

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, November 11, 2014

Minutes, Board Meeting, Alexandria Historical Society

October 14, 2014

President Debbie Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum. Other members present were Audrey Davis, Tal Day, Ted Pulliam, Linda Greenberg, Dennis Hensley, Julie Randle, Mark Whatford, and Helen Wirka.

Approval of Board Minutes: The Board approved the minutes with changes made earlier.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

President: Ackerman reported that the *Mount Vernon Voice* had published in a recent edition an article on the Society's September lecture, Richard Schwartz speaking on hurricanes. Also, John Kelly in his column in the Washington Post mentioned Schwartz. Board members who attended generally agreed that Schwartz gave an interesting talk.

Vice President: Davis reminded the Board that the next lecture will be held on October 22. Then Catharine Millaras and Stephanie Sample will talk on the evolution of the Parker-Gray Historic District. Hensley volunteered to be in charge of refreshments for the talk. Davis reported that Jim Mackay had issued last week a press release on the talk. A discussion was held concerning whether to have Jay Bartol videotape the lecture for \$300. Pulliam moved that the lecture be videotaped, if the lecturers give their consent, and that the lecturers be requested to furnish copies of any PowerPoint slides they use. Whatford seconded the motion, and the motion passed by a vote of 8-1.

Possible subjects and speakers for future lectures were discussed. Davis suggested that the March lecture might be a film. A possible film subject was the French and Indian War, and Whatford suggested several films on that subject. Davis said that when films were shown earlier this year at the Lloyd House, the right to show a film cost \$300. She also said that no admission could be charged at the showing, but there could be charges for food and drinks served during the show. Wirka suggested that if popcorn was to be served, instead of popping corn in a microwave oven, the Board should borrow or purchase a popper that it would use and possibly lend to others for their use. Davis also mentioned that a person researching the life of Civil War photographer Mathew Brady might be a future lecturer. Ackerman also suggested the author of a recent book on Thomas Jefferson's wife.

Davis also raised the possibility of the Board purchasing a PowerPoint projector. Greenberg volunteered to investigate projector options and prices and report back to the Board. Day stressed the need to have a projector with the ability to project a sharp image on the large screen at the Lyceum.

Treasurer: On October 2, Day had circulated by email a copy of the Treasurer's report with comments (attached). Because of upcoming Board decisions on possible advertising expenditures (discussed later), number of mailings, and possible PowerPoint projector purchase, he did not have enough information to finalize the budget. He also noted that revenues received in September were less than projected but that additional funds had been received after the report was prepared. The annual end of year appeal would bring in additional funds. He also noted that the report indicated how funds were apportioned in various Vanguard investment accounts. In response to a question from Hensley, Day replied that the Abshire Fund was composed of gifts dedicated to that fund and could be used only for a particular purpose.

Day also mentioned the possibility of purchasing a Survey Monkey account to organize the responses to surveys on various subjects to help with future planning.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: Hensley raised a concern that the Board needs more email addresses of members. Greenberg suggested asking at lectures for people to furnish their email addresses. Wirka suggested offering gifts for people who furnished their addresses.

Hensley and Whatford mentioned the large number of lapsed members on the website's membership list (184) (attached). Questions were raised about what the website membership program operated by Wild Apricot considered a "lapsed member," how long should someone be considered a "lapsed member," when should a "lapsed member" be removed from the list altogether, and the general membership capabilities of the Wild Apricot program. Whatford, Hensley, and Day volunteered to investigate these and any related issues further and report back to the Board with information and recommendations.

Hensley asked whether the Society should be considered a membership society in which members get certain benefits related to Society programs and other offerings or a service organization that raises money to give to certain worthy history-related charities. A discussion ensued concerning such issues as paying for attendance at lectures, corporate sponsorship of lectures, perhaps by a real estate firm's including an ad for the Society as part of its ads in local papers or providing a free membership with each real estate closing, and other related issues. Hensley agreed to prepare a proposal for the November meeting. Whatford suggested that whatever was agreed upon by the Board not go into effect until the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The Chronicle: Greenberg reported that the next issue of *The Chronicle* was ready to be mailed. The issue contains the second article by Jack Sullivan on the Civil War diary of John Zimmerman, a Confederate soldier from Alexandria.

Newsletter/Flyer: Davis reported for Cohan that the flyer on the October lecture will be sent tomorrow. She would have mailed the flyer around the first of the month but was prevented from doing so by illness. The newsletter will soon follow.

Publicity: Wirka reported for herself and Mackay on the cost of placing a one-eighth page ad in the *Alexandria Times* and on different options for banners from Affordable Signs and Banners.

Regarding ads for the *Times*, the cost would be less per ad if an agreement was reached to buy four ads. Whatford suggested the possibility of placing ads in the *Old Town Crier*, and Greenberg suggested the *Alexandria Gazette-Packet*. On banners and signs, Wirka discussed large vertical and horizontal banners. There also was a discussion of what the banners might say, such as “Historical Lecture Here This Week,” whether the wording could be changed to reflect the different dates of different lectures, and where the banners and signs might be placed. Davis mentioned wind frame signs that were signs inserted into a frame so that the signs themselves blew with the wind while the frames remained stationary. A-frame or sandwich board signs also were mentioned. Wirka and Mackay were to put together a paper on the cost of ads for the three newspapers and on the costs of different types of banners and signs and distribute it to the Board before the next meeting.

Correspondence: Ackerman reported that Mark Hill had received interesting inquiries but that he would report on them at a future meeting.

Adult History Awards: Randle asked for suggestions for speakers for the Adult History Awards program. Whatford suggested Congressman Jim Moran. Board members with additional suggestions should submit them to Randle.

Archaeological Commission: Cannaday reported through Ackerman that she was unable to attend the Board meeting because she was attending the City Council meeting when the Council was to award the Archaeology Commission’s Ben Brenmann Award to people for their work promoting history and archaeology in Alexandria. The Council also was to discuss the future of a 19th Century warehouse and preservation of grave markers.

OLD BUSINESS

New Brochures: Greenberg reported that the Society still has a few old ones. She will continue to work on improving the parts of a new brochure that do not depend on future Board discussions of membership and related issues.

Financial Audit: Day reported that the audit was completed. He also said that there still were a couple of technical items to be finished before the transfer from Lisa Adamo to Day of all treasurer-related tasks was completed.

Non-Profit Bulk Mailing: Whatford reported that to obtain more precise information about how the bulk mailing process worked it was necessary to go in person to the local post office. He had not yet had the opportunity to make the visit. He also raised questions concerning how many mailings should there be, to which zip code or zip codes should they be sent (the zip code that includes the new development at Potomac Yards was a possibility), and what should they say (advertise the Society itself, upcoming lectures, or both).

Society Presidents Plaque: Ackerman reported that the plaque with former Society president Bill Dickinson’s name added will be presented at the May Society meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

:

Lee-Fendall House Museum: Ackerman announced that the Lee-Fendall House Museum was having financial difficulties and asked whether, as a way of helping, the Board wanted to post Lee-Fendall activities on the Society website. It was pointed out that we did not post activities of other Alexandria museums and sites on the website, although the website contained links to the websites of other local sites. It was decided not to make an exception of Lee-Fendall.

Arlington Historical Society: Ackerman reported that there did not seem to be any advantage now in forming a partnership with the Arlington Historical Society.

Lachelier: Ackerman reported that she had been contacted by Paul Lachelier about his application for a grant to promote Alexandria history and that Pulliam, former Alexandria Archaeologist Pam Cressey, and author and newspaper reporter Michael Lee Pope were part of the project. Pulliam reported that the project might be useful in promoting Alexandria history, but he did not believe that the Board needed to do anything now about the grant application.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed

Ted Pulliam
Secretary