

PVA 250 Committee Meeting
Portsmouth Economic Development Conference Room
May 8, 2025

Present: Karen Washburn, Billie Cook, James Cullen, Angela Delosreyes (representing Peter Glagola), Councilman Mark Hugel, Wendy Mathias, James McCann, Pam McKittrick, Dan Schmit, and Audrey Lassiter

Absent: Jared Bobzien, Chessie Bray, Peter Glagola, Dr. Michael Hogan, Karla Jakubowski, Jacqueline Johnson, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Tom Sasso, Keith Toler, and Kristine Troch

Mr. McCann called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. A motion was made by Ms. McKittrick to approve the minutes. Mr. Schmit seconded the motion, and it was approved by all.

VA250 Related Updates

Mr. McCann shared with the board various free resources he obtained from attending conferences. He also presented information from Portsmouth's sister cities, noting that Hampton is currently leading in organizing related events. He emphasized the urgency of submitting the application for the Mobile Museum, noting that Norfolk has hosted it several times, and Portsmouth is featured in five locations within the exhibit. Mr. McCann supported an effort by Mr. Bobzien to host the Va250 Mobile Museum on behalf of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

He added that Tuckers Point is being considered as a possible sixth location for a Road to Revolution sign. His is currently awaiting information from Portsmouth Public Works and engineering regarding what lies beneath the bricks and for their removal and installation at three of the sites before Civil War Trails, Inc., can proceed with installation. He also reminded the group that the grant application deadline is fast approaching.

He mentioned that recent meetings have experienced low attendance and, together with Mrs. Washburn, proposed the subcommittees report their updates a week prior to our normally scheduled meetings and Mr. McCann will compile them and send it to the committee. It was all also proposed to pause the full committee meetings for several months. He also suggested that Mr. Glagola deliver a presentation on the upcoming Sail250 event in our September 11th meeting. Councilman Hugel noted that three tall ships are scheduled to visit Portsmouth as part of the celebration.

CMDR Cullen expressed concern that many citizens confuse the Revolutionary War with the Civil War. He suggested collaborating with Clergy Behind the Badge to disseminate accurate historical information.

Mrs. Cook noted that Rev. Joseph A. Fleming, President of Tidewater Metro Baptist Ministers' Conference, could be approached via a formal letter encouraging participation. This organization represents African American churches throughout Hampton Roads. She also recommended involving the Church and Community Action Group and Rev. Melvin Marriner of Grove Baptist Church. She feels it is important to highlight the First Rhode Island Regiment's pivotal role at the Battle of Yorktown,

CMDR Cullen suggested this story could help educate the community and recognize African Americans' contributions to the Revolutionary War.

Mrs. Washburn recommended this be adopted as an action item for the Grassroots Subcommittee and asked each subcommittee to either organize an event or find ways to participate in existing ones.

Mr. Schmit inquired about sending regular email updates with meeting dates and details. Mr. McCann suggested that members email him their updates at least two days before scheduled meetings so he can compile and distribute them.

Mrs. Washburn proposed a three-month sabbatical, with plans to reconvene in September. Mrs. Cook moved to pause meetings until September, with Mr. McCann providing monthly updates during the break. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McKittrick and unanimously approved.

Mrs. Mathias proposed hosting an exhibit at the Portsmouth Colored Community Library Museum.

Mrs. Washburn emphasized the importance of having a representative from the museum attend future meetings to coordinate efforts.

Mr. McCann suggested that during the sabbatical, the committee should distribute a public survey to encourage community participation. Mrs. Washburn recommended engaging with the Seawall Art Show, and Mrs. Mathias proposed a student competition titled "*A Revolution of Ideas*" or a Portsmouth History Award.

Upcoming Events:

- **November:** A two-day Tri-City Symposium titled *Competing Freedoms*, focusing on African American involvement in the Revolutionary War.
 - Day 1: Norfolk
 - Day 2: Portsmouth, followed by a visit to the Chesapeake Great Bridge Battlefield.
- **Spring:** *A Post Such as Portsmouth* event
- **June:** **Sail250** celebration
- **July 4:** Independence Day event
- **June 7:** **Seawall Festival**, which will serve as a trial run for concepts to be expanded during Sail250

The committee is also encouraged to explore connections between Portsmouth and the First Rhode Island Regiment. The Patriots of Color database was recommended as a valuable resource for research.

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

No report.

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

No report.

Old Business/New Business

No old or new business.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. McKittrick. Mr. Schmit seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.