

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, October 8, 2013

Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society

September 10, 2013

In the temporary absence of President Bill Dickinson, Vice President Debbie Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m. Other members present were Lisa Adamo, Ted Pulliam, Katy Cannady, Dave Cavanaugh, Jackie Cohan, Sarah Coster, Audrey Davis, Tal Day, Julie Randle, and Adrienne Washington. Dickinson joined the meeting at 6:47 and took the chair.

Minutes: The minutes of the June Board meeting and the June Annual Meeting were approved.

Welcome: Dickinson welcomed Julie Randle as a new member to the Board and congratulated Debbie Ackerman as the new Vice President, and Jackie Cohan, Sara Coster, and Tal Day as re-elected members of the Board.

Treasurer's Report , Membership Report, and Budget: Adamo circulated a Treasurer's Report, a Treasurer's Membership Report, and a draft Budget for 2013-2014 (attached).

Regarding the Treasurer's Report, she noted that the amount invested in Vanguard Account 1 was from the Abshire Money Market Account. She also noted that the funds in Vanguard Account 2 were taken from the savings and regular endowment accounts leaving sufficient funds in these accounts, judging by past Board actions, to make grants and for other uses. She reported that the Society had received a donation of \$50 from the family of Peggy Gross. It was agreed that the donation should be deposited in the endowment fund. Dickinson suggested that there might be a special account created for funds received to support the Society's activities for the War of 1812 commemoration. Adamo thought that would be possible provided the purpose for expenses from the fund were clear. Day suggested that if not all funds were used for the War of 1812 commemoration, it should be clear that in liquidating the account the remaining funds would go into the Society's general endowment fund.

Regarding the Treasurer's Membership Report, Adamo noted that membership was down slightly. She also reported that members renewing their memberships wrote in accompanying notes about their interests in certain historical periods or events, such as the Civil War and Urban Renewal, which might be subjects for future lectures and *Chronicle* articles. They also were interested in things other than lectures, such as waterfront preservation, and sometimes included personal notes, like a man from Texas who wrote that he was a graduate of George Washington High School, class of 1937. Dickinson made available to Board members a confidential printout of members' information and notes.

Regarding the draft Budget for 2013-2014, Cavanaugh suggested that the figures on projected expenses needed more thought. He and Adamo agreed to discuss revised projections and present them at the next Board meeting.

Membership – Recruiting: Dickinson reported that Friedman had said that as soon as the Society’s new website was launched with the capability to pay dues through it, he would phone members who had not yet renewed their membership to urge them to renew. Ackerman reported that she had talked with a couple of people who had not rejoined. She said that their original purpose in joining was to support the Society and that they did not expect anything special other than attending some of the lectures. She thought that they would rejoin.

Website: Coster reported that the new website was close to being launched, but that it still needed a little more work. Also, AHS needed to own its domain name in order to launch, and Adamo was working on obtaining ownership of the name. In the meantime, the old website was still functioning. Coster mentioned that the new site contains a social media connection.

Dickinson said he had the video of the June lecture to place on the site. It was generally agreed that this could be added to the site through U-Tube. Having a “members only” portion of the site was discussed, but there was some reluctance to have Society members deal with yet another password. Dickinson suggested that photos of the Board members appear on the website. This idea seemed to meet with general approval.

OLD BUSINESS

Virginia Association of Museums Conference: Davis reported that the Virginia Association of Museums, an organization composed of representatives of historical museums throughout Virginia, was to hold its annual conference in Alexandria on March 16-17. VAM had not met in Alexandria in a number of years, and the conference here would promote all Alexandria’s historical properties, not only those administered by the Office of Historic Alexandria, but also other properties, like the Lee-Fendall House and Carlyle House.

She asked that the Board authorize a financial donation to support the conference, noting that donations were needed soon in order to plan for the convention. She suggested that a donation in the range of \$500 -- \$1,000 or more would be very helpful. Ackerman moved and Day seconded a motion that AHS donate \$500 to support the convention and that the Board consider increasing that amount later this year once it had a clearer idea of its budget for the coming fiscal year. The motion passed unanimously. Dickinson suggested that AHS might help in other ways also.

Rosenwald School Lecture: Dickinson reported that he is preparing a letter to the new acting school superintendent on arranging a lecture at T.C. Williams High School on Rosenwald Schools. A Rosenwald school once stood on the site where T. C. Williams now stands.

Arlington Workshops: Dickinson reported that he had attended two sessions of workshops conducted by Arlington County on the operations of non-profit organizations and found them useful. He suggested that similar workshops should be conducted for all Northern Virginia history groups. Coster mentioned that other regional groups have conducted such workshops.

Potomac Yard EIS: Cannady reported that meetings on an environmental impact statement for a proposed Potomac Yard Metro station have not yet been scheduled. She indicated that the delay

was caused by the National Park Service's not agreeing with the City of Alexandria's choice of a site that would necessitate using and possibly closing part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway to aid station construction.

War of 1812 Commemoration: Dickinson announced that he and Gretchen Bulova from OHA were going to Richmond on September 11 to meet with the Virginia War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission and seek funding for events in Alexandria commemorating Alexandria's role in the war, including funding for related AHS lectures and for a lecture cruise on the Potomac that AHS might manage. (Attached are a summary of AHS events, including funds sought from the Commission for the events, and a draft plan for the general Alexandria commemoration.)

The lecture cruise would go from Alexandria to Fort Belvoir and cost around \$2,400 plus expenses for catering, if catering were to be supplied, and marketing. Dickinson mentioned the possibility of raising funds from National Harbor, Alexandria banks, and other organizations. The boat to be used for the cruise would hold approximately 120 people. Admission could be charged, although some local dignitaries would be invited who would not be charged. The Board might create a separate fund for money raised for these activities.

Possible lecturers would include Patrick O'Neill, an expert on the voyage of British Captain Gordon up the Potomac to capture Fort Washington and Alexandria and his return down the Potomac, and Andrew Lambert, a British expert on the Napoleonic Wars.

Dickinson said the Board could discuss sponsoring the cruise in more detail later when he had more information, particularly information concerning what funds might be available from the Bicentennial Commission.

Some of the events to be held as part of the commemoration were discussed, such as re-enactors at Fort Washington and Fort Belvoir and a cricket match. (A list of events is attached.) Dickinson suggested that a lawn at the Virginia Theological Seminary might be a good location for a cricket match. Randle reported that there were three natives of Great Britain on the VTS staff and one or more might be sympathetic to holding such an event at VTS.

June Lecture: Dickinson reported that the June lecture by Charles Mauro on his book *A Southern Spy in Northern Virginia* had been successful with about 60-70 people attending.

Financial Audit, 2012-2013: Cavanaugh gave the report of the Financial Audit committee's findings (copy attached). Members of the committee were Cavanaugh, Cohan, and Adamo. Generally, the transactions audited were valid and properly disclosed in the financial statements. The report also contained two recommendations: that the Board adopt a budget for the coming fiscal year and that it should consider better ways to promote its charitable efforts.

Recording Lectures: Dickinson said that the person who recorded the June lecture on video, Jay Bartol, was enthusiastic about doing so and had done a good job. Dickinson indicated that his charge for recording future lectures and the funding for recording them were questionable. He noted that he was requesting funds from the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission for recording those lectures related to the War of 1812. Ackerman pointed out that all future lecturers may not

want to be videotaped. She said she had received a release from the next speaker, but that another future speaker had indicated that she did not want to be videotaped.. Cavanaugh suggested that the Board itself may not want to tape all speakers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Future Speakers: Ackerman reported the following list of speakers and dates.

September 25, 2013 Gerard W. Gawalt author of *George Mason and George Washington: The Power of Principle*

October 23, 2013 Gene Allen Smith author of *The Slaves Gamble: For Freedom: Choosing Sides during the War of 1812*

March 26, 2013 Stuart Butler author of *Defending the Old Dominion-Virginia and its Militia in the War of 1812*

April 23, 2014 Award Night - speakers will be a former student award winner and a former adult award winner

May 28, 2014 Mary Ann Jung - an actress who will bring alive the historical composite of "Rosie the Riveter"

June 25, 2014 The team of Char Bah, Christa Watters, Audrey Davis, Gwendolyn Henderson, and James Henson - authors of *African Americans of Alexandria Virginia*

She requested that anyone having suggestions for the Award Night speakers to let her know. She also mentioned the possibility of publicizing future lectures through other local and regional historical organizations, such as enlisting the help of Gunston Hall to publicize the talk on George Mason and George Washington. Dickinson suggested that there was a need for AHS to have a marketing person to be in charge of publicizing the lectures. Cavanaugh agreed to compile a list of local and regional historical organizations to be contacted.

September Newsletter: Cohan and Dickinson discussed the contents of the September newsletter. It was agreed that it would be principally a flyer for the September lecture but also would include a list of future speakers, which Ackerman and Cohan would talk about further, and a list of new officers.

Archaeology: Cannady reported that Archaeological Commission had selected this year's Ben Brenman awardees. The Ben Brenman award is given annually to recognize business, families, professional preservationists, volunteers, students, and other individuals and organizations who have performed outstanding work in archaeological investigation, research, site protections, education, open space design, collections, or conservation. All this year's awardees made contributions to the preservation of and discovery of information about the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery.

NEW BUSINESS

Lee-Fendall House: Ackerman reported that the Lee-Fendall House was having financial difficulties. Day, who is on the board of the Lee-Fendall House, said the ongoing financial support for the House was not good. Operations support was needed on a continuing basis because event rentals and admissions did not provide enough income to fund operations. Still, there were some positive aspects to its situation. The physical condition of the property itself was continuing to improve, a recent program on John L. Lewis was very successful, more good programs are planned, and a new director has been chosen. Fundraising for repairs to a chimney are next major capital fundraising objective. It was suggested that Day invite the new director to the next Board meeting, and he agreed to do so.

Funeral Home Records: Davis reported that the Alexandria Library is working with the Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home to obtain records that the funeral home was planning to destroy. She reported that the funeral home is reluctant to give them to the library, possibly because of privacy considerations. Also, the funeral home recently had been purchased by a larger corporation and is no longer locally controlled. Adamo mentioned the valuable types of historical information such records contain. Board members suggested possibly obtaining only old records and not recent records. Another possibility would be to pay for the records' storage. Davis reported that efforts to obtain the records will continue.

Site for Fundraiser: Dickinson reported that Friedman had found a person in Old Town who was willing to host an AHS fund raiser. Ackerman asked how AHS would use funds raised in a fund raiser. It was agreed to discuss that issue in a further Board meeting.

Samuel Wilbert Tucker Book Signing and Reception: Davis announced that there would be a book signing and reception at the Black History Museum on Saturday, September 14 at 2-4 p.m. for the first-ever children's biography of Virginia and Alexandria's civil rights trailblazer Samuel Wilbert Tucker.

Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery: Davis reported that the cemetery dedication would be held March 8, 2014.

Carver School: Washington reported that the façade of the Carver School would be saved. A developer is going to convert the building to pediatric center.

Rosemont Video: Dickinson reported that a video on houses in the Rosemont neighborhood has been made and now available for purchase.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam, Secretary