

**Fairfax County Semiquincentennial Work Group  
Virtual Webex Meeting  
January 22, 2021  
Meeting Notes**

In attendance:

Camela Speer, Communications Director, Mount Vernon District  
Christine Morin, Chief of Staff, Mount Vernon District  
Scott Stroh, Gunston Hall  
George Alber, Human Rights Commissioner  
Julie Almacy, George Washington's Mount Vernon  
Cameron Brumett, The Army Historical Foundation  
Gretchen Bulova, History Commissioner  
Denice Dressel, Department of Planning and Development  
Patrick Lennon, Visit Fairfax  
Mary Lipsey, History Commissioner  
Elizabeth (Liz) Maurer, National Museum of the United State Army  
Kenneth Saunders, Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs  
Laura Wickstead, Virginia Room of the Fairfax Regional Library

Comments from Supervisor Storck's Office made by Christine Morin – Supervisor Storck was called away for a family emergency and was unable to attend. Ms. Morin emphasized the importance of the Semiquincentennial to the Supervisor, which is why he brought forth the Board Matter to initiate the County's efforts and is looking forward to partnering with the Workgroup.

**Requisite motions for electronic meetings - passed.**

Scott Stroh led the workgroup through the agenda items:

Stated Purpose for meeting:

- To discuss a budget submittal
- Preliminary discussion of the structure, process and time frame for preparing report to the Board

Shared values and commitments for participating in the Workgroup discussions:

- The Workgroup will be a place where all members feel comfortable and welcomed to fully participate
- Workgroup members commit to working collaboratively during the meetings and completing preparatory tasks for the meetings in order to meet the obligations of the Workgroup

Review Purpose and Charge of the Work Group:

To provide recommendations, by July 2021, to the Board of the preferred approach for organizing and leading county related efforts for the inclusive observance and celebration of the commemoration in 2026. Recommendations to include high level SMART goals

related to planning, promotion, types of civic, cultural, historical and educational activities, ways, means, timetables, approaches and accountability.

#### Review Work of Commonwealth Commission:

The Commonwealth convened the American Revolution 250<sup>th</sup> Commission and appointed members this past fall. Gunston Hall, Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation, and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture are three of the lead organizational partners on the Commonwealth Commission. Gretchen Bulova is one of the Governor's appointees to the Commission.

So far, the Commission has met three times and submitted a workplan that provides a preliminary approach as well as a budget request and preliminary core themes which have been submitted and are currently under review. The Governor included approximated \$250,000 in his proposed budget as seed money to get the Commonwealth Commission up and running.

Timetable for the Commemoration – envisioning activities and events of the commemoration within the 2025-2026 timeframe, mirroring federal and other statewide program planning. Planning reports and accounting in 2027.

#### DRAFT Commonwealth Commission Preliminary Key Themes:

- The American Revolution was a radical time when passionate activists, summoning the courage to challenge centuries of an established world order, led a revolution that would change the world.
- The American Revolution was more than a war. It was a revolution of ideas, with many sources of inspiration for ideas about freedom.
- Most Americans were excluded from the original promise of equality in the Declaration of Independence, from participation in government as delineated in the Constitution, and from the protections defined in the Bill of Rights.
- The Revolutionary challenge continues.
- 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. Virginia has a power of historical place, of sites essential to our American story.

The Commission was briefed on a study funded by the Virginia Tourism board on what the public is interested in seeing concerning the commemoration. In a future meeting, the Commission will be briefed on a study which targeted African American interests in the commemoration.

#### Discussion of Budget Submittal:

The workgroup discussed the question of whether they would like to make a request to the Board of Supervisors now, prior to submitting their report in July, to take advantage of the timing of the Board's budget cycle. The issue was raised that there is another opportunity to ask for funding from the Board in the fall, at the time of the budget carryover in the fall.

Discussion focused on promotion and publicity at the early stages. It was suggested that any budget request should be coupled with a plan. The Workgroup decided, working with the

Supervisor's office and the County, to move ahead with formulating a plan and submit a budget request for this spring. Patrick Lennon and Scott Stroh will work together on a draft proposal.

#### Discuss Structure, Process & Time Frame for Preparing Report to the Board:

The Commonwealth Commission's Key Themes should be central to everything the Workgroup does – organize the work around the themes.

Using the Bicentennial as an example, there was a nationwide/statewide directive to teachers to concentrate on the Bicentennial. An argument can be made from the Commonwealth's leadership to get people to participate.

The County should be looking for logo from Commonwealth to tie the events together and support the themes of the Commonwealth Commission. Gretchen/Scott – ask this question?

If a signature event is what the Workgroup is planning, we need to get someone onboard now that has the expertise to plan for events of that scale. Celebrate Fairfax may be interested/available. Patrick sits on their Board of Directors.

Questions to be answered: Do we want to have a signature event? How are we defining that? What resources are available? What is it going to cost?

Create a calendar or list that lists other entities or organizations are planning for partnership and promotion.

Communication plan to address questions regarding logos, dedicated social media, use of county's communication channels, website. What are the communication goals and strategies and who is going to execute them? This could serve as the key element in the budget request.

#### Q & A / Open Forum

Q: Are we going to hire staff to assist with the planning of programming? Are we reaching out to community groups? Is it a blend of those two?

A: Board community-based effort. At the County level, we can facilitate, support, and promote with others are doing. There is value in contemplating some sort of signature event or events at the County level, as well.

Q: Will the Workgroup be able to tag along with the state-level efforts for branding, tagline, etc.

A: Not so far, nothing is prepared at the state level. Focus is on promotion and getting the word out. The Commonwealth's approach will be to promote, facilitate, and support efforts. The Workgroup can have an approach element in the report to the Board for leveraging the Commonwealth's efforts.

## Next Steps

The workgroup was charged with thinking about:

- 1) Target audience – multiple demographics and hierarchy
- 2) The Commonwealth's proposed themes – how we can tailor the themes to Fairfax and leverage what is uniquely Fairfax.
- 3) Strategy (preferred approach) – how to build in the Communications Plan, the Marketing Plan, Partnerships, what are the high-level strategies to integrate these things?
- 4) What are the activities we want to include, what activities do we want to see, who can we partner with?
- 5) Identify resources – expertise, insight, perspective; what resources should we recommend to the County?

Future meetings:

- Monthly
- Fridays
- 3:00?

Adjourn