

**Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Commission**  
**May 24, 2023, 1-2:30 pm**  
**Fairfax City Library, Conference Rooms A & B**  
**10360 North Street, Fairfax**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance**

Christopher Barbuschak	Virginia Room, Fairfax County Library	Present
Joyce Gray Bellamy	Providence District	Present
Elliot B. Bell-Krasner	Human Rights Commission	Present
Matt Briney	GW Mount Vernon	Present
Gretchen Bulova	History Commission	Absent
Brent Feito	The Army Historical Foundation	Present
The Honorable Michael R. Frey	Sully District	Present
Paul Kohlenberger	Springfield District	Remote
Patrick Lennon	Visit Fairfax	Present
Elizabeth Maurer	National Museum of the US Army	Present
Subhi A. Mehdi	Dranesville District	Present
Garrett McGuire	At-large, Chairman Appointee	Absent
Suzanne Moffitt	Hunter Mill District	Absent
Nancy Rosenbaum	Mount Vernon District	Present
Beverly A. Schlotterbeck	Mason District	Present
Nancy Simmons	Braddock District	Present
Scott Stroh	Gunston Hall	Present

**Staff Present**

Denice Dressel, Heritage Resources, DPD

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Scott Stroh called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Secretary Nancy Simmons also was present. The members introduced themselves. Mr. Kohlenberger was participating remotely from McLean; it was confirmed that all members present could hear him.. Mr. Stroh announced that Carol Herrick and Donald Hakenson had resigned from the Commission. He introduced Nancy Rosenbaum as a newly-appointed member from the Mount Vernon District and asked her to introduce herself, which she did. Ms. Dressel is continuing to work within the county to determine how to have a commission member appointed from the park authority.

**Approval of March 2023 Minutes**

Mr. Stroh noted that the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting and asked for comments or corrections; none were made. Mr. Barbuschak moved that the minutes be approved as distributed, Ms. Schlotterbeck seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

## **Committee Reports**

### Inclusion

Mr. Bell-Krasner reported that at his committee's meeting on April 12, 2023, members outlined the types of diversity that would be reflected in their efforts and decided on next steps to take. These are included in the attached committee minutes. Their next meeting is on June 8.

### Outreach

Ms. Simmons reported that at her committee's initial meeting, members agreed that the committee's purpose is to communicate and coordinate with appropriate organizations and entities in support of the commission's efforts. This entails creating and maintain a master list of contacts that would eliminate the need for individual committees to create their own contact lists. In drafting this list, the committee agreed to be inclusive of organizations that may not be within the county, as well as those whose interests do not focus specifically on the Revolutionary War time frame. The next steps are to update the list and ask the County Supervisors for input. They also will work with Ms. Dressel to develop the means of communicating with the public.

### Activity

Mr. Feito reported that the committee met on April 19, 2023, and has two new members from the general public. They reviewed the ideas they had previously discussed and assigned these ideas to individual members for further development. They continue to explore ways to coordinate activities with established local activities. Mr. Stroh commented that the Virginia 250 Commission is creating a master activity list that should be helpful to this committee.

### Marketing and Communications

This report was incorporated in the discussion of the Signature Event.

### Signature Event

Mr. Lennon reported that this committee had met last week. He distributed a handout that contained a proposal for a Signature Event that would involve a traveling display that would rotate among community festivals and other public spaces for several months ending with July 2026. The display would commemorate the county's rich and diverse history and the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation. This approach would take advantage of pre-existing interest in events instead of requiring us to market a new event. It also would lessen the conflict with possible competing events in DC or other nearby jurisdictions. There is a precedent for this type of mobile center and, therefore, knowledge that can tapped to plan the display. The plan also would result in an end product that would be retained, perhaps in the Virginia Room, to be enjoyed for many years after 2026.

Ms. Schlotterbeck noted that one of the ideas listed in the handout seemed to overlap with the Activity Committee's idea of having StoryCorps record oral histories. This led to a discussion of the need for the committees to collaborate and coordinate their work. Mr. Feito noted they would discuss this at the next Activity Committee meeting. Ms. Mehdi mentioned the need to coordinate with other entities, such as the Virginia Room. She noted that the History Commission has compiled a list of history-related organizations that she will share with Mr. Stroh so that he can share them with other committees. Ms. Bellamy suggested that the Fairfax County office that issues permits for festivals might be a good source for identifying when and where those are held.

The commission members endorsed the concept that was presented. Mr. Stroh suggested that this should form the framework for the commission. Mr. Briney suggested that the committees discuss this at their next meetings and determine how their work fits the framework. Committees also may want to add to the framework.

#### Youth and Family Engagement

Ms. Maurer said she is still recruiting members and needs at least two from the commission. She has approached members of the relevant outside groups about joining the committee.

#### Finance

Mr. Stroh summarized the work of this committee under Old Business.

### **Old Business**

#### Fiscal Agent, Budget, Fundraising

Mr. Stroh noted that he and Ms. Dressel and the County Attorney's office met on April 13, 2023, to talk about the fiscal structure of the commission. The initial proposal was to use Visit Fairfax as the fiscal agent, but other options are being considered. The county needs to ensure that the method used is appropriate for receiving funds from the county as well as other potential donors. Similarly, the method of distributing funds must also be appropriate. Mr. Stroh will continue to follow up on this issue.

### **New Business**

#### VA250 Local Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Stroh noted that the Virginia 250 Commission is holding local roundtable discussions across the commonwealth. One session is scheduled on June 9 from 10 am to noon in Alexandria at the History Museum at the Lyceum. There are four questions being asked of attendees. Mr. Stroh encouraged commission members to attend.

### **Strategic Discussion**

#### What is Most Important Right Now?

Mr. Stroh asked for input from the commission on the tasks that are most important at this time. Items mentioned included the following:

- Finalizing the selection of the fiscal agent
- Determining how we communicate with external organizations
- Defining how to coordinate among the committees
- Developing a plan of action and associated timeline
- Building a section of our website that has points of contact for more information; this is needed to help tourism organizations that are already asking what we are doing
- Defining how much committees can do without commission approval—Mr. Stroh commented that a committee should be able to move forward as long as a commitment of resources is not needed. Once there is a need for affirmation or resources, the committee should come to the commission for approval

#### Lessons and Opportunities from 250<sup>th</sup> Kick-Off Event at Colonial Williamsburg

Mr. Stroh offered to answer questions about this event. Lack of time precluded discussing it during the meeting.

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

After a brief discussion, Mr. Stroh moved that we continue to meet every other month on the fourth Wednesday. Ms. Mehdi seconded the motion and it passed by voice vote without dissent. Ms. Simmons noted that she will not be able to attend the July meeting, so someone else will need to prepare the minutes.

#### **Adjourn**

Mr. Bell-Krasner moved that the meeting be adjourned and Ms. Bellamy seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent and the meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

#### **Attachments**

Handout from the Signature Events Committee  
Inclusion Committee Minutes from April 12, 2023, meeting  
Activity Committee Minutes from April 19, 2023, meeting  
Outreach Committee Minutes from May 4, 2023, meeting  
Signature Event Committee Minutes from May

Respectfully Submitted by Nancy A. Simmons, Secretary

Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Commission  
Fairfax at America 250 Proposal

Proposal: 250<sup>th</sup> Commission create a traveling display that rotates between community festivals, public venues, and other public spaces between September 2025 and July 2026 to commemorate Fairfax County's rich and diverse history and the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation.

Display will include:

- Logo wrapped vehicle, that can be driven by designated 250<sup>th</sup> staff and volunteers
- Trade show exhibit panels, tables, chairs, and promotional materials
- Interactive map through a digital display allowing exploration of the history of the county told through recorded stories
- Outreach materials (hands on activities, interactives, etc)
- Oral history or reflection gathering Interactive

Example festivals: Clifton Days, Centreville Festivals, Herndon Festival, KORUS festival, etc.

Funding sources: Sponsors, VTC grants, In-kind county resources

Budget: TBD (vehicle, exhibit, marketing materials, staffing, time capsule, interactives)

Partnerships:

- a. Community and cultural organizations (Inclusion Committee)
- b. Fairfax County businesses (Development Committee)
- c. History Organizations (Events Committee)
- d. Fairfax County Park Authority
- e. Fairfax County Libraries
- f. Arts Fairfax
- g. FCPS
- h. NOVA Parks
- i. Chambers of Commerce

Marketing:

- a. Banners and signage throughout the County
- b. County vehicle stickers
- c. Rack card
- d. Website
- e. Social Media (rebrand 275<sup>th</sup> facebook page)
- f. 2025/2026 marketing plan to support traveling display

Next Steps:

- a. Listening session with existing festival organizers
- b. Cost of similar wrapped vehicles, outreach programs
- c. Community and cultural group list (organization, contact, location)

- d. Meeting with history organizations (structure of 250, grants and resources available, events publicity process through VisitFairfax)
- e. Outreach to Arts Fairfax, FCPS, FCPA and more

**Additional 250<sup>th</sup> Components:**

1. Partnerships with Fairfax County businesses
  - a. Breweries/Wineries 250 labeled selections
  - b. Lego displays
  - c. Signage for store fronts
2. Channel 16 videos
  - a. Capture important figures in County history from diverse communities for display in exhibit, on Channel 16 and online
  - b. Feature history of county, development of diverse communities
3. County-wide mural project (Arts Fairfax)
4. Time capsule
  - a. Collection process
  - b. Dedication event
  - c. Long-term storage plan
5. Fairfax County Libraries
  - a. Displays
  - b. Reading programs, suggested reading lists
  - c. VA Room collecting initiative
6. Fairfax County Public Schools
  - a. SACC program activities
  - b. 4<sup>th</sup> grade history project
7. Music
  - a. Fairfax Symphony special concert, music
  - b. Fairfax City Band special concert
  - c. Wolf Trap event
8. Fairfax County history organizations
  - a. Produce own events under umbrella
  - b. Hold lectures, annual events with 250 theme
  - c. History Commission (annual conference, markers)

**Timeline:**

September 2023 – Concept approved, budget developed, sponsor solicitation begins, community/stakeholder engagement begins

September 2024 – Traveling display funded, concept fully designed, project bids completed

September 2025 – 250<sup>th</sup> program launches

**Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Commission**

**Inclusion Committee Meeting**

April 12, 2023

Thomas Jefferson Library, Room 1, Falls Church

**Committee Members Present:**

- Joyce Gray Bellamy (Providence District)
- Elliot Bell-Krasner (Chairperson)
- Subhi Mehdi (Dranesville District)

**Public Present:**

- None

**Purpose of the Committee:** To ensure that the 250<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the American independence is as inclusive as possible in Fairfax County, Virginia.

This inclusion should reflect:

- Diverse perspectives based on:
  - Geography (all corners of the County)
  - Race (African Americans, Native Americans, etc.)
  - Color (white, non-white)
  - Religion (Islam as the forgotten religion of the enslaved, etc.)
  - Sex, (sexual orientation or gender identity)
  - National origin (Korea and Vietnam, El Salvador [traced to Spanish conquests] etc.)
  - Age (school-aged, seniors etc.), and
  - Disability (including pregnancy)
- The meaning of the 250<sup>th</sup> to these groups of citizens: for example, Juneteenth and emancipation date; rights and freedom. For sources of information seek out: a) elderly members of houses of worship; b) participants in the bicentennial (1976); c) descendants of the Lovings.; d) school students, etc.
- The national and state definitions of inclusivity

**Next Steps:**

- Collaborate with the Outreach Committee
- Identify major groups and sub-groups to inform the overall design of the 250<sup>th</sup> commemoration
- Initiate discussion with the Virginia Room for the evidence-based milestone story board/exhibit: Historic trends over the past 250 years: track major milestones at every 50-year point

**Next Meeting:**

- June 8, 2023
- 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
- Dolley Madison Library, McLean

Prepared by Subhi Mehdi

**Fairfax 250th Commission**

**Activity Committee**

**Meeting Date: April 19, 2023**

**Location: City of Fairfax Regional Library, Room 103**

Prepared by Brent Feito

**Attendees:**

Suzanne Moffitt - Chair

Bev Schlotterbeck

Brent Feito

Paul Kohlenberger

Elizabeth Crowell

Janice Dixon

**Minutes**

- Invitation offered to Janice Dixon to officially join the committee.
  - Could create opportunities to coordinate events with the DAR, as well as opportunities outside of the mission of the DAR.
- Elizabeth Crowell Introduction - The Archaeology and Collections Manager for Fairfax County.
  - Works closely with orgs doing interpretation for signs and sights.
  - Provide interpretive content to go on website/blogs
  - Setup at various events and festivals around the county.
  - Work collaboratively with their friends group, with Gunston Hall, and others to come up with archaeology and History events, symposia, etc.
    - Gunston Hall will do a symposia on historic cemeteries this year.
  - Works closely with the Fairfax County History Commission, bringing topical offerings around the anniversaries.
  - Has been with the county for 20 years.
- Suzanne gives her background as well.
- Brent gives his background
- Paul gives his background
- Janice Dixon gives her background
- Brent makes motion to approve minutes from previous meeting
  - Paul seconds the motion.
- Suzanne would like to pare down the activities from the last meeting and to get focused.
- Are there events happening during the entirety of the anniversary?
  - Thoughts were expressed to focus most of our efforts on the national events that will likely occur during the anniversary of the year 1776.
- Clarification that Alexandria is a separate district, but that does not preclude collaboration between the districts.
- Looking to tell the stories of enslaved people around the county, women, and not just the men in the three-cornered hats.
- Janice is sitting in on a committee that will be discussing the Native American involvement in the 250th.
- Patriot vs. loyalist sentiments in the county.
  - One of the residents of Belvoir manor returned to England during the Revolutionary war.



- Lord Fairfax was a loyalist and moved to the western part of Virginia.
- Possible thesis statement: What does it mean to be an American?
  - Discussion of the falls church reading of the declaration.
  - 2025 - anniversary of the Fairfax Resolves chapter.
- Brent offers to start the discussion of having a large militia muster at the museum.
- Possibly having a commemoration of the Rochambeau ride.
- Possible symposia yearly between the commemoration of these events.
  - Possible Speaker: Iris de Rode - speaker who talks about Rochambeau.
- Planning symposium seems out of the realm of possibility for such a small committee.
- Liz offers to get some background for previous Rochambeau/Washington celebration
- Pohick church recently did a commemoration of the enslaved people who were involved in the building of the Church.
- Possibly invite descendants of slaves who were involved with building the church, etc.
  - Maybe have a speaker along with the reading of the declaration to give it context to different communities.
- Most African American cemeteries were not named, and often forgotten.
- FFX archeology group is doing a project to map the enslaved cemeteries in Fairfax County.
  - Somewhere between 350 and 425 African American cemeteries in the county.
- Passport program for various historic sites.
  - Paul will look into the passport program, as well as Liz.
  - Visit Fairfax will probably be very interested in supporting this sort of initiative.
- Essay content, but probably an overlap for youth and family engagement. (TBD)
- Library Exhibits
- New Citizen Ceremony (naturalization)
- Storycorps/oral history project with the theme “What does it mean to be an American?”
  - Brent will see if he can find a contact.
- Possible 2025 symposium of speakers.
  - Debate between loyalists and patriots - possibly to do with schools.
- Goal: Present a calendar of events to the commission at the end of the year so that we have time to plan.
- See if we can piggyback on the FFX History Commission symposium and support it with Commission resources.
- Use google drive for the creation of documents and for public record.
- Next Meeting: June 21st

**Outreach Committee**  
**Fairfax County 250<sup>th</sup> Commission**  
**May 4, 2023, 1:45-2:30 pm**  
**Burke Centre Library, Conference Room 116**  
**5935 Freds Oak Rd, Burke, VA 22015**

**Meeting Minutes**

Michael R. Frey	Sully District	Present
Elizabeth Maurer	National Museum of the US Army	Absent
Garrett McGuire	At-large, Chairman Appointee	Present
Nancy Simmons, Chair	Braddock District	Present

After a quorum of three members was present, the meeting began.

The first item discussed was the mission of the Outreach Committee. The Fairfax County Work Group Report states that the Outreach Committee is responsible for communicating and coordinating with appropriate organizations and entities in support of the effort. The members agreed that this entails creating and maintain a master list of contacts that can be used by the Fairfax 250 Commission and all of its committees. This would eliminate the need for individual committees to create their own contact lists. The Outreach Committee also would perform the initial contact to individuals and entities on the master list to make them aware of the commission and solicit their involvement. We did not anticipate that the Outreach Committee would be the only one using the list, just that it would maintain the list.

We were not clear on how the commission or committees will officially communicate with others, so Nancy agreed to ask county staff members for their advice. Also, we were not clear on the best way to make the list available to everyone. Michael agreed to draft the text of an initial email that would go to everyone on the master list.

We then reviewed the list that has been compiled so far from previous lists used in the county. Garrett and Michael both noted additional organizations that should be added to the list and they will email those to Nancy. We agreed that, while some organizations on the list may not be related to the Revolutionary War, we will keep them on the list because of their interest in history. Similarly, we will keep organizations that are outside of Fairfax County to facilitate coordination with neighboring communities and to recognize that current boundaries did not exist during the Revolutionary War. We also agreed that we should reach out to the Board of Supervisors with the list so that they can suggest changes or additions. Nancy agreed to send the list once she receives additional names from the committee members.

Moving forward, we envision that much of the business of this committee will be done via email to maintain the list. We do not anticipate frequent meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Simmons

### May 17 Signature Event Committee Meeting

Time: 10am

Location: The PARC at Tysons - 8508 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22182

Attendees: Gretchen Bulova, Ashley Morris, Matt Briney, Brent Feito, Elliot Bell-Krasner, Patrick Lennon

Meeting was called to order with Ashley Morris presiding as sub committee co-chair. Discussion ensued regarding the choice to plan for a single signature event, multiple coordinated events in different areas of the county, or no event at all.

Gretchen and Elliot brought up the point that a singular signature event could become problematic as access might be an issue for some, and generating an audience for an already packed event schedule in spring/summer might be difficult.

Brent brought up the point that some of the other subcommittees (events/outreach) would be looking at the signature event for guidance on who/when they should proceed with their tasks as the overlap between the committees was becoming apparent.

Matt suggested that we reach out to other events that are already happening in the area to let them know what we are planning. Ashley agreed to facilitate the discussion.

Gretchen then brought up the point that we should go ahead and partner with the existing community festivals and get them to brand themselves for the 250<sup>th</sup> and Patrick agreed to provide a list of yearly events to the group that he had accumulated over the years at Visit Fairfax.

Gretchen and Elliot then took the festival outreach idea one step further and began brainstorming on how we could have a presence at the festivals. Matt, Elliot, and Ashley then offered up examples of mobile exhibitions they had seen around Fairfax County and the country. Gretchen then expanded that possibility by suggesting that we create a signature experience which could be housed in a bus/van that could be our committees "event" within all these other established events.

Matt and Elliot liked the idea of tying ourselves to already successful events and brought up the importance of using our signature experience at these events to provide access to individuals all over the county. Elliot brainstormed ways that we could capture "stories" from different ethnic populations within the county and showcase them at our experience so that essentially everyone in the county would feel invested in this opportunity.

Brent then tied this initiative into some of the other committee tasks and was to report out to them what we had come up with. He predicted they would be supportive and it would give them direction within their own committees.

All attendees agreed that this signature event idea held the most promise and Gretchen volunteered to provide a writeup to the entire committee for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.