

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society

June 11, 2013

President Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. in the Black History Museum. Other members present were Ted Pulliam, Debbie Ackerman, Katy Cannady, Dave Cavanaugh, Jackie Cohan, Sarah Coster, Audrey Davis, Paul Friedman, and Linda Greenberg.

Minutes: The minutes of the May meeting prepared by Pulliam were approved with one amendment.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Report: In Adamo's absence, Dickinson reported that she had told him that she would circulate the Treasurer's Report soon by email and that she had closed the Burke & Herbert Abshire Money Market account. Dickinson said that he had received several letters that apparently contained membership renewals in response to the appeal in the last newsletter. It looks as though the Society is saving money by not having to send out a separate request for renewals. Adamo also had indicated to him that there recently had been 19 additional membership renewals.

Membership Generally: Friedman initiated a discussion about how to seek new members and suggested several approaches to telling people about the Society and letting them know it is seeking new members. Some of the suggestions offered by Friedman and other Board members were things like sending emails, making phone calls, choosing good places to leave flyers, placing information on the website, and holding special events. During the discussion it was generally agreed that what the Society needed was not only someone who would be in charge of recruitment but also someone who would undertake the secretarial duties, such as placing new members on the Society's mailing list, sending out a welcoming package to new members, and examining membership lists from past years to determine people who might be persuaded to rejoin. There was some consideration to formalizing the duties of a membership chairman in a position description. Davis indicated that she knew a history professor at West Springfield High School who operated a program that provided history students with opportunities to obtain special credit by helping history organizations. She said she was taking advantage of this program, and a student was coming to help her at the Black History Museum. She offered to investigate sharing the student with the Society. The student then could help with Society membership tasks. Davis and Friedman were to talk and work out a good arrangement on sharing.

OLD BUSINESS

Rosenwald School Lecture: Dickinson reported that the project of arranging for a lecture at T. C. Williams High School on Rosenwald Schools was on hold because of the difficulty of dealing with the school bureaucracy. Davis suggested that the lecture be given instead at one of the Society's lectures in the fall at the Lyceum. Friedman suggested first contacting a school board member and trying to arrange for the lecture with the aid of the member. Friedman and Dickinson agreed to approach a member with such a proposal.

War of 1812 Commemoration: Davis reported that the city's 1812 commemoration group will be conducting a walk-through of commemoration arrangements on the waterfront on June 17. She also said that the organizers are seeking vendors for the August 2014 commemoration event and asked that anyone who thought of a possible vendor to let her know. Coster suggested that the Society have a table at the event. Dickinson reported on an interesting bus and boat tour of Prince George's County sites connected with the War of 1812 sponsored by the Darnell Chance House Museum in Upper Marlboro. He suggested that it might serve as an example of the type of thing that could be done for the Alexandria commemoration. The lecturer on the tour was Ralph Eshelman, co-author of a book on the War of 1812 called *The Full Glory Reflected*, and Dickinson said he would be interested in coming to Alexandria to give a talk on the war. Dickinson also reported that people at the British embassy were interested in participating in the commemoration through such events as a British-Alexandria tug of war and a cricket match. Davis and Dickinson both mentioned a good book on slaves who were encouraged by the British to join them in the fight called *Slaves' Gamble: Choosing Sides in the War of 1812* by Gene Allen Smith.

AHS Website and Migration to Wild Apricot: Dickinson reported that he had talked with New Target, the Society's current website manager, about the transfer to a new manager and that the discussion went well. New Target agreed that the Society's new website could use the domain name associated with the old website. New Target indicated that it would need a couple of weeks to arrange for the changeover.

Coster said she had talked with Adamo and that they agreed for Coster to manage the current website. All documents to be posted on the website, such as the minutes and newsletter, should be sent to Coster. It was generally agreed that only one year of minutes needed to be posted on the website. Coster said she likely will be taking over as website manager for the new Wild Apricot website when the transfer has taken place in the fall. Dickinson mentioned that there was a need for some sort of contractual relationship with Wild Apricot, and he thought that Adamo may have made such an arrangement.

Coster also said anything to be posted on Facebook or Twitter should be sent to her. She and Greenberg urged tweeting about things like how good the most recent lecture was.

May Lecture: Board members who attended the lecture agreed that it had gone well. The lecturer, John Hennessy, was a federal employee and was given, and graciously received, a one-year membership in the Society.

Nominating Committee: Greenberg reported that the committee composed of herself, Cavanaugh, and Davis proposed the following nominations: Dickinson for president, Ackerman for vice president and program chairman, Adamo for Treasurer, and Pulliam for Secretary. The committee also proposed that Cohan, Coster, and Day, whose terms expire in June, each be nominated for another term, and that the position vacated by Ackerman be filled by a new board member, Julie Randle. The Board voted unanimously in favor of presenting those nominations to the membership at the June lecture and membership meeting.

Sales Tax Exemption and Fund Raising Certification: Friedman reported that he still was investigating the issue. Adamo said in an email that Virginia's non-profit guidelines could be viewed online. (email attached)

Membership Mailing: Cohan reported she had extra envelopes and billing forms.

Member Survey: There was a discussion about the need for and content of the member survey. The general opinion was that the survey could be useful, and at least it could indicate to the Society members that the Board was interested in their views. In addition, a survey service that Dickinson had arranged expired soon, and it was thought that the Board should take advantage of the service. Some subjects that the survey should address were discussed, such as how do members want to pay their dues, when was the last time the member attended a lecture, how should the Society's money be spent, what historical periods would members like to have as subjects of future lectures, and were members familiar with the different types of Society membership. Ackerman, Friedman, and Dickinson agreed to meet to discuss further the content of the survey. The upcoming survey is to be mentioned in the June newsletter together with a link to the website of the survey service where members could complete the survey.

Recording Lectures: Dickinson and Friedman reported that at a recent lecture at the Virginia Theological Seminary they had talked with Jay Bartol, who was recording the event, about recording the Society's lectures. Bartol was interested in doing so. Cavanaugh said that he knew Bartol and that he was very capable. It was generally agreed to approach Bartol about recording the June lecture so that it could then be posted on the Society's website. It also was agreed that the June speaker should be approached to determine if this arrangement was agreeable with him.

Fee for Lectures: The Board discussed charging for attending its lectures and allowing members to attend for a reduced fee. It was suggested that this would be a way of giving members something additional for their membership. It also was suggested that members received an intangible value for their membership and that a fee might not be needed. The issue was not resolved at this meeting.

Financial Audit Team: The audit team of Cohan, Davis, and Cavanaugh will meet at some date in July. Davis said that unless the team met to conduct the audit before July 3, she would not be able to meet with them and would need to resign. Dickinson said he would talk with Day and Washington about serving on the team in the place of Davis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Alexandria Chronicle: Greenberg reported that the next *Chronicle* article would be by Kathleen Miliaras on the evolution of the Parker-Gray Historical District. Greenberg also said she was trying to increase the number of issues of the *Chronicle* that would be published this year.

Future Speakers: Friedman reported that the speaker on June 26 will be Charles Mauro, author of *A Southern Spy in Northern Virginia*. Greenberg mentioned that a book on the relationship between

George Washington and George Mason had been published recently and the author might be a good person to give a lecture.

June Newsletter: Cohan circulated a draft of a flyer on the June lecture and said it could be worked into a newsletter quickly. Other items in the newsletter would be the nominees for officers and Board members and a message from the president mentioning the member survey.

Potomac Yard Metro EIS: Cannady reported on discussions centered on performing an environmental impact statement for construction of a new Metro station at Potomac Yard. She reported that city officials had said that it was possible to do the option that the city favored without having to use the George Washington Memorial Highway. She also said that the city council had voted to fund the metro by issuing a bond and servicing the bond with income from the Potomac Yard development as the development is completed and money from it becomes available. She also said that, depending on which option is chosen, the developer would make a contribution to Metro construction.

NEW BUSINESS

Workshops for Non-Profits: Dickinson announced, following up an earlier email (attached), that Arlington County was conducting workshops on the operations of non-profits over a several week period in May, June, and July. Anyone interested in attending should contact him.

Virginia Association of Museums Conference: Davis announced that the Virginia Association of Museums, an organization composed of representatives of Virginia museums, would be holding its annual conference in Alexandria in March 2014. All the Alexandria museums would assist in holding the conference. She asked the Board for a donation to aid with conference expenses. Greenberg moved and Ackerman seconded a motion that the Board make a meaningful financial contribution in support of the Alexandria museums and the conference. The motion passed unanimously. The amount of the contribution would be determined at a future meeting. Dickinson said the Board should support the conference in other ways that may be needed. Davis said that the Society could distribute material about the Society during the conference.

African American Mural: Davis announced that on June 22, a mural on African American history painted on a building near the Black History Museum would be dedicated.

Alexandria African American Biographies Book: Davis showed the cover for a new book that contains 63 biographies of African Americans who have lived and worked in Alexandria. She said the book would be published in July.

Art-History Waterfront Committee: Pulliam reported that the city had appointed a committee composed of city artists and historians to develop a plan for telling the story of the Alexandria waterfront in art and words. The plan would be a combination of the separate plans for the waterfront developed by the arts community and by the history community that now are appendices to the Waterfront Small Area Plan. He said that he was on the committee, and that the committee's

combination plan was nearly completed. It will be presented to city art and history organizations and the Waterfront Commission later this month or in the fall.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam