

## **NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, November 12, 2013**

### **Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society**

**October 8, 2013**

President Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Other members present were Debbie Ackerman, Lisa Adamo, Ted Pulliam, Katy Cannady, Audrey Davis, Paul Friedman, and Linda Greenberg.

#### **GUESTS' SUBJECTS**

**War of 1812 Commemoration:** Dickinson introduced Peter Pennington, a member of the city committee organizing the commemoration of the War of 1812 in Alexandria. Dickinson reviewed a list of events, funding, and needs related to the commemoration (attached), and he and Pennington further explained some of the items.

Lectures: Dickinson reported he had contacted C-SPAN, and the people there will record AHS lectures related to the War of 1812 if doing so does not conflict with their obligation to cover congressional activities.

Fundraising: Dickinson said that an honorary fundraising committee would be formed composed of distinguished people, such as Vola Lawson, former Alexandria city manager, and Hunt Burke of Burke & Herbert Bank, who both already have agreed to serve on the committee. Money raised would go to a special fund for the commemoration administered by ACT for Alexandria. ACT would reimburse organizations from the fund for their expenses for commemoration activities.

Activities: Pennington reported that during its meeting on October 22, the city council will issue a challenge to the British embassy to compete with Alexandrians in a yacht race, cricket match, and tug of war. Dickinson suggested that AHS might want to walk in the Scottish Walk the first Saturday in December with a banner, perhaps as part of the OHA group, and maybe also march in the George Washington Day parade. Dickinson said the prospective film likely would be the British navy action film "Master and Commander," and profits from sales of tickets for the film would go to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Needs: Pennington mentioned that there were funds in OHA's budget for commemoration expenses, and that part of them would be available for marketing brochures. Later in the meeting, Dickinson reported that the Virginia War of 1812 Commemoration Committee also will provide funds for the city for commemoration expenses. Davis circulated examples of logos for the commemoration and asked board members to choose the one they liked best.

Use of AHS Logo on Fundraising Letter: A discussion was held on whether to allow the AHS logo to be used on a letter sent by the honorary committee seeking funds to support commemoration activities. The money raised would be deposited into the fund administered by ACT for Alexandria and used for commemoration expenses. Friedman moved that AHS allow its logo to be used on such a letter. Greenberg seconded the motion. Dickinson said that he

anticipated that OHA and the Virginia 1812 Bicentennial Commission would have their names or logos on the letter. He also said that he would circulate an example of the letter to board members when it had been drafted. Adamo asked whether AHS needed to register with a state agency to be able to raise money for such an event. Friedman said that there probably was a need to do so, but he did not think that would be difficult. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion also was held about whether AHS should be involved in marketing tickets for commemoration events, but the matter was not resolved. It was suggested that a committee of the board be formed to consider a War of 1812 boat trip sponsored by AHS.

**Lee-Fendall House:** Dickinson introduced John Christiansen, director of the Lee-Fendall House, who discussed activities and concerns at the Lee-Fendall House. He said that there were funding challenges but that the organization still planned to be able continue its operations. A corporate sponsorship program was planned with the funds raised going to the operations budget. He also planned to work with other organizations and museums in Alexandria to make the Lee-Fendall House as visible as possible in the history community and the general public. He said that there was a shortage of volunteers, particularly docents, but that efforts were being made to address that situation. The house itself generally was structurally sound with the exception of the chimney, and efforts were being made to raise funds to repair it. Ackerman suggested that he come to some of the AHS lectures and address the crowd for a couple of minutes at the beginning of the program about some of his concerns. This idea was generally approved.

**Support for History in Alexandria:** A short discussion was held on the support for history generally in Alexandria. Dickinson said that the 1812 fund might later be changed to a fund for donations to support history in general in Alexandria. Friedman noted that the ACVA branding strategy had shifted away from promoting Alexandria as a place to come for history and mentioned that this shift may lead to the de-emphasis of history generally. He suggested that talking points promoting history be developed for future use and that maybe a petition should be handed out at the start of AHS lectures supporting history.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Minutes:** The minutes of the September meeting were approved with one change.

**Treasurer's Report:** Adamo circulated a Treasurer's Report for September 3 to September 30, 2013, and some revised earlier reports. She pointed out that the \$214.80 on the September 2013 as a Pay Pal fee would be refunded because AHS is a non-profit.

**Membership:** Adamo had sent an earlier email listing several membership issues (attached) These included keeping the address labels up-to-date, confirming email addresses, sending out welcoming letters to new members, ensuring renewal notices were not sent to people who already had renewed, and preparing a membership card. Friedman responded with an email (attached). Generally, he thought the board should make the membership experience a positive one and suggested that he and Adamo discuss the issues further outside the upcoming meeting.

At the meeting, Friedman asked whether the new website had the capacity to do rolling memberships, that is, the capacity to allow each member to renew a membership at the same time each year, a time the member chooses. Adamo said that it did have that capacity. It was mentioned that about a third of the members did not use email, and they would have to be contacted in the old way. It appeared that it was generally thought that rolling memberships should be examined further. Adamo had designed membership cards, which were passed out to the board members present, all of whom were members. It was generally agreed that cards should be issued in the future. Friedman said he would call sustaining members and patrons to determine how many cards they wanted. It was generally agreed that individual memberships would be given one card and couple memberships two. Dickinson passed to Adamo membership payments he had received recently, and Adamo noted that some were new members.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Budget:** Adamo circulated a draft budget for the coming fiscal year (attached). During a discussion of the draft, Greenberg said it probably would be necessary to raise the expenditure attributed to brochures because the Society was running low on them. Friedman suggested that the board might want to redesign the brochures. Greenberg reported that when the brochures were last printed, in 2011, the cost for 2,000 printed at Kinko's off-site facility was \$422. Dickinson suggested that the honorarium figure might be reduced because of the anticipated funding of two lectures on the War of 1812 by funds for the commemoration. Ackerman reported that the October lecturer had given his permission to video tape his lecture. The board agreed that Dickinson should talk with Jay Bartol, who had recorded an earlier lecture, about recording the October lecture. Bartol should be approached because C-SPANN would not know until the last moment whether it would record a lecture. Adamo also had circulated several pie charts related to membership and expenses (attached). Friedman moved that the budget be approved as discussed, Greenberg seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adamo mentioned that investing funds in the Vanguard accounts limited the amount of funds readily available for expenditure, although she said that should not be a problem based on expenditures for previous years. Friedman said that a family in Old Town had offered their home for use as a fundraiser for AHS, and such an event could offset some expenses. Dickinson noted that OHA's providing us free space at the Black History Museum for meetings and free space at the Lyceum for lectures was a great benefit.

**Recording Lectures:** Dickinson raised the question of videotaping future lectures. It was the general opinion that this question should be decided on a lecture-by-lecture basis. Dickinson reported that he had offered the Virginia War of 1812 Commission copies of AHS's 1812 lectures to circulate throughout the state.

**Virginia Association of Museums Conference:** Davis said that further discussion of this matter could be postponed until December.

**Funeral Records:** Friedman reported that he had discussed with Rose Dawson, head of the Alexandria Library, the status of negotiations with the Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home

concerning the library's obtaining its old funeral records. He learned that the negotiations had stalled but said he will contact the funeral home in an attempt to restart the negotiations.

**Annual Report:** Dickinson said he would compose the annual report for 2012-2013 integrating much of the materials provided by Adamo and including it in the October 2013 newsletter. The draft would be shared with board members and comments requested.

**Potomac Yard Metro EIS:** Cannady reported that no progress had been made on the delayed Environmental Impact Statement for the Metro station.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**The Chronicle:** Greenberg reported that the next issue of the Chronicle had been delayed because the proposed article for the next issue needed more work than had been anticipated. If the delay is greatly extended, she will proceed with another article.

**September Lecture:** Greenberg said she was disappointed that the speaker did not compare Washington and Mason as had been reported. Dickinson noted the small turnout. Friedman suggested that each board member call five people and urge them to attend the next lecture. Dickinson again suggested that the board needs a publicity chair. Adamo suggested a need to specify the duties of all board officers and chairs. Greenberg volunteered to call the *Alexandria Gazette Packet* to make sure an announcement of the next lecture appeared in that paper.

**October Lecture:** Davis reported the Black History Museum will co-sponsor the next lecture.

**October Newsletter:** Cohan was unable to attend but by email reported that she should be finished with the newsletter soon. Dickinson reported that has developed mailing labels for newsletter and annual reports for AHS members who do not use email and for other people to whom we provide hard copies. We do not have email addresses for about 30 AHS members. He asked that someone on the Board who had mastery of Excel and mail merge to assist preparing 2013-2014 mailing labels for all AHS members.

## NEW BUSINESS

**History Awards Ceremony:** Davis reported that because of her role in preparing for the Freedmen's Cemetery dedication, she could not be able to chair the AHS awards ceremony this coming April. Dickson asked Tal Day to take the lead in the general history award selection process. Debbie Ackerman agreed to handle the student portion of the History Awards Ceremony.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam