

Fairfax County 250th Commission
September 27, 2023, 1-2:30 pm
Fairfax City 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	Absent
Gretchen Bulova	History Commission	Present
Brent Feito	The Army Historical Foundation	Absent
The Honorable Michael R. Frey	Sully District	Absent
Paul Kohlenberger	Springfield District	Present
Patrick Lennon	Visit Fairfax	Present
Elizabeth Maurer	National Museum of the US Army	Present
Subhi A. Mehdi	Dranesville District	Present
Garrett McGuire	At-large, Chairman Appointee	Absent
Suzanne Moffitt	Hunter Mill District	Present
Nancy Rosenbaum	Mount Vernon District	Present
Beverly A. Schlotterbeck	Mason District	Present
Nancy Simmons	Braddock District	Present
Scott Stroh	Gunston Hall	Present
Ashley Morris	CEO Celebrate Fairfax	Present
Trinity Yansick	Celebrate Fairfax	Absent
Laura Grape	Park Authority, Resource Management Division Director	Absent
Denice Dressel	Heritage Resources, Department of Planning & Development	Present
Megan Leining	City of Fairfax, Historic Resources Specialist	Present
VACANT	George Mason University	
VACANT	History Commission	
VACANT	Franconia District	

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Scott Stroh called the meeting to order at 1:09 pm and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Secretary Nancy Simmons also was present. Ashley Morris introduced herself. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Stroh distributed the meeting agenda and a copy of the draft themes of the Virginia 250 Commission.

Approval of July 2023 Minutes

Mr. Stroh noted that the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting and asked for comments or corrections. Ms. Simmons suggested a change in wording in the Strategic Discussion section, which was accepted. Mr. Bell-Krasner moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Mehdi seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissention.

Committee Reports

Finance

Ms. Bulova reported that she hoped to finish the budget request by the end of the week. The plan is to ask for \$150,000 to cover mainly the costs anticipated by the Signature Event Committee. This amount would cover the cost of a vehicle for two years. She noted that we still have \$170,000 obligated in prior years, which will roll over into future years if it is not used. She briefly outlined possible future financial needs.

Inclusion

Mr. Bell-Krasner reported that his committee had tried to meet on August 29, 2023, but did not have a quorum with only two members present; therefore, no business was conducted. The committee is solidifying its mission while working with the Signature Events and other committees. They are gathering lists of people with whom they want to interface and hope to capture the diversity of the county through a series of interviews.

Outreach

Ms. Simmons reported that the list of contacts created by her committee is on the Google drive and should be accessible to all commission members. She encouraged everyone to look at the list and add groups that should be included. On August 25, 2023, she emailed the list to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors who told her they would forward it to all of the supervisors. None of the offices have replied yet.

Activity

Ms. Moffitt reported that the committee met on August 30, 2023, and continued to compile activities that may be pursued, including interviews with individuals. Ms. Dressel noted that some of the activities may require completing consent forms. Mr. Barbuschak said he could email her the ones used by his office; he also suggested that the committee plan to have transcripts prepared of oral or video interviews because transcripts sometimes last longer than the recordings. Ms. Mehdi noted that the History Commission has an interview protocol in place that it uses; its interviews are conducted in collaboration with Fairfax County's cable channel 16. Mr. Lennon added that the History Commission will soon host its annual history conference, which will include a diverse group of people sharing their stories. Ms. Bellamy mentioned that her church conducted interviews previously that might be of interest to the committee.

Marketing and Communications

Mr. Lennon reported that we have a bare bones website available that is free to us to use and he encouraged members to post known upcoming events on the site. He said the committee is working on a year 1 marketing plan and is waiting for other administrative challenges to be resolved before rolling it out.

Signature Event

Mr. Lennon reported that we have tentatively arranged for the vehicle that would offer the signature experience during the year or so that we will want to visit events throughout the county. No contract is yet in place, but the idea is to have the vehicle owner drive the van to events that we designate; the owner would also be responsible for vehicle maintenance and insurance. It will have the ability to record onsite. The commission can design/enhance the vehicle to meet its needs. Details and logistics still need to be worked out.

Youth and Family Engagement

Ms. Maurer reported that the inaugural meeting of her committee is planned for October 19 at 3 pm at the Thomas Jefferson Library. The committee hopes to be a conduit to various groups so they can understand what the commission will be doing. It will be a public meeting with in-person and video conferencing options. She asked the committee members to encourage others to attend.

Committee Chairs Meetings

Mr. Bell-Krasner reported that the committee chairs had met twice—Aug 16 and Sep 15—with a third meeting planned for October. The Committees have begun developing concise descriptions of their respective missions. In the first part of 2024, the chairs hope to hold town hall type meetings to introduce the Fairfax County 250 Commission to the community.

Old Business

Financial Duties and Fundraising

Mr. Stroh noted that he, Ms. Dressel, and the County Attorney's office have had continuing discussions on how the financial transactions related to the commission can/will be handled. He felt that a path forward had been identified and would include a formal memorandum of understanding with Visit Fairfax for them to hold and be responsible for funds allocated to the commission's work. The expenses and contracts would then be executed by Visit Fairfax. While the commission would be deciding the activities that are to be funded, it would not be legally involved in committing the funds; Visit Fairfax would be legally involved in committing the funds. And the understanding would be that the funds committed are to support the Fairfax County 250th Commission.

However, before the memorandum of understanding can be finalized, the County Attorney's office would like to understand how fundraising would be handled, especially if private funds are going to be solicited. Mr. Stroh outlined several potential options that were discussed, including identifying an existing non-profit organization that would be willing to handle this on our behalf and account for any private funds raised, created our own such organization, and finding an

existing entity that is already structured to receive and distribute privately-raised funds. There was also discussion on the extent to which the Board of Supervisors expects us to raise private funds. Some members commented that the approach we are now taking may require less money than previously thought, so private money may not be as essential as initially thought. Ms. Schlotterbeck expressed the importance of engaging the corporate community in our work, and having them donate funds is one way to do that. Ms. Maurer raised the point that whatever method is used to accept donations should allow for them to be tax-deductible for individuals. Ms. Rosenbaum noted that we have a great mission—one that would likely be universally appealing if we solicit private donations. Mr. Kohlenberger mentioned the Community Foundation of Northern Virginia as a potential option and Ms. Bulova agreed to reach out to them to explore how it would work.

Upcoming Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for the day before Thanksgiving and that a different meeting date is preferred. Mr. Stroh said he would work with Ms. Dressel to select an alternate meeting date.

Adjourn

Mr. Bell-Krasner moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Lennon seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent and the meeting adjourned.

Attachments

Handout from Scott Stroh showing the draft VA250 Themes
Activity Committee Minutes from August 30, 2023
Committee Chairs Meeting Minutes from August 16, 2023

Respectfully Submitted by Nancy A. Simmons, Secretary

These minutes were approved on November 29, 2023.

Draft – Consolidated themes
Updated March 9, 2021

Virginia 250: Semiquincentennial KEY THEMES

Virginia’s history is America’s story: complex, diverse, and promising, a multicultural story that in the Revolutionary era was Native American, European, African and American, and is now so much richer for its diversity. Focusing on Revolutionary events in 1775 and 1776, the Virginia Semiquincentennial will embrace the inclusive history and narrative breadth of the era, and mark the origins of a revolutionary new nation.

I. Virginia is a powerfully historical place, home to sites and stories essential to our American story.

- Virginia’s historic places include the stories of both prominent and ordinary people.
- Virginia’s native peoples were first to shape the place that is the Commonwealth, and continue to shape Virginia and the nation.
- Virginia’s honest reckoning with the paradox of our origins in both freedom and slavery aims to be a national model.
- Virginia’s sites and museums reveal chapters of our founding narrative: key ideas about American governance including the first representative assembly in British America, the Virginia Resolution for Independence, Virginia Declaration of Rights, Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and the Statute of Religious Freedom.
- Much of American history is here in Virginia – native lands, a founding colonial settlement, the American Revolution, the Civil War, Civil Rights, and more.

II. The Revolutionary challenge continues.

- The American experiment has resulted in the most robust and longest democracy in history.
- The American Revolution was a time when passionate activists, summoning the courage to challenge centuries of an established world order, led a revolution that would change the world.
- Many of those who fought for liberty -- including enslaved people —were young radicals, rule breakers, optimists, justice seekers, change agents.
- American optimism and passion for change have been driving forces for progress, improvement and innovation.
- The American founders could not have envisioned inclusion and diversity as we know it, but their work entitled Americans over more than two and a half centuries to fight for a more equal society.
- The 250th anniversary of independence is a chance to assess our resolve to deliver on the American “promissory note” of freedom, equality, and “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

III. Here in Virginia, the American Revolution was a war, and more than a war.

- It was a war waged by Virginians, that divided some communities and families and brought others together.
- It was a revolution of ideas, with many sources of inspiration for ideas about freedom including from European enlightenment thinkers, and ancient Greek and Roman philosophy.
- It was a revolution for expressions of liberty, including from enslaved people seeking freedom and Native Americans asserting sovereignty.
- It was a struggle that produced a promise of equality in the Declaration of Independence, participation in government as delineated in the Constitution, and protections defined in the Bill of Rights.
- It was a struggle whose conclusion excluded most Virginians of the time, but which has inspired disenfranchised, subjugated, and disempowered groups to fight for their rights as Americans on the basis of our founding documents and the ideals they express.

IV. We can tell our history to reflect the fullest American story.

- Virginia's semiquincentennial of the American Revolution will serve as a continuum of recent Virginia commemorations --of 1607, and of 1619--that emphasized the challenges, diversity and dynamism of the Commonwealth.

**Fairfax County 250th Commission
Activity Committee
August 30, 2023
Fairfax Regional Library
Room 103**

Meeting started at 1:15
Brent Feito absent.
Paul Kohlenberger absent.
Forest arrived late.

Suzanne made a motion to accept the minutes. This was seconded by Janice.

Review of Activity Committee projects.

1. Pohick Church/Falls Church – left voice mail. Never heard back – Give them a week. Called and left a voicemail message with the receptionist. Pass information on. Called yesterday. Forest – Lynn Rinaldi – Rector. Sondra Caesar – arrangements with her. SAR congregant on vestry. [Mike Ellston, Nat. Officer of SAR. Day job – Attorney for Postmaster General.
2. Museum of the Army – Don't have activities. Maybe musters. Gathering. Naturalization program. Rules printed out. Qualify under fairs/festivals. Northern District of Oklahoma. Date/Location. Who will give the oath? Historic Courthouse. The Falls Church – historic July next year. Declaration of Independence from steps of courthouse – equity and inclusion Recognize efforts of enslaved people. Ceremony; contributions of the enslaved @ Pohick. Be inclusive. Founding members. Unveiled plaque in the church. Descendants of black community Ancestors in the Revolution
3. Story Corps Haven't done anything. Does it have to be approved. Scott approved.
4. Passport with Paul. It can be stamped at each location. Children and families.
5. Stage – Showmobile. Actors and Reenactors. Interpret. Forest – Tom Costa to read the Declaration of Independence. Janice and speakers at Gunston Hall 1776 – Contact Fairfax County Public Schools. Head of Theatre Arts. Commemoration Wall. July 18, 1774. Signing of the Fairfax Resolves. Endorsed. SAR Color Guard. SAR Planning. Take credit. 50 attendees for 249th. One Resolve: Abolition of Slavery. Add to list for the 250th. December 16, 2023 – 250th Commemoration of the Boston Tea Party Commemorative Event.

Is the Commission creating a calendar? Could add to it.

Prepared by Liz Crowell

Committee Chairs Meeting

August 16

10am at Visit Fairfax Offices

In attendance: Elliott Bell-Krasner, Gretchen Bulova, Nancy Simmons, Patrick Lennon, Trinity Yansick, Elizabeth Maurer

Meeting was started and discussion ensued, led by Elliott, on gaining clarification on what each committee's responsibilities were for the commemoration. Elliott began the discussion by bringing up the potential overlap between the youth and family engagement and outreach committees. Elizabeth clarified that as the family engagement and outreach chair she would exclusively be the point of contact for the schools and youth organizations, and they wanted to communicate directly with her. Nancy shared with the group that she had a list of potential history and community organizations that the commission had identified as partners in our endeavor and asked if Elizabeth's youth and family engagement list should be added to that. The group decided that the lists should remain separate in terms of the messaging that was sent to each and who would be communicating with them, but it would be ideal if all contacts were kept in one repository. Elliott then suggested that each committee chair come up with a purpose statement to further clarify what each committee was ultimately responsible for and have it prepared for our next meeting.

The discussion then turned to Nancy asking what she is supposed to do with the list and asked who would be capable of communicating with the groups. Due to the limited resources and time of the committee chairs there was no consensus on who should do this. Patrick volunteered to take a stab at it.

Discussion then moved to reaching out to the groups to invite them to a series of Town Halls where we could inform them of the Commission's work thus far and our vision for the commemoration. Gretchen came up with a list of potential places around the county and Patrick volunteered to book the spaces each week from early October through the week before Thanksgiving.

Elizabeth again advocated for the development of a business/marketing plan for the group in order for everyone to be organized in terms of purpose and meeting deadlines.

The group agreed that the commission chairs should continue to meet regularly in the coming months until the purpose of each committee was clear to avoid any duplicate work. Elliott volunteered to send out potential dates and find a place to meet.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:13

Minutes prepared by Patrick Lennon