

Subject: Comments/Suggestions to the Notes/Minutes and Consultants' Presentations (made at the 10/30/07 meeting of the LH House Committee)

1. Page 1, Presentation Section, 1st paragraph:

--- Suggest that Frazier needs to add at least a passing reference in its next presentation and in its final Study Report about the Lindsay Family's "Scots-Irish Diaspora-related" naming of its Laurel Hill Plantation, due to the Family's well-practiced habit of naming its homes after one or the other of its ancestrally-sourced homes in Scotland and Ireland. In our FC's case (as is detailed in the introductory chapter of the "Lindsay's in America" book), it seems that our Laurel Hill was named after the original Lindsay Family plantation estate located in the north of Ireland (County Derry/River Bann area) that is also known as Laurel Hill Plantation. In this same vein, Major Wm. Lindsay's predecessor family members had named their primary Fairfax plantation-estate, "The Mount" --- upon settling in Northern Virginia in late 17th Century after emigrating from Ireland following some one of the several British/Anglican-led pogroms of "recalcitrant" Presbyterian Scots-Irish at the time --- after the very first Lindsay Clan's homestead located in the southern or Skye area of Scotland.

2. Page 2, Building History Section, 3rd paragraph:

--- Suggest that Frazier should add a comment about the reference that Mary Oakey makes in her book, "Journey From the Gallows" (Chapter 11, page 123, end of 2nd paragraph) that even the D.C. Government thought enough of the heritage/meaning of Laurel Hill that it had developed plans apparently to restore the house on its own. Oakey's reference reads as follows: "Over the years, several additions have been made to the house; nevertheless, the original structure as well as the grave sites have remained intact. ... Plans have been underway in recent years to restore "Laurel Hill" by the Department of Corrections." [Note: It's possible that Ms. Oakey (who is supposed to be working on an updated/sequel book about the D.C.D.C. starting from when she ended her "Journey" book's narrative in 1982 up to present day/early-21st Century time) or others within the D.C. HQ or the D.C. D.C. Retirees' Association may have more details about those presumably late-1970's plans and what may have later happened to cause the D.C. Govt. to cancel them.]

3. Page 2, Historic Significance Section:

--- Suggest that Frazier do more research on and then integrate into its final LH House Study Report the actual nature of the Calvert Family's involvement (if any) with the LH Plantation --- especially as to how Ann Calvert and Wm. Lindsay came to be betrothed. For example, maybe there is some relevancy worth noting within the alleged "close inter-family friendships" --- between the neighboring FC-area Lindsay and Washington Families' and the even earlier Lindsay/Washington/Calvert Families' relationships (especially since the Calvert Family had apparently controlled land on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, right across from Mt. Vernon). In all reality, one of the more "historically-exciting" angles vis-a-vis Laurel Hill and the Lindsay/Washington Families of that early- to mid-18th Century era that REALLY make this story of the LH House all that truly interesting today is how inter-connected the so-called "Old Aristocracy or Patrician Families" of Maryland and Virginia actually were during that early-Colonial Period in their various mercantile, religious and governmental pursuits.

4. Page 2, Historic Significance Section:

--- Suggest that Frazier do more research on Wm. Lindsay's Revolutionary War service with the end-purpose of confirming (or denying) whether in fact he was actually one of General George Washington's war-time "aides". It is known that G.W. had a variety of so-called "Commander's Staff Assistants". Therefore, it would stand to reason that Wm. Lindsay (as one of the sons of G.W.'s "close neighbors/friends") could actually have performed some such service at

one time or another --- among those others from FC who had heeded the call of the Great General during the six active years of the Revolution itself.

5. Page 2, Proposed Treatment Options Section:

--- I believe that our Committee's priorities --- to be eventually outlined in its final recommendations (vis-a-vis being the most realistic or "the best option") --- should be as follows:

a. Priority 1 --- chose A-2, but it should be performed in phases --- as funds/sponsors become available, with the A-1 portion to be done up-front/first. In line with my comments noted above, the REALLY "unique/special nature" of the Laurel Hill House relates not only to the very fascinating "first-families-of-Virginia" inter-connection and history (vis-a-vis the Scots-Irish/French-Catholic diaspora and the Washington/Calvert/Lindsay manorial-aristocracy activity among the early settlers and leaders of the Mid-Atlantic Colonies, involving later on some of the key characters during and after the Revolutionary War Era), but also to its "small-plantation" life-style experiences and its architectural design of which we in FC have very few if any extant examples anymore. Certainly, the early-20th Century Attorney Totten/DC Prison-initiated changes are not all that historically important nor even moderately architecturally exceptional in any case.

Also, using this option as our Priority 1 should also make it easier to provide for a "What-If/Ultimate Case Scenario" as a longer-term option, with the readily-available potential for eventually restoring/reconstructing the additional facility portions as circumstances allow.

b. Priority 2 --- chose A-3 option as a back-up to Priority 1; again, so as to allow provision as in a. above for a "What-If/Ultimate Case Scenario".

[Note: As for the Proposed Uses' option, the "house museum/educational piece" one listed by Frazier in this Section would seem to offer the more realistically supportable and financially-reasonable one --- that can still allow for a later-on/phased expansion of uses --- if such proves worthwhile upon further experience.]

6. Page 3, Grounds and Landscape Considerations Section, 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence:

--- Suggest that Lardner/Klein research the potential or "what-ifs" vis-a-vis restoring at least some of the original traces and viewshed characteristics. Of course, we don't want to remove ALL of the mid-to-late 20th Century forest-growth; but just enough to be able to restore the look of those earlier-eras' visual and horticultural experiences. This would then reflect the fact that the LH House Garden Area was originally planned as a rather wide-open almost tree-less feature, with the "lower-lawn" (just below the upper-gardens brickwork/stair-steps area) being a relatively expansive lawn designed for hosting large events and/or family activities sponsored by the Prison Superintendent.

7. Page 3, Grounds and Landscape Consideration Section, 2nd paragraph:

--- Suggest that Frazier and/or Lardner/Klein research the recent Dunbarton Oaks Park's Cultural Landscape Study experience (as outlined in the 11/8/07 Washington Post article about Dunbarton Oaks). This review could include studying the possibility of inviting that Park's landscape study consultants to discuss their experiences with the LH House and LH House's Gardens' Consultants so the latter could learn more as to how FC should go about restoring/preserving its similarly-impacted park and garden. Due to the many recent years of landowner-caused neglect at LH House (resulting in humongous invasive species and other over-growth problems), it would seem that the rather substantive environmental-remediation activities necessary to accommodate the kind of restoration experience performed at Dunbarton Oaks House and Park could also be replicated by FC at Laurel Hill.

--- Strongly recommend that the LH House Committee defer its final meeting and/or report until AFTER not only these kinds of extra-careful consultancy research activities can be performed but also so that the Committee and the County's Staff/Consultants can have the collegially-important opportunity of reviewing the final FCPA-ordered LH House Gardens Cultural Landscape Study that is due in January as well.

Page 4, Discussion Section, paragraph 2, last sentence:

--- This is one of the more important comments/suggestions made by FC's consultants. As noted above in my several historically-oriented references, we would most likely not even be considering ANY of these restorative/reuse opportunities anywhere within the overall Laurel Hill Property if it weren't simply the case that the original house (i.e., its residents and uses and interactions with 18th Century plantation life and Revolutionary War/FC Family experiences) --- and its later-on Prison-developed Supt. House/Gardens' associations --- gave it the unique historical, architectural and political-social-cultural importance that are arguably found nowhere else in America, never mind in our Fairfax County!

Page 4, Options for Restoration and Use Section, 1st Comment:

--- Although this particular restorational-concept idea is probably THE single best one expressed so far, it actually understates its case or rationale. As a result, it could possibly be seen as much too-subtly negative to its end-point proposal --- when read out of context somewhat later-on by County decision-makers. By all accounts, the various Lindsay/Calvert/Washington/Waggener Families' historically-relevant connections and the site itself are really MUCH MORE "intertwined" with the overall pre- and post-Revolutionary War story concerning the people of Fairfax County's various experiences and roles (to include the aspects of plantation life between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War's Reconstruction Eras) that occurred during much if not all of the House's first century's existence.

Page 5, Options for Restoration and Use Section, 8th Comment:

--- As result of the rather significant expense necessary to restore the house to its current configuration/size, I agree with this idea --- i.e., taking the House back to the original LH Plantation/Lindsay Family-oriented structure and purpose. However, it should be done in such a way that any later-decided-upon restorations-additions can be accommodated as funding-availability allows and/or as interest/need demands.

Page 5, Options for Restoration and Use Section, 11th and 12th Comments:

--- We need to quickly resolve and come to consensus about this issue so as to disavow the rather naysaying/risk-adverse outlooks expressed in these two observational/what-if types of commentaries. As recent research by Frazier, LHS and others have increasingly revealed, the Laurel Hill House is not JUST an "ordinary" house --- as some may choose to negatively interpret that descriptive word ("ordinary"). In fact, it is an amazingly eclectic and somewhat complex residence that also tells a series of "stories" that serve to provide an overview of much of Fairfax County's familial, social and political experiences over the past two hundred-plus years of its or its various owners' existence. Even with a \$300/SF restoration cost for the approximately 1800-SF house (assuming completely re-doing all 3 levels of the original structure), this would only be about \$500,000. This is a relatively modest amount compared to what FC has spent in previous years on all sorts of other historic house site purchases, reconstructions, etc. --- some of which have provided FC citizens with somewhat limited or restricted public use/access (e.g., Oak Hill, Salona, Mt. Gilead). And when compared to what home-buyers are being required to pay for new homes on/around the immediate Laurel Hill area (e.g., between \$500K to \$700K for a 1600-SF to 2200-SF home on a 1/25th to 1/20th-acre lot), this is a bargain! [Note: FCPA is proposing in its draft 2008 Bond Referendum Package to spend several millions of dollars on the restoration/expansion of its Lamond House Property, which excludes the \$4 million that I believe FC spent to purchase it just a few years ago!]

Page 5, Site Considerations, 2nd thru 3rd Comments:

--- It is definitely quite appropriate --- in fact, I would argue quite necessary --- to have the prison-era gardens and the House's associated brick-lined roadway be tied in to the restored original Laurel Hill Plantation House. In addition to the opportunity to juxtapose the different eras that these two facilities represent, there is also the inter-connective story to be told vis-a-vis the historic experiences of the formal garden developed for and by the Lorton Prison's Leaders and of the informal but equally decorative and meaningful rose and other 18th-century style flower gardens that were nurtured by "Grand'mere Lindsay" Herself and by the House's later residents. As a result, taken together --- even though separately done and purposed --- these two historically-, horticulturally- and architecturally-significant facilities add up to FAR MORE than just the sum of each others' parts!

Page 5, Site Considerations, 4th and 5th Comments:

--- These two comments embody great ideas on which the FCPA's Cultural Resources Department, Lorton Heritage Society, FC History Commission, FC ARB and area garden clubs should consider collaborating. Contact could also be made with the horticultural experts working with the other South County Area historically-oriented plantation-type homes that have extensive garden complexes (i.e., Woodlawn and Gunston Hall). Additionally, and probably even more importantly (esp. so as to help minimize any cost concerns that such a garden-preservation/restoration project could entail), consideration should be given for FC and LHS/FCHC to develop a partnership with the nearby Mt. Vernon Estates' and the American Horticultural Society's River Farm's gardening experts. They should find this particular project rather exciting, due to Major Lindsay's and Laurel Hill House's relationships with the original owner of both of those complexes --- General George Washington himself!

Page 6, Miscellaneous Section, 3rd Comment:

--- This is an excellent idea! It is especially prescient for this project as a result of the very recently-approved resolutions by the FCPA and FCPS (that originally originated from a recommendation by the FCBOS) that direct each agency to work with one another in developing, planning and even funding their respective programs where joint-use sharing of one-another's lands and facilities can be mutually beneficial. With the multitude of immediately-contiguous educational and recreational facilities on the Laurel Hill Property itself (such as the new and planned South County High and Middle Schools and the Laurel Hill Elementary Schools for FCPS as well as the new and planned Laurel Hill Park's Sportsplex, Giles Run Meadow Park, Cold War Museum and Equestrian Center for FCPA), this should be a veritable "no-brainer" for everybody concerned.

Conclusionary Note:

With respect to achieving access to governmentally-sourced funds to plan, design and build the appropriately-restored/preserved Laurel Hill House and Gardens Projects, there should be some quite reasonable opportunities for appropriating such relatively minimally-needed monies (about \$650-\$750,000+/-) just by tapping into the soon-to-be available FC gains via the upcoming Vulcan Quarry Land-Deal (\$15 million) and the already-being-achieved FC profits via the existing LH Golf Course (about \$3 million since 2005). Each of these were the direct outcome of past Laurel Hill Planning Task Forces and BOS recommendations that resulted in the final/1999-approved Comprehensive Plan for the entire Laurel Hill Community Planning Sector. In effect, monies made from County-initiated Laurel Hill-related commercially-oriented ventures should first be considered for being spent on other County-initiated ventures within that same LH Community Planning Sector that may not have the kind of readily-accessible sources of funding available to help defray their expenses as did the others.