

NEXT MEETING – NEW TIME: Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society

February 12, 2013

President Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Black History Museum. Other members present were Lisa Adamo, Ted Pulliam, Debbie Ackerman, Katy Cannady, Dave Cavanaugh, Jackie Cohan, Audrey Davis, Tal Day, Paul Friedman, Linda Greenberg, and Adrienne Washington. Also present was Society member Boyd Walker.

New Board Member: Dickinson introduced new member Paul Friedman. He had been elected January 28 by electronic vote. The vote total was ten yeas, two abstentions, and one member who could not be reached.

Agenda: The draft agenda that Dickinson circulated was approved.

Minutes: The minutes of the November meeting drafted by Pulliam were approved.

New Board Roster: Pulliam said he would circulate a revised roster for comments.

Treasurer's Report: Adamo earlier had circulated a copy of the Treasurer's Report (attached). She mentioned that endowment contributions were down from last year but noted that there still is time remaining in this year. Other items seemed in line with the past year.

Friedman asked whether the Society had complied with a state requirement to register in order to receive donations. Adamo replied that the Society was a registered 501(c)(3) corporation but that she would check into the state requirement.

Membership Report: Adamo earlier had circulated a copy of the membership report (attached). She reported that we have more new members than last year but also have lost more old members, so membership is basically static.

Dickinson suggested that the Board needs a new membership chair. Friedman volunteered to be the chair, and Adamo said she would work with him as he assumes this position.

Friedman asked about the Board's policy on complementary memberships, particularly complementary memberships for city council members. It was reported that the past policy had been to provide city council members and the mayor with complementary memberships, but that had not been done recently. Neither the mayor nor any of the council members currently are members of the Society. Dickinson said he had written the mayor and council members last year inviting them to join but had received no response. The general opinion was that they should not receive complementary memberships. Friedman said he would approach them about joining and

would approach Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg about being the Society's liaison with the Council.

Friedman also suggested that the Board may want to announce online speakers and dates for programs at the beginning of the program year to encourage membership. He also suggested that in the future the Board may want to charge a minimal admissions fee for programs, with a lesser amount being charged for members than non-members, such as \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.

Website Statistics and Website Status: Adamo had circulated earlier the statistics on website usage. She noted that usage in January was down because that is when the website was hacked into and shut down. Before those events, usage was normal.

Adamo explained that the site was vulnerable because the backend system supporting the site was not being updated. She said she is investigating the cost and capabilities of another website manager, Wild Apricot. She reported that the current website manager, New Target, now had converted the site to a different backend system. She sought and received general approval to notify New Target to put the site back online. She also said she would email members whose email addresses we have that the site is back online. There also was some discussion about getting a new domain name.

OLD BUSINESS

New Board Website Administrator: Dickinson reported that Adamo has been particularly busy with various Board duties and suggested that it would be good to have a new Board website administrator. Such a change was agreeable with Adamo, and Cavanaugh and Friedman agreed to help Adamo with her website duties. Greenberg suggested that the next newsletter should contain a notice concerning the need for a new Board website administrator.

New Historical Introduction to Website: Pulliam circulated a draft of a new introduction to the Society's website that outlines the history of Alexandria (attached). Board members should in the near future send him comments on the draft.

Rosenwald School Project: Dickinson reported that Stephanie Deutsch remains interested in being a lecturer on Rosenwald Schools for February of next year. He also reported that he had approached teachers at T.C. Williams High School with ideas about student and school participation, but they generally had been nonresponsive. Cavanaugh reported similar lack of school enthusiasm concerning an earlier proposed event. Friedman suggested that it should be possible to obtain the use of the school building and proceed without active school participation.

War of 1812: Dickinson reported that a group of about 25 people, chaired by Helen Wirka, staffer at the Carlyle House, met on February 5 to discuss the city's commemoration of the 1814 British navy's raid on Alexandria during the War of 1812. Besides Society representatives, the group was composed of representatives of the historical sites in the city, representatives of other city and area organizations, and interested citizens. Many interesting ideas were discussed, including arranging a water tour from the Alexandria waterfront to related sites along the river.

Pulliam reported that the group decided to organize a signature event for August 2014 around the day in August that the British raid took place. The event would be somewhat like the event at Market Square in 2011 commemorating the Union army invasion of Alexandria at the beginning of the Civil War. A smaller group was to meet on March 5 to develop a plan for the event. That group would present their plan to the larger group on March 25.

Strategic Objectives: Cavanaugh reported that it had not been possible to arrange a suitable meeting time for Board members interested in discussing strategic objectives. However, he had researched online the practices of other historical societies in projecting their goals and mission online to attract a new group of people. He had drafted a possible website statement that would explain why the Society existed and its goals and circulated it to the Board by email on January 27 (attached). He mentioned also the need to keep the website interesting with fresh content.

Dickinson suggested that the Society might like to extend its range of functions to include such things as listing online the major books available on Alexandria history in the Special Collections branch of the Alexandria Library and listing people who would be available to do genealogical research. Cavanaugh proposed to organize a meeting to discuss the Society's expanded functions and objectives. It also was reported that Coster was interested in using social media to explain the Society to Internet users.

Investment of Society's Excess Assets: Day and Greenberg reported that soon they would circulate their investment proposals by email. Board members then could vote on them by email.

Carver School: Washington and Boyd Walker, Society member and president of the Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance, circulated copies of History Structure Report on the Carver School, an Alexandria Times article on the School, a draft letter of support for saving the School, and a memorandum on the school from the director of the city's Department of Planning and Zoning (last two attached). Washington reported that the two year period given by the owner for someone to purchase the building and preserve it before he would demolish it will expire on February 25. She also reported that no such buyer had come forward. She said, however, that the owner had given oral assurance that he would extend that deadline for six months.

After much discussion, Dickinson asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to draft a letter expressing Society support for preserving the Carver School. The letter would be sent to the Mayor and City Council, with a courtesy copy to the City Manager and copies to local media. Washington volunteered to head the committee, and Cavanaugh, Cannady, and Walker volunteered to serve on the committee.

History Awards Ceremony:

Student Awards: Ackerman reported that she had a contact in each of the four city high schools who each would select a student from his or her school to receive a history award. She also indicated that she had given each of the contacts a copy of Pulliam's book on the history of Alexandria, which he had donated for that purpose. She reported that she also had furnished each contact with a list of past awardees from the contact's school and requested that they provide her with contact information for the awardees so that they could be invited to future award programs and possibly take part in them. She also indicated a need for stationery,

envelopes, and stamps, and Cohan, Davis, and Dickinson offered to help supply some of those materials.

Speaker: Ackerman reported that she had asked a previous awardee to be the main speaker at the awards ceremony. This action received general approval.

Program: Adamo said she could prepare the program for the award ceremony.

Miller History Award: Davis reported that she and her selection committee had two nominations already for this year's T. Michael Miller History Award and that the deadline for submitting nominations has not yet passed. Committee members are: Davis, Cavanaugh, Cohan, Lance Mallamo, Wanda Dowell, and Anne Paul. Dickinson suggested that there should be some way to recognize Pam Cressey's contribution to preserving Alexandria's history.

Presenter: There was some discussion about who would present the award, but the matter was postponed until the next meeting.

Ceremony Place: Dickinson said he had arranged the Lyceum for the awards ceremony.

New March Meeting Date: Davis indicated she had a conflict with the usual March meeting date. Because she has an important role in planning the awards ceremony, the March meeting date was changed one day until Wednesday, March 13.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Program Update: Dickinson for Gross reported that the March lecture will be held March 27 and that the speaker will be Richard Striner, who will speak on his book *Father Abraham*. The April program will be the awards ceremony, and the May speaker will be John Hennessy, a Civil War historian with the National Park Service, who will talk about the aftermath of the battle of Fredericksburg, including its effect on Alexandria. Gross is working on a program for June. Dickinson indicated that a possible speaker for June would be Guy Gugliotta, author of *Freedom's Cap*, a book about constructing the Capitol.

Chronicle: Greenberg reported that the article by Jack Sullivan about Alexandria merchants after the Civil War is coming along well. The article following his article will be "History of the Establishment of the Parker-Gray District" by Catherine Miliaras.

Newsletter: Cohan asked Dickinson for any suggestions for contents of the next newsletter, which she said would be sent the end of February. Dickinson suggested that the newsletter contain a notice about restoration of the website, a mention of Cavanaugh's work on Strategic Objectives, and something about monetary contributions to the Society. At Cohan's suggestion, Dickinson said he would submit a piece as president of the Board. Greenberg suggested that the newsletter also mention that the Board is seeking a website manager. She also said she would draft a request for *Chronicle* articles and submit it to Cohan for inclusion in the newsletter.

Archaeology: Cannady said that a farewell party for Pam Cressey retired head of Alexandria Archaeology, had not yet been scheduled. She reported that members of four city historical

commissions, the Archaeology Commission, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC), the Public Records Advisory Commission, and the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, met with members of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts on January 15 to discuss working together on matters of common interest. Among other things, the group agreed that the heads of these commissions would meet at least quarterly and the membership of the commissions would meet together at least annually.

Potomac Yard Metro EIS: Cannady reported that the first meeting of the citizens group on this subject is to be held on February 20 at 11:00 a.m. in City Hall. Three options for the location of the metro station and the lines leading to it are being considered: locating the station on a platform over the rail lines, locating the station near the GW Memorial Parkway with rails running along the Parkway, and locating the station near Route 1 with rails running along Route 1.

HARC: Day reported that his membership on HARC expires soon. Friedman moved and Greenberg seconded a motion that Day be renamed the Society's representative. The motion passed unanimously. Dickinson said he would write a letter recommending his reappointment.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Records Advisory Commission Opening: Cohan announced that there was an opening on the Public Records Advisory Commission, which offers advice to the city regarding management of its archives and records.

Alexandria Salute to Women: Friedman announced that the Alexandria Salute to Women organization still is accepting nominations for its awards.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:31.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam