

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION
Report of the Executive Committee
Speaker of the House William J. Howell, Chairman
November 17, 2008

Executive Committee members present: Speaker William J. Howell, Delegate Albert C. Eisenberg, Delegate Algie T. Howell, Jr., and Dr. Charles F. Bryan, Jr.

Speaker Howell called the meeting to order and welcomed members. He announced that this would be the last meeting of any of the Commission's subcommittees for the year.

Informational Briefing: Battlefield Preservation Grants - *Kathleen Kilpatrick, Director, Department of Historic Resources*

Ms. Kilpatrick briefed the Commission on recent awards made from the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Fund, which received an appropriation of \$5 million during the 2008 General Assembly session. The funds require a 2:1 match, yielding \$15 million for battlefield preservation. The Department of Historic Resources established criteria for grant disbursement and affirmative recruitment to ensure that the highest priority sites were protected. Twenty-one grants have been disbursed to four nonprofits, protecting over 1,500 acres.

In response to questions, it was noted that of 384 priority battlefields identified by Congress, one-third are in Virginia. Ms. Kilpatrick indicated that, while the state is doing well in terms of acres that have been preserved, there is still a lot of work to be done protecting remaining threatened land in the Commonwealth.

Civil War Preservation Trust: 2009 Teacher Institute - *Jim Campi, Policy Director*

Mr. Campi discussed the Civil War Preservation Trust's (CWPT) very successful Teacher Institute program, which is held over a three-day period and involves as many as 200 teachers from across the country. The 2009 Civil War Teacher Institute will be held in Spotsylvania County from July 24-26. The goal of the Institute is to impart in teachers not only a better understanding of the Civil War for themselves, but also to give them the tools to teach the Civil War, including how to incorporate battlefield interpretation. Mr. Campi invited the Commission to partner with the CWPT on the 2009 Institute, in ways that could include: (i) endorsing the Teacher Institute; (ii) offering a letter of welcome to be included in the Teacher Resource book; (iii) advertising Commission events and its website in the Teacher Resource book; (iv) sending Commission members to participate in the Institute; (v) screening the educational DVD for teachers; and (vi) providing resource materials for teachers in the exhibit area.

Staff was directed to work with Mr. Campi to establish a partnership for the 2009 Civil War Teacher Institute.

DVD Preview: "Virginia in the Civil War, 1859-1865: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance" - *Jim Hammerstrom, Producer/Director, Blue Ridge Public Television*

Members of the Executive Committee previewed segments of the DVD being produced by Blue Ridge Public Television under the direction of Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. The DVD is scheduled for

completion in June 2009, with distribution beginning in August 2009. It will be distributed, free of charge, to every school, library, and historical society in Virginia. Members of the Executive Committee also asked that attention be given to distribution outside of the Commonwealth, including a partnership with The History Channel.

Staff Reports

Development Update - *Danielle Watkins*

Ms. Watkins provided an update on committed donors and pending prospects to the Civil War Sesquicentennial Foundation as well as a plan for donor recognition levels.

Workgroup 1 (Coordination) - *Cheryl Jackson*

Ms. Jackson gave the report of Workgroup 1, which is chaired by Sen. Colgan and oversees the statewide coordination effort.

Local Committees: 95 of the 134 counties and cities have established local sesquicentennial committees to work with the Commission and plan commemorative events. Staff communicates regularly with the local liaisons through a listserv and periodic meetings of the Civil War 150 Local Committee Roundtable.

Kiosks: The Workgroup is developing recommendations to place kiosks throughout the state with information on Civil War-related travel destinations, based on the interactive "Then/Now" map on the Commission's website. There are currently 35 kiosks in operation in Virginia's state parks, which the Department of Conservation and Recreation has offered to partner with the Commission in creating a larger statewide network of kiosks. The Executive Committee directed staff to form a workgroup to further develop the recommendations, composed of representatives of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Virginia Department of Transportation, Department of Conservation and Recreation, National Park Service, Dominion Power, and Imperial Multimedia.

Micro-grants to Localities: Earlier in 2008, the Commission made funds available to offer matching grants in conjunction with local committees for marketing of sesquicentennial events that support the goals of the commemoration. The grant program will be administered by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, with the first application window opening in January 2009. The Executive Committee will have review oversight and make final decisions on grant recipients.

MOU Review/ Criteria for Letters of Support: Staff reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding that local committees and others who desire to use the Commission's logo must sign, as well as criteria for letters of support or endorsements by the Commission. In all cases, third parties must agree to work in concert with and furtherance of the Commission's goals for the commemoration, which include diversity, inclusiveness, accessibility, education, and positive long-term legacy. Requests for letters of support or endorsement will be brought to the Executive Committee for approval.

Workgroup 2 (Signature Events) - *Cheryl Jackson*

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the plans of Workgroup 2, which is chaired by Speaker Howell and is charged with oversight of Signature Events and Activities.

Signature Conference: The first official sesquicentennial event in the nation is the Commission's inaugural Signature Conference, "*America on the Eve of the Civil War.*" It will be a day-long conference

held at the University of Richmond on Wednesday, April 29, 2009. Members were briefed on the schedule and asked to consider an invitation list.

Themes and Signature Conferences 2010 - 2015: The Executive Committee discussed the future schedule for annual conferences, as well as the establishment of themes highlighting a wide range of subjects throughout the commemoration. After a discussion on the merits of providing a full array of programs that includes homefront, social and cultural themes as well as battlefield and military themes, Dr. Bryan moved, and Del. A. T. Howell seconded, adoption of the themes and conference schedule as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

Harper's Ferry event: Staff continue to work with representatives of the West Virginia legislature and Harper's Ferry National Historical Park to plan a joint-state event that will serve as the national kickoff of the sesquicentennial. The event is scheduled for June 25, 2009.

Document Digitization pilot program: The Library of Virginia is working with the Danville and Washington County sesquicentennial committees to conduct a pilot of the document scanning project. The pilot will be held on November 22 at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville.

Workgroup 3 (Education) - *Brenda Edwards*

Ms. Edwards briefed the Commission on the progress of Workgroup 3, which is chaired by Delegate Algie Howell and is charged with oversight of the education component of the commemoration. The workgroup has formed an Ad Hoc Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Locke, to review the various methodologies for teaching American Civil War history, address the hard and controversial issues of the Civil War and its legacy that teachers may encounter in the classroom and options for dealing with controversies in the classroom, review the "message" of various sesquicentennial initiatives, and recommend alternatives to resolve concerns. Dr. Stephen Rockenback outlined academic approaches to teaching Civil War history, which include narrative, thematic, and community history approaches.

The Workgroup supports the idea of a one-stop, comprehensive resource for educators, and to that end, is developing a Compendium on the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War for Educators. The workgroup is also recommending two Law School Symposia. The first would be a moot court held in 2011, highlighting legal issues surrounding the separation of West Virginia and Virginia. The second is scheduled for 2013, in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, to examine the historical, political, social, and legal context of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the United States Constitution, the import of these Amendments on the rule of law, and their legacy in modern times.

Other Business

Speaker Howell recognized Dr. Charles F. Bryan, Jr. on his retirement from the Virginia Historical Society, thanked him for his vision on the sesquicentennial and his service to the Commission, and presented him with a gift. Dr. Paul A. Levenson will succeed Dr. Bryan.