

**Fairfax County History Commission
Monthly Meeting**

April 2, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Fairfax County Government Center
Conference Room 2/3
12000 Government Center Parkway,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

The Fairfax County History Commission conducted an in-person meeting on April 2, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Call to Order and Attendance

Commissioners Present per Districts:

Gretchen Bulova, *Chair*
Subhi Mehdi, *Vice Chair*
Tammy Mannarino, *Secretary*
Brian Heintz, *Treasurer*
Jenee Lindner
Jen MacPherson
Holly Irwin
Anne Stuntz
Cheryl-Ann Repetti
Anne Barnes
Sue Kovach Shuman
Margo Coleman
David Meyer**

District:

Braddock
Dranesville
Mount Vernon
Braddock
Springfield
Franconia
Mount Vernon
Hunter Mill
Sully
Mount Vernon
Providence
Mason
Fairfax City

Commissioners Excused:

Jordan Tannenbaum

County Liaisons Present:

Laura Kviklys, Heritage Resources Branch, Department of Planning and Development;
Stephanie Newman, Heritage Resources Branch, Department of Planning and Development;
Aimee Wells, Archaeology and Collections Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority;
Christopher Barbuschak, Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library.

Staff Present:

Corinne Bebek, History Commission Substitute Clerk

Special Guests Present:

None

***Joined after roll call*

Chair Bulova welcomed Commissioners MacPherson and Irwin who were recently appointed to the History Commission and represent the Franconia District and Mount Vernon District, accordingly.

Minutes

Commissioner Mannarino noted that the March Minutes had minor edits that should be incorporated prior to finalization.

Vice Chair Mehdi moved, and was seconded by Commissioner Kovach Shuman, that, **with the minor change in March minutes, the History Commission accept the February and March 2025 minutes, and pay the Clerk, Keisha Strand.**

The motion passed unanimously

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Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Heintz reviewed the Treasurer's report for the period ending March 31, 2025. The Treasurer's Report can be found as **Attachment 1**.

- Commissioner Heintz shared that there were 2 expenditures for membership renewals to National Alliance for Preservation Commissions (NAPC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- The ending balance is \$51,048.41.

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New Business

Welcome New Members

Chair Bulova introduced and welcomed the new members of the History Commission, Commissioner Jen MacPherson and Commissioner Holly Irwin. The new members introduced themselves and expressed excitement at being appointed to the History Commission. Chair Bulova reminded the new commissioners to review the information provided to them ahead of the meeting in the New Member Binder to ensure roles and responsibilities are understood.

Commissioner Irwin provided a brief introduction noting a position on the Cherry Hill Farm Arts and Humanities Council, and a focus in public engagement and public programming. The Commissioner earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Mary Washington in historic preservation and a master's degree in museum studies from George Washington University.

Commissioner MacPherson provided a brief introduction indicating formal work as an archeologist hailing from Rhode Island and the New England region. Past and current work experience includes Geospatial Mapping and GIS with the Army Corps of Engineers; the Commissioner resides in the Franconia District.

Advisory Members

Chair Bulova indicated that the current six (6) active Advisory Members have agreed to serve for the 2025 calendar year.

1. Phyllis Walker Ford
2. Mary Lipsey
3. Carole Herrick
4. Marion Dobbins
5. Barbara Naef
6. Barbara Peters

Commissioner Stuntz moved, and was seconded by Vice Chair Mehdi, that the **History Commission appoint Phyllis Walker Ford, Mary Lipsey, Carole Herrick, Marion Dobbins, Barbara Naef, and Barbara Peters as Advisory Members for the 2025 calendar year.**

Discussion followed the motion where commissioners requested clarification on how the slate was determined. Chair Bulova clarified that the current slate were all active advisors in 2024, and have agreed to serve in the same capacity for 2025. The Chair indicated that for the 2026 calendar year additional or different members could be considered by the History Commission for the Advisory Committee, and any recommendations should be raised in fall of 2025 to allow the History Commission time to review and consider the new slate for action in January 2026.

The motion passed unanimously.

Additional New Business (not listed on agenda due to timing of request):

Chair Bulova indicated that the interpretation/reimagining committee of the Sully Historic Site in the Sully District has requested a representative from the History Commission to serve as part of the committee. The commitment involves four 2-hour meetings that will likely start in May 2025; some may be off-site in Maryland or Washington D.C., so transportation is required. History Commission members raised clarification questions around whether meetings would begin in April or May of 2025.

Commissioner Repetti provided background on the matter, indicating that this effort began with redistricting and proposals to rename districts based on their affiliation with the confederacy. While the name of the district is proposed to remain, Supervisor Smith indicated that the Sully Historic Site should be reimagined. A committee has been established to examine the history of the site and would be reaching out to the community to get input and direction on what community wants to see at the site. The role of the committee is to assemble information for a consultant to create a plan for the site.

Commissioner Irwin expressed interest in learning more about this opportunity.

Old/Unfinished Business

Funding request to support CLG Grant Application

Department of Planning and Development staff members Kviklys and Newman indicated that, as presented in March regarding the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Certified Local Government (CLG) grant application, staff is requesting that the History Commission support the application for a Cost Share Grant of up to \$10,000. The application is due on May 5, 2025, additional information can be found on page 2 of **Attachment 2**.

Vice Chair Mehdi moved, and was seconded by Commissioner Mannarino that, **the Fairfax County History Commission support the application for a Cost Share Grant for the African American Communities in Fairfax County Archival Research and Map with up to \$10,000 of History Commission funds.**

Discussion followed the motion:

- Commissioner Kovach Shuman noted that this is a popular piece of information for when the History Commission does outreach, and thanked staff.
- Vice Chair Mehdi requested clarification on how the History Commission would be acknowledged as part of this effort. Staff noted that the printed credits on the map would include the History Commission, as well as contain the seal of the History Commission; if a more specific acknowledgement is desired that additional consideration could be given during the creation of materials.
- Commissioner MacPherson sought clarification on if a map has already been developed and offered assistance with the effort given past and current work experience – a suggestion was raised to develop a Story map in ArcGIS. Staff indicated that a Story map was the ultimate goal but at this time a static map will be developed, staff was welcoming and open to the Commissioner's offer of assistance and will be in contact.
- Commissioner Mannarino indicated that the previous version of the map had items that may need to be modified but it is generally very popular as a handout. Old copies will be brought to the May 2025 History Commission meeting for reference and that a laminated copy is posted at Sherwood Hall Library.
- Commissioner Meyer indicated that as digital information becomes available it widens the aperture. Commissioner Mannarino clarified that some information included letters and photographs found include information that has been valuable in describing how some locations were accessed.
- Commissioner Mannarino asked if up to \$10,000 would be enough for the effort. Staff indicated that it would be as this is a cost-share effort, and other avenues and grants would be pursued to make this project happen.

The motion passed unanimously

Further discussion ensued where a question was raised on whether the History Commission would need to provide a letter of support for the project. Chair Bulova, Vice Chair Mehdi, and Commissioner Mannarino concurred that it would be helpful.

Vice Chair Mehdi moved, and was seconded by Commissioner Barnes, that **the History Commission write a letter of support for the African American Communities in the Fairfax County Archival Research and Map for inclusion with the application packet to meet the May 5, 2025 deadline.**

The Commission discussed who would draft the letter and Commissioner Mannarino volunteered.

The motion passed unanimously

Cartersville Baptist Church Report

Following up on the March 2025 meeting regarding the Cartersville Baptist Church, Commissioner Repetti moved and was seconded by Commissioner Meyer that, **the Inventory Committee complete a draft letter in response to Supervisor Alcorn's inquiry regarding Cartersville Baptist Church by April 11, 2025, explaining that the History Commission will retain the 1903 date on the Master Inventory List because this is the earliest documented date connecting the physical site with the congregation. This reflects the use of the Inventory as a planning tool and does not intend to date the inception of the congregation or church community.**

Discussion followed the motion where Vice Chair Mehdi sought clarification on whether staff was supportive of this approach – staff concurred that this was the most suitable conclusion. Commissioner Mannarino also noted that the inventory is used as a planning tool and that is why the earlier date is on the Historic Marker and linked on the webpages. The Commissioners raised question on who would send the letter to Supervisor Alcorn, it was determined that the letter can be sent by staff or the History Commission but that Chair Bulova will sign the final letter prior to send off.

The motion passed unanimously.

New Business brought from the floor – James Lee Interpretive Panel

Commissioner Coleman raised an issue brought to the Commissioner surrounding text associated with the James Lee interpretive panel. The Commissioner noted that Marion Dobbins, a descendant of James Lee, has been working on this item. A concern was raised by a patron of the James Lee Community Center regarding the term “mulatto” on the interpretive panel indicating that the term is offensive and should be removed; this patron returned for an event after raising the concern to notice the term was still included on the interpretive panel. This individual is continuing to request that something should be done to remove the term and revise the panel; however, it was noted that they are not a Fairfax County resident. Commissioner Coleman is working with Mr. Clark of the James Lee Community Center to have meeting on April 7, 2025 to resolve the issue. Commissioner Coleman also noted that there was a request for the History Commission to review and approve the revised text prior to it being finalized for printing and posting. This item will be added to the May 2025 History Commission agenda.

This conflict and surrounding research to find out the author and date of publication for the interpretive panel raised the need for authors and dates of publication to be included on written materials so that it would be easier to resolve issues going forward.

Staff Reports

Heritage Resources Branch, Laura Kviklys:

- Laura Kviklys, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development, gave projects, program, and staff updates. See **Attachment 2** for the staff report.
- In addition to the staff report, staff noted that the contract for the Egnyte has been extended for another year. There is potential to migrate to SharePoint in the future.
 - Chair Bulova reminded Commissioners to download files and information from Egnyte as records are retained for only 30-days with the software.

Archaeology and Collections Branch (ACB), Aimee Wells:

- Aimee Wells, Fairfax County Park Authority, provided ACB program and project updates to the Commission in addition to the Heritage Resource Conservation Branch updates. See **Attachment 3** for the ACB staff report and **Attachment 4** for the Heritage Conservation Branch Staff Report .
- In addition to the staff reports, the following was discussed:
 - The History Commission was thanked for the previous grant provided to the Park Authority; the hiring process should be completed soon for an assistant in the county archeologist museum position
 - Riverbend Park upcoming event how to make coil pots out of Play-Doh and discussion of Native American pottery, the event coincides with the bluebells at the bend.
 - Staff will be helping inventory committee to review and standardize language – ruins vs archeological sites and other terms.
 - Vice Chair Mehdi indicated surprise that there isn't standard language Staff clarified that there is standardized language in industry, but it has not been standardized on the History Commission Inventory and that is what the focus of this review will be.
 - Commissioner Meyer questioned whether the definition of a ruin has an impact on potential development (planning and overlays), and if additional requirements are triggered based on the inclusion or selection of the term. Staff clarified that a ruin is an archeological site with above ground features and in Fairfax County if a site is not within a Historic Overlay District (HOD) there are limited tools for protection.

Virginia Room, Christopher Barbuschak

- Christopher Barbuschak, Fairfax County Public Library, provided staffing, program, collection, and archive updates. See **Attachment 5** for the Virginia Room staff report.

- In addition to the staff report, the following was discussed:
 - Virginia Room staff expressed thanks to the History Commission for submitting a letter of support to the Department of Planning and Development for building and street file transfer.
 - Members of District 5 Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) have since 2022 have been transcribing the Board of Supervisors minutes from 1870 to 1923 which were previously only accessible by microfilm. Files will be bound in library once complete.

Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee, Anne Stuntz:

Commissioner Stuntz indicated that Commissioner Mannarino is starting the process of collecting reports for 2024 through first half of 2025 for the History Commission Annual Report and has requested a summary from all History Commission Committee Chairs from January 2024 through end of June 2025. This will sync the History Commission Annual Reporting cycle with the Fiscal Year. Files are requested to be sent to Commissioner Mannarino by the May 2025 History Commission meeting. The plan is to present the Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors in October or November of 2025.

A number of upcoming events are scheduled as listed in the Advocacy Committee Minutes, **Attachment 6**, and additional Commissioner support is requested at the events.

The History Commission also discussed that Commissioner Heintz's students are working on "Then and Now" posters of Fairfax County Inventory Sites, see **Attachment 7** for an example. The idea was suggested that these posters could be included as a potential exhibit for the 250th celebration. Vice Chair Mehdi indicated that the authors of the "Then and Now" posters be included so appropriate credit can be given to the students that have worked on the material.

Commissioner Kovach Shuman indicated that additional help is requested for events on April 26th. Commissioner Lindner indicated potential availability to assist with the event Vice Chair Mehdi indicated it may be helpful for the History Commission to have a sign-up method for events to keep a rotation of Commissioners present at events rather than continually relying on the same few. The Advocacy Committee members concurred and indicated they would look into the matter.

Oral History Committee, Sue Kovach Shuman:

Commissioner Kovach Shuman indicated that the Committee discussed over 25 names of potential interviewee prospects for the 250th Video Series. Vice Chair Mehdi and Commissioner Kovach Shuman will be working with Channel 16 producers to get started on items related to the American Revolution. The Committee is making an effort to have a diverse and broad perspective on these video segments. A full Oral History Committee Report can be found as **Attachment 8**.

Inventory Committee, Tammy Mannarino:

Commissioner Mannarino shared that the Inventory Committee met at 6pm before the current meeting. The Committee discussed their mission as the 2025 work plan priorities are due. Further the Committee discussed the then and now project which is great for the promotion of the History Commission.

There was brief discussion among Commissioners of how cemeteries fit into inventory for historic sites. Commissioner Mannarino indicated that most are linked to a site or building. Currently there are two (2) Inventory nominations for Cemeteries, if they are approved the History Commission raised the question of whether all cemeteries should be placed on the Inventory.

Marker Committee, Cheryl-Ann Repetti:

Commissioner Repetti shared that the Marker Committee did not meet in March. Next month a report will be submitted. The Commissioner reiterated the Historic Marker unveiling scheduled for April 5, 2025. Commissioner Heintz indicated that the Board of Supervisors endorsed the student marker project and student advocacy.

250th Commission, Chair Gretchen Bulova:

Chair Bulova shared that the 250th new signature exhibit “Give me Liberty” is now open at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond. The new tagline for VA250 is “American History.Made in Virginia.” VA250 is partnering with America250 to display two lights on April 18 and 19, the Anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The Chair also indicated that the 250th Commission has a Listserv where monthly newsletters are being released and encouraged Commissioners to sign up. Additionally, the Fairfax County 250th Commission held a successful Naturalization Event where 75 new citizens from 48 different countries were naturalized. A full 250th Committee Report can be found as **Attachment 9**.

Cemetery Committee: Jenee Lindner

Commissioner Lindner indicated that the Cemetery Committee is working with Mary Lipsey on how to clean cemeteries without official organization of volunteers. Vice Chair Mehdi provided a gentle reminder to review the mission of all committees and that they should flow from the overall History Commission mission. The Cemetery Committee needs a defined mission and perhaps could possibly be absorbed into the Inventory Committee due to overlap.

Architectural Review Board (ARB), Cheryl-Ann Repetti:

Commissioner Repetti raised the question of how to proceed with providing updates as the focus should be on what the ARB is looking at in coming months rather than focusing on past meetings and events. Upcoming agendas will be shared with the History Commission and items of interest will be flagged for discussion. The ARBs main job is to review building permits that are happening within the confines of Historic Overlay Districts (HODs).

Announcements & News to Share

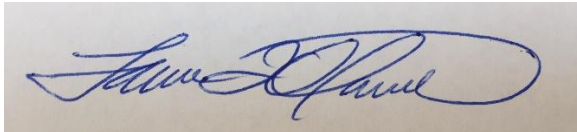
- Vice Chair Mehdi questioned if there will be an August 2025 meeting or any more virtual meetings in 2025.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman indicated that on May 3rd the Historic Schoolhouses of Northern Virginia (mostly one-room schoolhouses) will hold a second open house. The group includes some schoolhouses in Loudoun County and Prince William County, and one in Fairfax County; Commissioner Kovach Shuman will be at the Oakton Schoolhouse. There will be a passport stamp for 2025 events. Events will also include cursive challenges. The flyer will be distributed to History Commission members. Further, the Park Authority and Oakton Group have signed an MOU to rent Oakton Schoolhouse for events.
- Commissioner Meyer respond to Commissioner Shuman that the oldest Fairfax County Public School building still in operation is the Vienna School. Commissioner Meyer went on to provide an update on the Fairfax High School which was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project built by Raymond V. Long. A developer, IDI, redeveloped the site of Paul VI High School, when this agreement was established, the core of the old high school would be preserved and used for public space. IDI has sold the property, and another company is planning to put commercial activity in building in addition to painting the façade white. Right now it is unclear if the stone plaque from 1935 will remain as previously proposed or if terms of sale include preservation. Commissioner Meyer will keep the History Commission apprised. Commissioner Mannarino indicated that there was a previous unsuccessful attempt to nominate Fairfax High School for National Register and that there is a rising awareness of these schools in recent years.
- Commissioner Lindner will be giving presentations on April 7th and 14th at Glennon
- Commissioner Repetti indicated that Historic Huntley is open for free tours April 5th and 6th. The Commissioner reminded the History Commission of the upcoming Historic Marker unveiling and interest in Leighton Cemetery for an upcoming presentation with Fairfax Museum on April 12th.
- Commissioner Irwin raised a question about upcoming dates and events and suggested the History Commission attend the Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on May 10th. The Commissioner volunteered to coordinate with the assistant manager and report back to the History Commission. Commissioner Mannarino indicated that the Advocacy Committee has three (3) kits and can attend three (3) different events at one time due to the availability of supplies and materials.
- Chair Bulova noted an upcoming wreath laying and dedication for John Alexander, the founder of the City of Alexandria, on April 27th at 3 pm at Caledon State Park. The cemetery is on private property and will only be open at that time.

Commissioner Mannarino moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Vice Chair Mehdi and Commissioner Lindner seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Corinne Bebek

Substitute Clerk, Fairfax County History Commission



Date: 5/19/25

Tammy Mannarino,
Corresponding Secretary Fairfax
County History Commission

Attachments

Attachment 1: Treasurer's Report, April 2025

Attachment 2: Heritage Resources Branch Staff Report, April 2, 2025

Attachment 3: Archaeology and Collections Branch Staff Report, March 27, 2025

Attachment 4: Heritage Conservation Branch Staff Report, April 2, 2025

Attachment 5: Virginia Room Staff Report, April 2025

Attachment 6: Advocacy Committee Minutes, March 31, 2025

Attachment 7: "Then and Now" Project Sample, April 2025

Attachment 8: Oral History Committee Report, March 31, 2025

Attachment 9: Semiquincentennial Report, April 2, 2025