

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Virginia Bicentennial Commission on the War of 1812 September 24, 2009

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, *Chairman*
The Honorable Stephen H. Martin, *Vice Chairman*
The Honorable Christopher K. Peace, *Advisory Council Chairman*

The Advisory Council of the Virginia Bicentennial Commission on the War of 1812 met on Friday, September 11, 2009, to develop and refine the plans for programs and activities adopted by the Commission for the commemoration of the bicentennial. The Council began the meeting with a moment of silence for the victims of 911. A staff update regarding progress on the bicentennial objectives was presented, followed by presentations by Suzanne Copping, Project Director for the Star-Spangled Banner Trail, and Mr. Patrick O'Neill, President of the Archeological Society of Virginia concerning Virginia's participation in the war. The staff proposed that items ranked 1 and 2 on the matrix receive priority until funding has been obtained for the bicentennial.

Battle of the White House. Mr. O'Neill briefed the Council on a little known battle during the war, the Battle of the White House. The Council agreed that the Commission's commemoration should include and highlight this and other such battles, as well as help facilitate visibility of Mr. O'Neill's research with the National Park Service for possible inclusion in the Star-Spangled Banner Trail.

Star-Spangled Banner Trail. The Council expressed considerable concern to Ms. Copping regarding the omission of Virginia in the federal legislation and development of plans to commemorate the War of 1812, particularly the engagements in Hampton Roads. Ms. Copping was also queried regarding Virginia's current representation to the National Park Service for the bicentennial, and how representation can be broadened. Ms. Copping offered that the Commission may wish to recommend to her the names of persons for the NPS' consideration.

Historical Markers. In addition, the Council discussed the potential of placing historical markers at significant War of 1812 sites in Virginia. It was noted that this effort was consistent with the objectives of the Star-Spangled Banner Trail, should the Commonwealth participate. The historical markers would provide an opportunity to inform citizens and students concerning the war, and facilitate publicity for the bicentennial and visibility of the Commission's work. Several members volunteered to work with staff to identify sites for appropriate historical markers and coordinate this effort with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Education. It was the consensus of the Council that education become a focal point during the bicentennial and that programs and activities complement the Standards of Learning. It was agreed that an education component should be added to the commemorative plans and that the Advisory Council Chairman would assign several members the task of working with staff to develop and ensure educational goals in each bicentennial activity.

Library Exhibits and Dan Roberts. Staff reported that the Library of Virginia is already planning an exhibit and that the Librarian of Virginia may address the issue at the Commission's next meeting. The effort to secure the aid of Dan Roberts to conduct "A Moment in Time" for the War of 1812 is being explored.

Website. Council members also expressed concern that the Commission's home page should depict an image related to Virginia's role or victory in the war. The staff was directed to research and replace the picture and to continue building the website.

Following a protracted discussion relating to Virginia's role and involvement in the war, and ways to publicize the bicentennial, the Advisory Council voted to recommend that the Commission consider the following actions.

1. Amend the matrix of commemorative programs and activities to add the compilation of information pertaining to Virginia's participation in the war and convey this information to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Management Feasibility Study for the Star-Spangled Trail.
2. Develop a Virginia version of the NPS' map outlining the war.
3. Write to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to express (i) disappointment and concern regarding the omission of Virginia's participation and contributions to the War of 1812 from federal plans for the bicentennial, and (ii) interest in exploring ways in which Virginia can become involved. Further, the Virginia Congressional delegation should be copied and requested to follow up on the letter on Virginia's behalf to seek clarifying language that notes Virginia's inclusion and full participation in the Management Feasibility Plan for the Star-Spangled Banner Trail.
4. Develop a calendar of bicentennial events and activities and include this effort as a regular agenda item for each meeting.
5. Continue the development of the Commission's website, replace the picture on the home page, and explore the use of social networks, such as Face Book and Twitter, to maximize the Commission's visibility and communication with persons interested in the bicentennial.
6. Ensure that education becomes a focal point during the bicentennial and those commemorative programs and activities complement the Standards of Learning.
7. Explore opportunities with the Virginia Tourism Corporation regarding placing materials concerning the War of 1812 and bicentennial activities in various visitor bureaus.

8. Determine whether Dan Roberts will agree to assist the Commission by conducting "A Moment in Time" on the War of 1812.
9. Follow up with Dr. Treadway concerning possible exhibits and contact the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of the Senate about an exhibit in the State Capitol on the flag of 1812.

The Advisory Council agreed to meet again in October.

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OTHER OPTIONS

1. War of 1812-related organizations should be requested to place a link to the Commission's website on their sites.
2. A War of 1812 History Trail should be established, modeling the Virginia Indian Heritage Trail.
3. The Commission should institute a public relations blitz.
 - o News articles written by members of the Commission and the Advisory Council, scholars, historians.
 - o Interviews
 - o News Makers (e.g. Comcast)
4. Brochures related to various aspects of Virginia's role in the war should be developed for distribution to public libraries, schools, and open visitor centers.
5. A type of "This Day in History" for the War of 1812 should be developed and used in partnership with area media.
6. The Commission should pursue grant funding and in-kind services through philanthropic and other private resources.
 - o The History Channel
 - o The History Project
 - o History.Com
 - o National Geographic Society
 - o Gilder-Lehrman Society
 - o The History Place
 - o EDcitement
7. The Commission should explore collaborating with bookstores to promote and highlight the bicentennial through exhibits and discounts on books purchased on the War of 1812.
8. The Commission should establish a budget and request approval of funding from the Joint Committee on Rules.