

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, October 14, 2014

Minutes, Board Meeting, Alexandria Historical Society

September 9, 2014

President Debbie Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:34 at the Alexandria Black History Museum. Other members present were Audrey Davis, Tal Day, Ted Pulliam, Katy Cannady, Jackie Cohan, Linda Greenberg, Dennis Hensley, Jim Mackay, Julie Randle, Mark Whatford, and Helen Wirka.

Approval of Board Minutes: Earlier Pulliam circulated by email a draft of the minutes of the Board meeting of June 10, 2014. He revised the draft based on comments received and circulated the revised draft at the meeting. No additional amendments were suggested. Day moved the amendments be approved, Hensley seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Secretary: Pulliam had nothing new to report.

President: Ackerman reported that she and Davis had held a meeting with new Board members to acquaint them with Board procedures and to distribute manuals to them. She also reported that new members compose certain committees:

Publicity Committee – Wirka and Mackay

Membership Committee – Whatford and Hensley

Correspondence – Mark Hill

Ackerman also reminded Board members that the Board meets the second Tuesday in October, November, February, March, April, May, and June at 6:30 at the Alexandria Black History Museum.

Ackerman circulated three revised position descriptions (attached). They were for AHS Representative to the Alexandria Archaeology Commission, AHS Board Member, and AHS President.

Vice President: Davis reported that the September lecture will be Richard Schwartz speaking on “Hurricanes and Alexandria: A Surprising History” at The Lyceum on September 24. The October lecture will be Catharine Millaras and Stephanie Sample on “Parker-Gray Historic District – Evolution of a Neighborhood” at the Lyceum on October 22. She asked for suggestions for future lectures. The Society holds lectures on the fourth Wednesday in September, October, March, May, and June and holds the Awards Ceremony on the fourth Wednesday in April.

Treasurer: Day circulated a Treasurer's Report and a draft Budget (attached).

Treasurer's Report: Day pointed out that in the Treasurer's Report Pay Pal was listed as a separate Society account. As he expanded in a later email, it was listed in a separate account because it is a fund holding assets of the Society. Payments can be made out of that account, and funds from that account can be transferred into the Burke & Herbert business checking account. As a general matter, it will be used only to receive payments, although during the transition of website management to Wild Apricot, former treasurer Lisa Adamo made a payment out of PayPal to ensure no interruption of support for the Society website by Wild Apricot.

He also reported in the later email that when a renewing or new member pays through PayPal, the information is updated in the membership records of Wild Apricot to show payment received. PayPal also generates a receipt that is emailed to the renewing or new member and an email to the Society g-mail account furnishing notice of payment received.

Day also mentioned that a payment for support of War of 1812 commemoration events was misdirected but that the misdirection is in the process of being corrected.

Budget: On the revenue part of Budget, he indicated that the "budgeted" column was an estimate for the present fiscal year, July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. The "received/spent" column represented the amount of revenue received to date, and the "pending @ 80 %" column was an estimate of the amount to be received from lapsed memberships, based on 80% of those lapsed members renewing their memberships.

On the operations part of the Budget, he reported that the audit committee had yet to meet but would meet the following week. He hoped after the meeting to have a better idea of estimated expense amounts to include for items in this part of the budget. He also asked Board members to provide him with estimates for different items with which they were familiar. He will present a revised budget at the next Board meeting.

Mackay suggested that there needed to be a separate operations item for publicity. Day said he would include such an item for review in the revised budget.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chronicle: Greenberg reported that many people want to write articles for *The Chronicle*. As a result, she plans to publish two articles in the fall and two in the spring instead of the usual one in each. The two in the fall will be the second article by Jack Sullivan on the Civil War diary of a Confederate soldier from Alexandria named John Zimmerman and an article by Catherine Miliaras on the Parker-Gray Historical District, an expansion of her earlier lecture. The two in the spring will be Garrett Pike on Alexandria beer-brewer Andrew Wales and Richard Klingermann on the Madeira wine trade. Davis suggested that a future article might relate the story of black soldiers stationed in L'Ouverture Hospital in Alexandria during the Civil War and pictured in a rarely seen photo taken in Alexandria.

Newsletter/Flyer: Cohan reported that both the flyer and newsletter had been composed and would be circulated later in the week. She said that in the future both should be circulated before a Society event. She also mentioned that the members who received the newsletter by email received it in color but that the 60 or so members and the 30 or so public officials and organizations who received it through postal mail received copies in black, and white. For comparison, she reported that she produced 300 copies of the one-page flyer in color for \$105. The newsletter is longer, but all its pages do not need to be in color. She said that in October she would print the appropriated pages for the October newsletters in color for copies of the newsletter that would go to postal mail recipients to see what the cost might be. Cohan's suggestion met with general approval. Cohan said she would send Day the information on the cost of the production.

Mackay noted that the number sent by postal mail would be reduced over time. Hensley mentioned that he had seen names of several people on the list of members who regularly use email but had not given an email address to the Society.

There was a discussion about who receives the newsletter. Hensley asked whether lapsed members received a copy. He indicated there were 57 recently lapsed members. Cohan said that had not been the practice. Hensley suggested that maybe a copy could be sent to them, at least with the letter urging them to rejoin. It was mentioned that this practice would be giving away a benefit of membership. This issue was not resolved.

Cohan also reported that in the past, about 30 public officials and organizations, such as libraries, had received complimentary copies of the newsletter, although it had been decided that city councilmen no longer would receive such copies because the Board never received responses from them. It was generally agreed to send copies of *The Chronicle* and the newsletter to city councilmen, other public officials, and organizations by email when possible and acceptable to them and postal mail when not. Cohan said she would check with recipients to see whether email was acceptable.

Day suggested that the newsletter that was published after a lecture should mention that the lecture was recorded and is online, if the lecture was recorded.

Website Report: Coster earlier had circulated a report by email. In the report she mentioned that an email about the upcoming lecture in September will go out to the contact list next week.

Mackay asked about the general flow of information among committees. Ackerman said that this flow was set out in the position descriptions. Davis said as an example that she would prepare the biographical information and dates on upcoming speakers and provide it to the Publicity Committee for press releases, to the newsletter editor for the flyer and newsletter, and to the website manager for posting on the website. Society members and board members would receive the information when they received the flyer and newsletter or went onto the website.

Ackerman reported that Coster earlier had emailed to Board members how to access the administrative view part of the website.

Membership: Day mentioned that he had introduced Membership Committee members Hensley and Whatford to Wild Apricot, the website operator. Coster had gotten them onto the Society website. Hensley and Whatford reported that they had developed or were developing several lists: a list of current members, a list of 57 recently lapsed members, and a list of 200 longer-term lapsed members (including the 57 recently lapsed members).

Hensley had circulated earlier by email drafts of two letters, one to lapsed members and one to new members. On the lapsed-members letter, it was agreed that “Society” was a good way to refer in the letters to AHS and that the paying alternatives listed in the letter were good. There was a discussion of paying dues at the door at lectures, and it was generally agreed that this could be done with cash and checks but not with credit cards. Having a list at the door of members who already had paid was suggested in order to answer questions of people who were uncertain whether they had paid. There was a suggestion that the newsletter be sent with the two letters, and Cohan said she would coordinate with the Committee on that issue. There also were additional suggested changes to the letters.

Hensley and Whatford said that the letters needed to be sent soon. They will revise them as appropriate and send them without recirculating the revised version to the Board. This procedure meant with general agreement.

The Society contact information for the letters is: 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria 22314 and alexndriahistoricalociety@gmail.com

Ackerman mentioned that some members already had renewed their memberships through the website.

There was also some discussion about whether non-members should pay for the lectures as was done in the recent series of jointly sponsored lectures on the War of 1812, but resolution of this issue was postponed to the next meeting.

Later Hensley asked whether there was a list of people who might be interested in joining the Society. There seemed to be a list [somewhere on the website?], and people got onto the list in various ways, like showing interest at the Society’s table at the 1812 Signature Event.

Publicity: Mackay announced that he and Wirka would be meeting on publicity tomorrow. He also asked what was referred to as the “publicity handbook” in the Publicity Committee’s job description. Ackerman said it was the list of media organizations and people to contact in those organization prepared by the previous publicity chairman. Whatford suggested that the media list be placed on the website, and there was general agreement with this suggestion.

Wirka asked if there was a list of timelines for when things should be done and who was responsible for accomplishing things. Ackerman said that information was in the position descriptions. Mackay wanted to know who wrote the press releases. Davis said she would get the biographical information on speakers and dates to the Publicity Committee, and the Publicity Committee would write the press releases.

Correspondence: Hill earlier had submitted a report. The Correspondence function was to handle individual inquiries that come to the Society about such things as questions about Alexandria history and what to do with some family article of possible historic interest. An example Hill mentioned was an inquiry about to whom some old farm equipment might be donated.

April Adult History Awards: Randle reported that she would have a report on this subject at the next meeting.

April Student History Awards: Ackerman reported that she would send letters of intent to the high school contacts in the next couple of weeks.

Archaeology and Potomac Yards Metro: Cannady reported that the Archaeology Commission would be making its annual Ben Brenmann Awards for contributions to Alexandria archaeology and history soon. She also reported that the city was continuing to struggle with choosing whether to recommend option A or option C for positioning the metro station for Potomac Yards. The city really favors option C, but the Department of the Interior would not allow the city to use Park Service lands adjoining the George Washington Memorial Parkway to build the station. The city cannot figure out how to build the station at C without such use. The city still plans in December to issue an Environmental Impact Statement covering both options.

HARC: Day reported that HARC's last meeting was in June and the next meeting is September 16. At the last meeting, HARC had voted to send a letter of support for the Fort Ward management plan.

Society's Financial Audit: Day reported that the audit had to be postponed until next week because of illness

OLD BUSINESS

Videotaping Society Lectures: Ackerman spoke against videotaping lectures because the money (\$300 per video if the person currently used would continue that price) could be spent on other more worthy purposes. She also was unsure how often the resulting videos were viewed and had other reasons for opposing that expenditure. She also reminded members that lecturers had to give their consent before their lectures could be videotaped. Whatford suggested that the issue of videotaping be settled on a lecture-by-lecture basis. Wirka suggested that it might be possible for high school students to do the videotaping cheaper for a class project, but Greenberg indicated that this had been investigated before with little satisfaction. Mackay wanted to know whether only members could view the video when posted on line. Greenberg suggested that, like *The Chronicle*, the video should be posted three months after it was prepared. Other issues were raised in the discussion that followed.

Pulliam moved and Wirka seconded a motion that the decision on videotaping should be made on a lecture-by-lecture basis, and if it is decided to videotape a lecture, the scheduled lecturer should be consulted beforehand about whether he or she wants to be videotaped and the breath of

the video's distribution. The video should at least be posted on the Society's website. The motion passed with Ackerman abstaining.

It was agreed that it was too late to arrange for videotaping the September speaker.

New Society Brochure: Greenberg presented a revised version of the Society's brochure (attached). Greenberg said she would email the brochure to the Board for further comments, and she would present a revised brochure at the next meeting.

Non-Profit Bulk Mailing: Greenberg and Whatford are investigating this subject. Greenberg reported that we have a \$220 permit allowing the Society bulk mail privileges indefinitely. We still need to pay an annual \$220 fee for using bulk mailing services. For a mailing of the *Chronicle*, for example, to members the cost would be less than 25 cents each for up to 3.3 ounces. Greenberg and Whatford plan to do a bulk mailing to announce upcoming lectures and other matters.

Whatford reported that to do a bulk mailing only to certain people, such as Society members, within the zip code for Old Town, we apparently need to provide the post office with information concerning the impact of the mailing, such information on the breakdown of items per carrier route. Also, this type of mailing would be more expensive per item than the bulk mailing to everyone in the zip code. He has been getting contradictory information about how this process works and will be seeking more precise information.

1812 Signature Event: Ackerman reported that the Society manned a table and passed out copies of *The Chronicle*, flyers, brochures and other information concerning the Society and Alexandria in 1812 at Alexandria's War of 1812 Signature Event at Waterfront Park on August 31. She manned the table along with Pulliam, Greenberg, and Cannady. An estimated 7,000 plus people attended the event. She also reported that Pulliam's articles on Alexandria and the War of 1812 had appeared in the *Alexandria Gazette Packet*.

NEW BUSINESS

Lee-Fendall House Museum: Day reported that the Museum was in a precarious financial situation. He suggested that the Society might need to help support it financially or otherwise, and he reported that he would attend a meeting of the Museum board soon and report further information to the Board.

Seaport Foundation: Day reported that the Alexandria Seaport Foundation would like the Society, and other organizations, to send letters of support for its continued presence on the Alexandria waterfront. He suggested that the Board might discuss this matter further at the October meeting.

Cloud Storage: Day suggested that we might place more Society information on the cloud for permanent storage. He suggested using Google Drive for this storage because it would be a good fit with the Society's current gmail address. Randle made a motion to that effect, Ackerman seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Arlington Historical Society: Ackerman suggested the Board consider forming a partnership with the Arlington Historical Society, as the Board's past president had mentioned. Questions were raised about what such a partnership might entail for the Society and Arlington. Ackerman said she would investigate further.

Sponsoring Films: Davis reported that two old filmed versions of the Battle of New Orleans recently had been shown at The Lyceum as part of the War of 1812 commemoration. The first had been attended by 38 people and the second by 60. Many of the attendees thought the showings were a great success and suggested doing more. There was no charge for viewing the films, but there was a charge for popcorn and bottled water. The Lyceum also had to pay for the right to show the films. She suggested that the Society might want to arrange for showing of other historical films in the future and maybe charge admission.

AHS Plaque: The Board agreed to add Bill Dickinson's name to the plaque listing past presidents. Davis is to issue Dickinson an invitation to a future event where the revised plaque would be introduced.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam
Secretary