

Fairfax County 250th Commission
July 26, 1pm
City of Fairfax Regional Library
Conference Rooms A & B
10360 North Street, Fairfax

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Christopher Barbuschak	Virginia Room, Fairfax County Library	Present
Joyce Gray Bellamy	Providence District	Present
Elliot B. Bell-Krasner	Human Rights Commission	Present
Matt Briney	GW Mount Vernon	Present
Gretchen Bulova	History Commission	Absent
Brent Feito	The Army Historical Foundation	Present, arrived 1:13
The Honorable Michael R. Frey	Sully District	Absent
Paul Kohlenberger	Springfield District	Present, arrived 1:22
Patrick Lennon	Visit Fairfax	Present
Elizabeth Maurer	National Museum of the US Army	Present
Subhi A. Mehdi	Dranesville District	Present, arrived 1:45
Garrett McGuire	At-large, Chairman Appointee	Present
Suzanne Moffitt	Hunter Mill District	Present
Nancy Rosenbaum	Mount Vernon District	Absent
Beverly A. Schlotterbeck	Mason District	Present
Nancy Simmons	Braddock District	Absent
Scott Stroh	Gunston Hall	Present
Laura Grape	Park Authority, Resource Management Division Director	Present
GMU – VACANT		
HISTORY COMMISSION – VACANT		
FRANCONIA - VACANT		

1:10 meeting called to order with quorum

Staff Present

Denice Dressel, Heritage Resources, DPD
Stephanie Newman, Heritage Resource, DPD
Camela Speer (virtual), Mount Vernon District Office
Emma Gruesbeck (virtual), Intern, Heritage Resource, DPD

Visitors

Megan Leining – Historic Resources Specialist, City of Fairfax

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Scott Stroh called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Secretary Nancy Simmons was absent. Staff liaison Denice Dressel will keep minutes in her place. Mr. Stroh introduced Laura Grape, Resource Management Division Director for the Park Authority, and asked her to introduce herself, which she did. Mr. Stroh also introduced Megan Leining, Heritage Resources Specialist with the City of Fairfax, working on the 250th Commemoration for the City, and asked her to introduce herself, which she did. All members present completed brief introductions for the new participants.

Approval of May 2023 Minutes

Mr. Stroh noted that the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting and asked for comments or corrections; none were made. Mr. Barbuschak moved that the minutes be approved as distributed, Mr. Feito seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent. Mr. McGuire abstained, having not attended the meeting in question.

Committee Reports

Finance

Mr. Lennon reported that all requests have been approved so far, and that there continues to be an ongoing conversation with the County regarding the fiscal agent.

Inclusion

Mr. Bell-Krasner reported that the committee met on June 21. Ms. Mehdi will be sending out the meeting minutes. They discussed the following topics under the umbrella of the Signature Experience to be working on: The group members will be working to identify the important stakeholders for inclusion; creating a framework for how voices can be included; determining ways to bring in youth voices by working with FCPS for ideas. They would like to begin outreach, with a plan for feedback, and fill out benchmarks for moving forward. There was some discussion on ensuring the efforts are being coordinated between committees and Commission as a whole. It was noted that it is important for the committees to coordinate. The next meeting is the 3rd week of August; they are meeting every other month.

Outreach

Mr. McGuire reported for Ms. Simmons, who was absent. The Committee is finalizing the list of stakeholders and would like to have a final ready by August 10. They have determined to work with Visit Fairfax for outreach efforts.

Activity

Ms. Moffitt reported that the Committee met on June 21. They are working to finalize membership. They have come up with the following list of activities that they would like to focus on:

- Readings of the Declaration of Independence at Pohick and Falls Church
- Event at Museum of the Army
- Naturalization Ceremony – During the discussion it was offered that Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon hold naturalization ceremonies
- Story Corps – What does it mean to be an American?
- Passport with events stamped
- Sponsoring a debate between Loyalist and Revolutionaries
- Working with FCPS to put on a production of the play *1776*

A question was raised about including other ethnic groups that were not part of the American Revolution. The Committee is definitely thinking about this and how to accomplish. Ms. Bellamy offered that her church getting a historical marker and would like to ask people to join, for instance. It was noted that the 275th anniversary of Pohick Church's founding will take place in 2024.

The point was made that the Commission should consider consolidating requests to particular groups/organizations.

Marketing

Mr. Lennon reported that neither the Marketing nor the Signature Event Committees have met since the last Commission meeting, having to do with the fiscal agent issue, which needs to be figured out. Mr. Lennon noted that ArtsFairfax is interested in participating in the Marketing Committee and helping to disseminate information. He would like to have Park Authority input as well. It was asked if the website was up yet, and Mr. Lennon replied not yet. He believes that the 275th anniversary of the founding of Pohick Church would be an event that could be included. Mr. Lennon reported that the Commission has secured a spot on the Virginia 250th page. Discussion of the federal “American 250” formally launched on July 4th. There is a “share your story” on their website.

Signature Event

Mr. Lennon reported that the committee had not met since the last Commission meeting.

Youth and Family Engagement

Ms. Mauer reported that there are not enough members to hold a meeting. The question was raised if this committee should be combined with another committee, such as Outreach. There seems to be a lot of overlap between committees. Would this mean a change in the resolution/bylaws?

The need for a master plan, or a strategic plan appears to be emerging to determine the exact roles of each committee and better define each committee’s activities. Mr. Bell-Krasner will take the lead in organizing a committee of the Committee Chairs to meet regularly.

Old Business

Fiscal Agent, Budget, and Fundraising

Mr. Stroh noted that there is a meeting scheduled on August 3 with Visit Fairfax, representatives from the Office of the County Attorney, and the County Executive’s office to determine the best way forward for the fiscal agent solution.

New Business

VA250 Update

Mr. Stroh shared the following update from the Virginia 250th Commission meeting last week and noted that Ms. Bulova is also on the Virginia 250th Commission.

- The VA250 website is up and running.
- The Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC) and the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF) will open an exhibit entitled “Give me Liberty” at VMHC then move to JYF in 2025 and 2026. There will be a traveling element to the exhibit that this Commission may wish to look into.
- Major convening of the state representatives at Williamsburg over the next 2 years March 18-20, 2024, and March 24-26, 2025. The first meeting will be about concepts and introductions; the second will be geared to actionable and implementable programs.
- Grant Opportunities/Programs:
 - VA Humanities
 - VA Tourism
 - Upcoming: VA Commission for the Arts. The Commission for the Arts maintains a roster of artists that might be helpful in planning this Commission’s activities
- VA250 is developing a mobile exhibit that will begin touring the state in the fall of 2024. Commission can book the trailer for Fairfax. Not fee based.
- There has been an honorary leadership council created, composed of 9 living former governors, chaired by Carly Fiorina, supporting affinity, and promoting VA 250th
- Report for VA Tourism:
 - They have identified, in terms of funding and level of activity, the state’s competitors: PA, TN, NC

- Question about grants being used by the Commission for its activities:
 - Grants typically require partners and a matching contribution. \$20K is typically the maximum per event. For VA Tourism grants, you must show the ability of your initiative to drive tourism. They are looking for a broader commonwealth-wide impact. 3 organizations working together with one DMO (Visit Fairfax – letter of support).
- Meetings are open to the public; the next 2 meetings will be held at the state Capital.

Strategic Discussion

Mr. Stroh introduced the following topics from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) 250th priorities/observations and asked for thoughts on how the report relates to the Commission’s work:

- a. Startup funding for organizations launch
- b. Reliance on multiple funding sources
- c. Which comes first, viable program concepts or seed funding
- d. Struggle to envision the financial scale of commemoration
- e. Interstate collaboration

Mr. McGuire indicated that increasing awareness/interest are the most important step to focus on right now. There is a need to drive knowledge/information about the 250th and hopefully will see grass roots swelling from that outreach and increase in public interest. Ms. Medhi asked if there was a one-page summary with talking points for what the Commission is all about. Several members identified this as a top priority and are waiting on the fiscal agent issue to be resolved.

Mr. Lennon and Ms. Grape indicated that collaboration is important. Different resources/sites need to work together to frame the themes of the 250th and tell the different stories – threading through the historic sites.

Ms. Mauer suggested asking the Activities Committee to create a master plan coming up with the themes we want to advance and then how we implement that through programming. What is specific about Fairfax County?

Mr. Stroh indicated that we do have themes in our plan which relate to the Revolution, being not just a war but a revolution of ideas, so stories that are associated with these ideas can be included. The Commission should revisit the themes and subthemes to identify programming opportunities. Committees should take the themes to stakeholders to get feedback.

Messaging needs to be accessible and understandable to the broader community - recommend using the state’s language/themes, etc. as much as possible.

It was noted that the VA250th Commission has rack cards, already

Open Forum / Q&A

The Commission will be considering if there are other places where they can meet.

Next meeting:

September 27, 1:00 – 2:30, City of Fairfax Regional Library, Conference Rooms A & B

Meeting Adjourned at 2:38

Respectfully submitted:

Denice Dressel
Staff Liaison, 250th Commission

Fairfax 250th Commission
Activity Committee
Meeting Date: June 21, 2023
Location: City of Fairfax Regional Library, Room 214
Prepared by Brent Felto

Attendees:

Suzanne Moffitt - Chair
Bev Schlotterbeck
Brent Felto
Janice Dixon
Forrest Crane
Elizabeth Crowell

Minutes

- New committee member - Forrest Crane of the Fairfax Resolves Sons of the American Revolution Chapter
- Other committee members introduce themselves to Mr. Crane.
 - Janice moves to approve the meeting minutes
 - Janice Seconds.
- Review of activities sheet
 - Suzanne has not yet contacted the church, but plans to do so soon.
 - Liz pointed out that doing a signing on the 4th as folks are going to be pulled in a lot of directions on that date.
 - SAR is having a commemoration of the signing of the Fairfax Resolves at Pohick church. (22rd of July)
 - Will pass on to the other commission members
 - 21st of September - George Mason stands up the Independent company of Fairfax Volunteers. George Washington was a member, as was George Mason- the first independent company of militia in Virginia.
 - SAR is celebrating that each year.
 - Also highlight the ceremony that honors the enslaved people who were involved of the building of Pohick church.
 - There is a website that lists the SAR events in Virginia.
- Brent updates on the army museum's plans and that they are focusing on 1776, but it will be some time before details are known as that is substantially far out.
- Janice will have to have details of a naturalization ceremony - where it is, when it is, so that a judge can be assigned for it.
 - Gunston hall does an annual naturalization ceremony, as well as Gunston Hall.
 - Vienna also has a ceremony
- Brent reviews the Signature Event Committee plan for the story collection station.
 - Bev would like to still approach story corp as they could bring recognition

- o Brent suggests that we should preserve time and make sure we are interfacing with local historical organizations to make sure the activities are known to the commission so that they can be publicized.
- Passport has not been moved forward since the past meeting, working on it.
- Debate between patriots and loyalists does not have a person to head it along, Bev Volunteers.
- Bev: new idea - can the local high schools put on a production of 1776.
 - o Possibly utilize wolf trap if there is going to be a collaborative event/
- Suzanne offers Forrest to join the committee.
 - o Bev Moves to accept
 - o Brent Seconds
 - Forrest is approved.
- Next meeting is August 16 at 1:00.

Fairfax County 250th Commission

Inclusion Committee Meeting

June 21, 2023

Dolley Madison Library, McLean

Committee Members Present:

- Joyce Gray Bellamy (Providence District)
- Elliot Bell-Krasner (Chairperson, Providence District)
- Subhi Mehdi (Dranesville District)

Public Present:

- None

Purpose of the Committee: To ensure that the 250th commemoration of the American independence is as inclusive as possible in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Discussion:

What are we asking the communities for to develop storyboards?

- Individuals who can work with Chanel 16
- Artwork
- Music
- Photographs

Next Steps:

- Identify the groups and subgroups

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, August 31, 2023
- 2:00 – 3:00 pm
- Sherwood Hall Lane Library, Alexandria