts***

*In memory of Donna L. Chasen*

*In memory of "Jinxie" Barbara Brooks Forbush*

### ***2022 Annual Membership Drive***

*So far, more than 350 Annual Members have joined (renewals and new) for 2022.*

*Additional donations received to support:*

- *Unrestricted/General Fund*
- *Lewis Store Fund*
- *Heritage Stewardship Fund*

# Research Corner

The Charles Dick House and J.W. Masters' Domestic Outbuilding at 204 Lewis Street  
by Danae Peckler

Although the structure at 204 Lewis Street was built between 1910 and 1912 for local lumber dealer John W. Masters (1854–1929), it is more closely associated with the history and development of the property known as the Charles Dick House at 1107 Princess Anne Street than many realize.

Charles Dick is believed to have purchased Lot No. 52 about 1750, adding to his holdings at Lot 51, where he owned and operated a store (Johnson 1992). The house he built on Lot 52 faced the river and was accessible by two terraced staircases from Dick's place of work at the southwest corner of Caroline and Lewis streets . . .



Read the rest of the blog post on the HFFI website — [hffi.org/facility-resources/hffi-blog-articles/](https://hffi.org/facility-resources/hffi-blog-articles/)  
*Image: View of retaining wall below the Charles Dick House from Caroline Street, Image taken April 2021.*

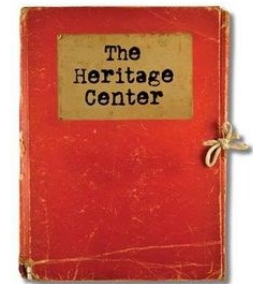
## **A PASSING OF NOTE**

*As a Board, although we are currently engaged in some intense preservation activities, we should not have missed taking a moment to note the passing of Christina "Tina" Sheffield this past April. As an organization that has been around since the 1950s, we sometimes forget our past. In addition to being a member, Tina served as HFFI's Interim Executive Director and was actively involved in our organization's activities. She represented the best of community involvement and what we want as members. We don't want to forget what important tasks community members have performed for us—past and present.*

*The Board extends our condolences to her husband, Walter J. Sheffield—an HFFI Life Member—and her family. After all, memories need to be preserved as well as our City's historic core.*



**THANK YOU to our non-profit and corporate members!**



Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.  
1200 Caroline Street  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401