



**Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Commission**  
**March 30, 2022 1:00pm**  
**Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Rooms 9 & 10**

**Approved Minutes**

**Attendance:**

|                          |               |                                |                             |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anne M.                  | Barnes        | Mount Vernon District          | Absent                      |
| Joyce Gray               | Bellamy       | Providence District            | Present                     |
| Elliot B.                | Bell-Krasner  | Human Rights Commission        | Present                     |
| Cameron                  | Brumett       | The Army Historical Foundation | present                     |
| Gretchen                 | Bulova        | History Commission             | Present                     |
| The Honorable Michael R. | Frey          | Sully District                 | Present                     |
| Donald                   | Hakenson      | Lee District                   | Present                     |
|                          |               |                                | present;<br>Arrived at 1:20 |
| Carole L.                | Herrick       | History Commission             |                             |
| Patrick                  | Lennon        | Visit Fairfax                  | Present                     |
| Elizabeth                | Maurer        | National Museum of the US Army | Present                     |
| Subhi A.                 | Mehdi         | Dranesville District           | Present                     |
| Suzanne                  | Moffit        | Hunter Mill District           | Absent                      |
| Beverly A.               | Schlotterbeck | Mason District                 | Absent                      |
| Nancy                    | Simmons       | Braddock District              | Present                     |
| Scott                    | Stroh, Chair  | Gunston Hall                   | Present                     |
|                          |               |                                | Present;<br>Arrived 1:22    |
| Paul                     | Kohlenberger  | Springfield District           |                             |

**Staff present:** Denice Dressel, Principal Heritage Resources Planner, Department of Planning and Development

**Welcome and Introductions** – The Chair opened the meeting at 1:05. Commissioners went around the room introducing themselves and noting their affiliation. The Chair noted that there are a few vacancies and that additional appointments to the Commission are expected in May 2022.

### **Administrative Action Items**

**Bylaws** – Nancy Simmons volunteered to draft the 250<sup>th</sup> Commission bylaws using the County model bylaws as a template and bring the draft back to the Commission for its consideration at the next meeting. Staff to provide Ms. Simmons with the electronic model bylaws template.

**Remote Meeting Policy** – Paul Kohlenberger volunteered to draft the Remote Meeting Policy using the County model remote meeting policy as a template and bring to the Commission for its consideration at the next meeting. Staff to provide Mr. Kohlenberger with electronic template.

**Meeting Schedule** – Scott Stroh discussed results of the informal poll – most members were comfortable with meeting in person and most members preferred meeting during the day. Proposed meeting schedule of bimonthly for now on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every other month at 1:00. Meeting duration 1.5 hours. Meetings will be held at the Government Center, unless otherwise noted, with the anticipation of rotating venues across the county as things progress, in collaboration with partner organizations.

**NOTE: Next meeting: May 25 @ 1:00 pm, in conference rooms A/B, Fairfax City Regional Library, 10360 North St, Fairfax.**

### **Overview of America250 and Virginia American Revolution 250<sup>th</sup> Commission – Scott Stroh, Chair**

2016 the federal commission was established by an act of Congress, to lead the nationwide observance of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country’s founding – the federal program is called “America 250.” Commission made up of members of Congress, Cabinet members, private citizens, and others, and is working to involve each state. They are working with the American Battlefield Trust to raise funds and are currently focused on partnership development, branding and marketing.

The Commonwealth of Virginia’s Commission – 250<sup>th</sup> Commission members Scott Stroh and Gretchen Bulova are both a part of the Commonwealth Commission. Other Commonwealth Commission members include, among others, representatives from Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and Gunston Hall, Virginia Humanities Foundation, Virginia Tourism, Virginia’s federally recognized Tribes, Colonial Williamsburg, Monticello, the Secretary of Education, and new state House of Representative members are being added to the membership.

State efforts will focus on the year 2026, recognizing the experience of the Revolution was not confined to one year There will be opportunities for other events and alliances, but the focus



will be on the year to maximize return on investment – responding to lessons learned from prior commemorations.

The Commonwealth Commission’s drafted and adopted a set of core themes:

- 1) Virginia is a powerfully historical place, home to sites and stories essential to our American story
- 2) The Revolutionary challenge continues.
- 3) Here in Virginia, the American Revolution was a war, and more than a war.
- 4) We can tell our history to reflect the fullest American story

The Commonwealth 250<sup>th</sup> Commission has hired an Executive Director with experience leading other commemorations who will be hiring staff. They have formally entered into a partnership with America 250 which entitles them to a \$10K grant up front. The Commonwealth Commission’s role is one of convener and facilitator – providing support for localities, the allocation of grant resources. Identifying partnership with VA Tourism and VA Humanities to fund their grant programs for this purpose. VA Tourism and VA Humanities will manage the grants. Envisions many of the same programs as Civil War 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration.

A discussion ensued regarding Sister Cities and how the County Commission might be more broadly/internationally focused, noting that Morocco was the first country to recognize the America as an independent county, and the reach of the American Revolution extended past France. Founding of Liberia having a global impact, scouts sent out across the globe so America could find a place to resettle freed slaves. James Monroe and other Virginias were part of this effort.

Discussion around the commemoration focusing on broader themes - promise of life, liberty, happiness, equality, and justice. Historical context was recognized as being important to tell an inclusive and equitable history these broader ideas and concepts should be explored.

### **Overview of Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Work Group Recommendations in the Report – Scott Stroh, Chair**

Ad-hoc Semiquincentennial Workgroup members transitioned into the 250<sup>th</sup> Commission, with new members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The workgroup recommended adopting the Commonwealth Commission’s articulated themes, adapting them to Fairfax County. Other recommendations were to convene an affiliated Advisory Council, and adopt a Committee Structure, with the following Standing Committees:

- Finance
- Marketing



- Inclusions
- Youth/family
- Program
- Signature event
- Outreach

Other recommendations:

- 1) Develop a business plan and budget – deadlines in the report are not accurate.
- 2) Community count-wide survey
- 3) Collaborate with visit Fairfax
- 4) Develop and implement a marketing plan
- 5) Semi-annual report to the Board – fall/spring
- 6) Submit financial reports on a regular basis – Visit Fairfax is the fiduciary agency. Staff will follow up with Patrick Lennon on who the County contact is for financial reporting.

**Open Forum / Q & A**

General discussion around the topic of inclusion – how to engage the diverse representative groups that make up Fairfax County. The 250<sup>th</sup> Commission has a standing Inclusion Committee for the purposes of being intentionally inclusive in outreach.

Discussion of inclusivity also should extend to the Commission’s definition of who the patriots were – highlighting less known hero’s, and the importance of telling a complete history was emphasized, including Native American and the enslaved.

Scott Stroh indicated that the County’s observance of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary is framed as a commemoration rather than a celebration, following the lead of the Commonwealth Commission, and based on a research report conducted on behalf of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. He noted that there was some opposition at the time of the Board’s adoption. Scott will give a presentation on the Virginia Tourism report at the next Commission meeting.

Other ideas shared for hearing from diverse viewpoints:

- Inviting elected officials and other community leaders to come and share their perspectives and hear about the Commission’s work
- An Oral History project as an avenue to collect diverse stories

**Public Comment – None**

**Closing Comments – Scott Stroh**



Reach out to him with any questions or further thoughts after the meeting.

**Adjourn @ 2:20**

