

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION
Report of the Commission

Speaker of the House William J. Howell, Chairman

April 29, 2008

Opening Remarks; Election of Vice-Chair -Speaker Howell

Commission members present: Speaker William J. Howell, Senator Charles J. Colgan, Delegate Albert C. Eisenberg, Delegate Algie T. Howell, Jr., Senator Janet D. Howell, Delegate L. Scott Lingamfelter, Senator Stephen H. Martin, John P. Ackerly III, and Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

Speaker Howell welcomed everyone in attendance at the meeting. He also thanked the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation staff for their contributions to the meeting. There were five local committee members present and they were recognized by the Speaker.

Speaker Howell asked for nominations of a Vice-Chair to succeed John Chichester. Senator Charles Colgan was nominated by John P. Ackerly, III, and seconded by Delegate Albert Eisenberg. The members unanimously voted to approve the nomination. Senator Colgan will serve as Chairman of Workgroup 1 (Coordination) and as Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Welcome and Remarks -Jennifer Esler, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

Ms. Esler was unable to attend the meeting, so she welcomed the group and shared some history and facts about the museum through a previously recorded video. The museum, which opened in 2005, includes a house dating back to the eighteenth century and six acres of spectacular gardens. The Glen Burnie historic house is currently under restoration and should be completed before the beginning of the Sesquicentennial. The museum will also serve as a host of the Commission's traveling exhibit during the commemoration.

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation -Howard Kittell

Mr. Kittell briefed the Commission on the purpose of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and its accomplishments since being created by Congress in 1996. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation's purpose is (i) resource protection; (ii) interpretation and education; (iii) tourism and economic development; (iv) creating federal and local partnerships; and (v) creating a new national park. Currently, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation protects 10 battlefields (3600 acres) and works to interpret history for visitors through hosting educational programs, supporting reenactments, participating in the Civil War Trails program, and providing information in brochures, orientation centers, and kiosks. The Foundation has received \$657,000 in grants and has leveraged \$2.75 million in projects. The Foundation works with regional clusters to further their mission, construct orientation centers, and complete projects.

Sesquicentennial Special License Plate: Information on Fabrication and Sale Process -Eula Moore Anderson, Division of Motor Vehicles

The license plate design has been completed. It will include the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War's website address on the bottom and the logo on the left-hand side. Dr. Robertson motioned for approval of the design of the license plate and the motion was seconded by Senator Colgan. The Commission unanimously approved the design.

Upon approval of the license plate design, the license plate will be available for sale July 1, 2008. A link to the DMV will be posted on the sesquicentennial website to order the license plate. Revenue from the plate will be disbursed in September or October, annually.

Virginia Association of Museums: Time Travelers Program -Scott Harris, Past President, VAM Council

Mr. Harris described the Time Travelers Program to the Commission members. Youth receive a passport and take it to museums and historic sites all across Virginia. After they collect six or more stamps, they can earn a certificate of completion signed by Governor Tim Kaine. The Time Travelers Program was created in 1996 through the Virginia History Initiative. The program aims to support historic and cultural resources by increasing visitation and visibility; promote summer learning; and increase tourism revenue in Virginia by promoting multiple museum visits. Mr. Harris indicated that 38% of the 137 sites in the program contain Civil War content.

Mr. Harris also discussed the program's need for funding in order to continue its services. The Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) proposes the Commission fund the Time Travelers Program \$30,000 annually for 2009-2015 or a single allocation of \$210,000 to be applied over the 2009-2015 period. The Time Travelers Program would then promote the Sesquicentennial on its website and all printed materials, highlight special events, provide incentives to tour Civil War specific sites, and produce special sesquicentennial certificates for the completion of the program.

Discussion was held regarding whether the program would give enough focus to the Sesquicentennial, but noted the importance for the program. The Commission did not act on VAM's request.

Comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Sesquicentennial - Richard Lewis, National Public Relations Manager, Virginia Tourism Corporation

Upon request of the Chairman, the Virginia Tourism Corporation developed a strategic marketing plan for the Sesquicentennial. Civil War tourism is already high in Virginia and Civil War tourists tend to stay longer and spend more than average visitors. However, challenges remain, including: (i) there are better-known battlefields in other states; (ii) overall, the number of visitors to historic sites is declining; and (iii) the fact that there are so many Civil War destinations in Virginia may present confusion for visitors.

Mr. Lewis presented the message of the Sesquicentennial as one that states American life - the very structure and evolution of our society - can be traced to the Civil War. So much of what America is today can be traced to the effects of the Civil War and, now more than ever, Americans are poised to discover how learning about it has an impact upon how they view their democracy and society. Virginia was the epicenter of the most pivotal event in American history; the stories of the enormous sacrifices, the tragedy, the triumph and the legacy are all told here - and everyone should hear those stories. Therefore, the goal of the marketing plan is to raise awareness of Virginia as a Civil War tourism destination and position Virginia as a top-of-mind choice prior to and during the Sesquicentennial.

The marketing plan will begin with research and will integrate tactics such as public relations, advertising, targeted e-mail, sales, special promotions, international marketing, community outreach and support, and resources of the Virginia Tourism Corporation and Virginia Film Office. An estimated budget for the marketing plan throughout the Sesquicentennial is \$8,246,500.

There was a motion by Dr. Robertson to allocate funds to the Virginia Tourism Corporation for 2008 (\$30,000) and 2009 (\$25,000). This motion was seconded by Mr. Ackerly, and the motion was agreed to by the Commission.

Delegate Lingamfelter suggested the Virginia Tourism Corporation collaborate with Pennsylvania to market Virginia as a precursor to Gettysburg and capture the two million people that travel there.

Staff Reports:

Sesquicentennial Moments -Dick Hickman:

Mr. Hickman informed the Commission that \$2.17 million of the general fund has been appropriated for the Commission for 2009 and 2010. He also noted that \$5 million from the general fund has been appropriated at two-to-one matching rate for Civil War battlefield preservation.

Mr. Hickman has finished drafting the first "Sesquicentennial Moments" article, entitled *Kansas, 1854-1858*. These notes are intended to highlight the state of the country related to the Civil War 150 years ago. The "Sesquicentennial Moments" will be put on the website as an educational resource for visitors. Mr. Hickman will continue writing the pieces, but encouraged members and staff to take part, as well. Delegate Lingamfelter suggested taking the articles and using them as lecture series. The lecture series could also be used as a fundraiser for the Commission.

Development Activities -Danielle Watkins:

Ms. Watkins briefly informed the Commission on current development activities. The NEH grant proposal in support of the museum exhibition and its traveling components, including the HistoryMobile, was submitted in January and is currently under review. The Commission continues to work with the VHS to develop the museum exhibition that will serve as the foundation for the traveling components. An implementation grant proposal will be submitted in January 2009 requesting support up to \$1 million for these projects. Final notification on this

request will come in August 2009. A pending in-kind contribution of a tractor to support the HistoryMobile has been offered by Mack Trucking out of Dublin, Virginia. The approximate value of this offer is in the range of \$125 - \$150K. A grant proposal was submitted to the Richard S. Reynolds Foundation for support of the Signature Conference series, law symposium and the website. Dominion has expressed interest in supporting the visitor kiosk program based on its very successful support and feedback of the kiosks within Virginia state parks, and Phillip Morris, Bank of America and S&M Brands have expressed general support and Ms. Watkins will continue to follow these proposals.

Status of Ongoing Activities; Items Submitted for Approval from Executive Committee -Cheryl Jackson:

Ms. Jackson introduced Tomi Dechant and Mike Shuman who are new support staff for the Commission. She also discussed a schedule for upcoming meetings and encouraged the commission members to decide what format they would like each meeting to take.

The 501(c)(3) Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Foundation has filed the necessary forms and the Foundation is waiting to hear back from the IRS. The Foundation has been incorporated with the SCC as a nonprofit corporation, distinct from the Commission and the adopted bylaws are currently under review. The Initial Board had its first meeting in April and developed a list of candidates for Board members. Those candidates are being contacted individually.

There are currently 39 local sesquicentennial committees. Staff members have met with many of these local committees and regional meetings are also being developed. The localities are most excited about the DVD, the HistoryMobile, and the possibility of a grant program. Commission members were provided a list of the localities in their district and were encouraged to reach out to those who have not responded to the Speaker's letter mailed last September.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is also being drafted for the Commission's approval to protect the Commission's logo. It has been suggested that the local committees be used as the first line of review for any group that wants to associate itself with the Commission by use of the logo and would have the right to refuse anyone. A motion was made by Delegate A. Howell for staff to draft an MOU. This motion was seconded by Senator Colgan and agreed to by the Commission.

Ms. Jackson briefly demonstrated the "Then/Now" interactive map on the website and informed the Commission that the maps rely heavily on the local committees to provide the descriptions/history. A demonstration on the computer will be done at the next meeting.

For the first Signature Conference, Dr. Ayers has proposed a fresh perspective and challenged attendees to forget that they know how history turns out while discussing recent events and what effect they may have, limiting themselves to what was known in 1859. A transcript of the conference will also be published. Delegate Lingamfelter made a motion to approve Dr. Ayers' conference proposal, which was seconded by Dr. Robertson. The Commission unanimously passed the motion.

The Commission has received responses from 15 institutions of higher education, offering support for meetings, tours or conferences. Speaker Howell sent a letter to each college and university in December. The Commission will discuss this item further and make decisions at the June meeting.

The Commission, after funding the DVD project, paying its first installment to VHS, and paying the first two years of the strategic marketing plan from VTC, has a fund balance slightly over \$1 million. Discussion was held as to how to allocate the remaining funds. Dr. Robertson motioned to appropriate \$10,000 for the internet battlefield tours project, which will be matched by CWPT, \$100,000 to fund micro-grants for localities, and \$750,000 to VHS to be applied to the remaining balance owed by the Commission. Senator Colgan seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Other Business:

Dr. Robertson gave a status report on the DVD, which is aimed at 8th graders. He has written all nine scripts. Blue Ridge Public Television has purchased high definition cameras and filming will begin later in April at major Civil War sites, including Manassas, Harper's Ferry, and Antietam. Theme music selected for the DVD is "Shenandoah," performed by Bobby Horton. The DVD is scheduled for completion in August 2009, but Dr. Robertson is hoping that it will be finished in June or July so that it can be previewed. Members of the Executive Committee requested notification prior to the beginning of post-production for donor recognition.