

VA 250 Committee Meeting
Bloom Conference Room
February 13, 2025

Present: Karen Washburn, Jared Bobzien, Angela Delosreyes (representing Peter Glagola), Councilman Mark Hugel, Karla Jakubowski, Jacqueline Johnson, Wendy Mathias, James McCann, Pam McKittrick, Tom Sasso, Keith Toler, Kristine Troch, and Audrey Lassiter

Absent: Chessie Bray, Billie Cook, Peter Glagola, Dr. Michael Hogan, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, and Dan Schmit,

Mrs. Washburn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. A motion was made by Mr. Toler to approve the minutes. Mr. Sasso, seconded the motion, and it was approved by all.

Lafayette Final Updates/Wrap-up

Mrs. Washburn told the group that the Lafayette 2024: Return to Portsmouth Committee donated \$2,000 to Support Portsmouth Public Art for a future Lafayette mural. She added that Julie Dunn and James Fayette both did presentations about Lafayette at the Suffolk Cultural Arts Center.

Mr. Toler thanked Mrs. Washburn for her hard work making the Return of Lafayette a great event. Ms Mathias and Ms. McKittrick from the Daughters of the American Revolution presented Mrs. Washburn a DAR America250! Commendation and medal for “Extraordinary Effort in Raising Awareness of Revolutionary Patriots and America's 250th Anniversary”.

Road to Revolution: Signage Updates

Mr. McCann explained to the group that the grant was awarded a year ago and now the committee is working on the final product which includes:

- A draft of the body text and image text has been completed for 5 of the 6 signs
- The initial batch of images have been selected for each sign
- The committee is preparing to go through a round of edits on these 5 signs to conform to length requirements
- The committee is completing research on the 6th location

He added that next the committee will send the first drafts to the Road to Revolution committee. Mrs. Washburn asked Mr. McCann to send a copy of the drafts to the

Portsmouth committee before it is submitted. Mr. Toler will make sure it is emailed. He added that they are trying to get the exact placement determined for each location.

Mr. McCann explained that anyone who wants to use the actual VA250 logo must be approved by the committee which only meets quarterly. He added that the Portsmouth committee can use the Portsmouth VA250 logo as often as needed however he has to report how many time it has been used.

Mr. Toler explained that Common Cause for All meets in Williamsburg on March 23 – 26 adding that Mr. McCann will be in attendance.

Mr. McCann informed the committee that 250CON is a virtual conference held on February 27 – 28.

Next Mr. McCann gave an update on the VA250 Mobile Museum which is now traveling around the state. He explained that events targeting middle school age students take priority. A city can request hosting the museum on two different dates. He suggested requesting it to visit Portsmouth on Saturday, March 22 for A Post Such as Portsmouth. He noted that it will be traveling for two years so the committee should also choose a future date. Ms. Johnson reminded the group that the committee had discussed hosting it during the back to school event at Festival Park. Mr. McCann told the group that he has sent the contract information to Dr. Benitez to be sent to the city attorney and then the city manager. He explained that all such contracts must be signed by the city manager. He suggested going to their Facebook page to see the mobile museum in other locations.

Mr. McCann told the committee members that Portsmouth is well represented on the VA250.org website with the following listings:

- 10 Events (PVA250 page & Local Events page)
- 4 Exhibits (Places to Visit Page)
- 8 Places (Places to Visit Page)

He added that the shared handout listed the tags that organizations can use when promoting events on social media.

VA250/Website/Committee Next Steps

Mr. Sasso told the group about this year's "A Post Such as Portsmouth" event explaining that the focus will be the Ethiopian Regiment in the year 1775. Due to the expense, all supplies are provided for the Youth Virginia Regiment. With the \$7,000 grant they received last year, they have made ten new uniforms and have five more in the works.

Just like in years past, they will have their tents set up in Red Lion Park, however, the bigger presence will be on the east side of Court Street. This will include music and dance in front of the Mustard Seed Place. Mr. Sasso added that the Fairfax Museum will have a mobile exhibit setup in the Portsmouth Welcome Center. Mr. Toler will update last year's blog post and market the event.

Mr. Sasso shared a 1781 map with the group and noted that many of the churches are still there. Mr. Toler told him that he could be eligible for a \$10,000 - \$20,000 grant that opens in August.

Mr. McCann told the committee members that Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander will give a lecture on “The Long Journey to Freedom: Lord Dunmore’s Ethiopian Regiment” at the Portsmouth Art and Cultural Center on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 1:30 pm.

Subcommittee Reports:

Research and Story Development: Co-chairs: Dr. Newby-Alexander and Tom Sasso

No report.

Education and School Outreach: Co-chairs: Karla Jakubowski and Kristine Troch

No report.

Museums, Public Art, and Exhibit Development: Co-chairs: Dr. Michael Hogan, and Dan Schmit

No report.

Events: Co-chairs: Jacqueline Johnson and Audrey Lassiter

No report.

Grants and Marketing: Co-chairs: Keith Toler and Wendy Mathias

No report.

Grass Roots Outreach: Co-chairs: Councilman Mark Hugel and Billie Cook

Councilman Hugel told the committee that there will be a Portsmouth Sail250 meeting allowing Mr. Glagola, Mr. Bobzien, and others the opportunity to exchange information

about their organization's plan for the event. He will report the results at the March meeting.

Sites and Signage: Co-Chairs: Pam McKittrick and Keith Toler

No report.

Old Business/New Business

Mr. Toler explained to the group that he spoke with a representative from a tour operator that is bringing 12 motor coaches to the Renaissance Hotel for Sail250. He added that the seawall will be full of docked ships and it would be great to have extra hospitality available. He also feels that the city should begin the Seawall Festival earlier on Friday.

Mr. Bobzien noted that Naval Medical Center Portsmouth will host their UnCorked Wine Festival that day.

Ms. Jakubowski told the group Douglas Park will participate in the Virginia Sail250 Adopt-a-Ship program.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Hugel. Mr. Bobzien seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.