

MARCH DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The time that has passed since the December board meeting has been a whirlwind! Not only did DHR endure a challenging General Assembly session that kept us on our toes due to multiple twists and turns, but the demands on staff and programs have never been greater. With several key vacancies that have proven challenging to fill, DHR is experiencing a trying, yet exciting, time.

MEEETING LOGISTICS:

- Executive Mansion Tour: A heartfelt thanks to Martin Townes for hosting a special VIP tour of the mansion. In his role as Deputy Butler, Martin is very knowledgeable about the history of this National Historic Landmark and is excited to host board members and staff. Plan to meet at DHR at 10:00 a.m. if you would like a ride downtown. If driving separately, there isn't any parking in the immediate vicinity of the mansion; the garage at St. Paul's Church at 8th & Grace is a good option.
- Board Training: DHR has arranged for our National Register reviewer, Jim Gabbert, to help lead the register portion of the training. He will also be attending the board dinner and Thursday meetings.
- Board Dinner: 6:30 p.m. at Pinky's, 3015 Norfolk St, Richmond, VA 23230. Located in the Scott's Addition Historic District. Deputy Secretary Jennifer Walle will be joining us, representing the Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources. Parking is competitive, so if you would like to be picked up at your hotel, just let me or Jen Pullen know.
- Agenda/Quorum: By now you have realized that the Thursday agenda looks a bit different as we needed to flip the typical morning/afternoon agendas in order to have an SRB quorum for the joint session.

BOARD GOVERNANCE:

- State Review Board
 - Elections: The Chair and Vice Chair need to be elected at Thursday's meeting; it is my understanding that the board members have been in communication and that the board is prepared to present a slate.
 - Bylaws: These need to be updated to reflect current practice regarding virtual participation which is important when an in-person quorum is not possible,
- Board of Historic Resources
 - Terms: Dr. Fairfax and Tucker Lemon's terms expire June 30, 2024. An election of officers will take place in September.

GA SESSION:

- Overview:
 - The General Assembly met for 60 days and adjourned on time with a conference report budget, something that has not happened these past few GA Sessions.
 - April 17th is Veto Session where the General Assembly will respond or take action to the Governor's vetoes and amendments to legislative bills and the budget bills.
 - Overall, DHR fared well, with new funding and positions, as well as budget language that corrected obstacles that prevented awards from the BIPOC Fund.
 - New Positions: 1 Deputy Director of Programming and 2 fiscal positions
- New Grants:

- Semiquincentennial Capital Grant Program: The Conference Report gives DHR \$20M to create a capital grant program in preparation of our nation’s semiquincentennial. These funds require a one-to-three match from grantees and the funds must be used to support capital improvements at significant historic sites in the Commonwealth.
- Clermont: \$1.3M in the Conference Report of the Biennium Budget for a barn at Clermont, to replace the barn that burned four years ago.
- BIPOC: An additional \$1M
- Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund: Level-funding at \$5.3M each year
- Tribal Ombudsman: The Conference Report adds a Tribal Ombudsman position to the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Office for Tribal Consultation between the Commonwealth and federally recognized Tribal Nations
- Relevant Bills:
 - Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Bill and Budget Amendment increases the maximum amount of the historic rehabilitation tax credit that may be claimed by a taxpayer from \$5M to \$7.5M; There were talks of putting a cap on the program, but the General Assembly ultimately chose not to. We expect discussions next year of possibly putting a cap on the program and will work during this off time to meet with legislators in hopes of avoiding a future cap.
 - SNHR Confirmation: Travis Voyles was confirmed as Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources.

UPCOMING MARKER DEDICATIONS:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 13 (9:30 am)
Appomattox Court House | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Colored Troops at Appomattox
DHR rep: L. Smith |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 13 (10:30 am)
Orange County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edna Lewis (1916-2006)
DHR rep: J. Langan |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 13 (3:30 pm)
Ferrum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ferrum
DHR rep: T. Lemon |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 18
Cumberland County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucyville
DHR rep: J. Langan |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 20
City of Richmond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emancipated Community at Chimborazo Hill
DHR rep: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May 11 (11 am)
Mathews County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flights to Freedom
DHR rep: C. Fairfax |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 22
Powhatan County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belmead
DHR rep: Langan? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ August 3
Middlesex County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antioch Baptist Church
DHR rep: |

GRANTS:

- National Park Service:
 - NPS Paul Buhn: In 2023 DHR was awarded \$750,000 to re-grant for historic building rehabilitation in southwest Virginia. Preapplications requesting subgrant funding are due March 15. Please see our website for more information on this program: <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/grant-funding/pbhrgp-appalachian-virginia/#:~:text=The%20Commonwealth%20of%20Virginia%20has,in%20the%20state's%20southwestern%20region>. DHR is applying for another \$750,000 award to re-grant to southwest Virginia. That decision will be announced in September.
 - SAT: DHR has received over \$176,000 to continue the conservation of artifacts recovered from excavations associated with enslaved people living at Kingsmill and associated with 17th and 18th century plantation sites. We have hired a conservator for this project, Chelsea Kreiner, who had previously worked on this collection at DHR under grant funding from The Conservation Fund.
 - Semiquincentennial: This grant supports the first phase of a remote sensing survey of the submerged area of the siege of Yorktown battlefield between Yorktown and Gloucester Point. This resource was the first underwater site listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. DHR has selected a consultant, Seafloor Solutions, and we anticipate fieldwork will be conducted in the next several months.
 - Maritime: DHR has received \$200,000 from the National Park Service to create a subgrant program to support the preservation and conservation of collections (archaeological, archival, etc.), properties, and objects associated with underrepresented histories related to maritime trade in Virginia. A public announcement has been released and preapplications are being accepted. We anticipate selecting projects and announcing awards in late summer of this year.
 - Under-Represented Communities: In February, DHR was notified that its 2023 Underrepresented Communities Grant application was successful. The Commonwealth has been awarded \$75,000 in grant funds through the NPS Underrepresented Communities Grant Program to support the development of a statewide historic context report for African American schools. The project will result in a Multiple Property Document (MPD), a NPS form used for documenting topically related historic properties. The information in MPDs can be used to streamline the nomination of related individual sites or historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places. This project helps DHR meet an agency objective to increase the number of Virginia properties significant to minority, underrepresented, tribal, and diverse communities listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as outlined in Virginia's Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, 2022-2027. The project will also produce a National Register nomination for Cuckoo Colored School in Louisa County.
- State Funded:
 - BIPOC: BHR members will be briefed in detail on Wednesday and Thursday as DHR prepares to make the first round of awards.

- Threatened Sites: DHR continues to support the FY24 projects, assisting with fieldwork when possible. Proposals for the FY25 cycle are due May 15th and will be reviewed and ranked in June.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY WEEK IN DC:

- Julie Langan attended the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, participated in Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, and met with representatives of the Historic Tax Credit Coalition (HTCC).
- Meeting with VA Delegation: Virginia fielded a team of ten who paid visits on Senators Warner & Kaine as well as Representatives Cline, Spanberger, McClellan, Wittman, and Griffith. For the most part, members were supportive of continued Federal funding for SHPO's and NPS grant programs.

Current DHR Priorities:

- Petersburg: DHR will present historic rehabilitation tax credit workshop on May 15th sponsored by Historic Petersburg Foundation.
- SW VA: The Governor will soon announce increased support to SW VA; DHR looks forward to complimenting this effort.
- VA250: DHR invites board members to suggest ways in which our programs and activities can highlight the 2026 celebration.
- Statue of Barbara Rose Johns: The full-scale clay model is currently under review by the Architect of the Capitol. Once this review is complete, the request for approval will be forwarded to the Joint Committee on the Library. Once approval has been granted, the next step in the process is for the foundry to begin the casting of the statue and for the Virginia granite pedestal to be constructed.

HOT TOPICS:

- Arlington National Cemetery: DHR continues to be involved in negotiations regarding the disposition of the Reconciliation monument that was removed in late December. A Programmatic Agreement to which DHR is a signatory maps out the remaining steps in the consultation process.
- Data Centers: Though there were multiple bills regarding data centers, none passed the legislature. This type of project is very controversial, and some have the potential to adversely impact eligible historic resources.

OTHER NEWS:

- Personnel:
 - Vacancies:
 - Curator of Collections
 - Register: Announcement was reposted in February; posting closes on March 25.
 - Administration:
 - Procurement
 - Director of Finance & Administration
- FLOVA Spirit of VA Award: On March 15 Julie Langan & Stephanie Williams attended an event at Mount Vernon during which the Spirit of Virginia Award was presented by the Governor and First Lady to the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

- *A Common Cause to All*: Julie Langan and Sarah Spota attended the second in a series of VA250 planning conferences hosted by the VA250 Commission and Colonial Williamsburg.
- Internship Program: Last week three HBCU students were on-boarded as interns. Their work will be coordinated by LaToya Gray.
- Preservation Virginia: CEO Elizabeth Kostelny will retire this fall; a national search for her replacement is underway.
- Contextualization Regs: The Governor's office has officially approved of the Contextualization Regulation. The next step in the process is that the register will publish it on April 8th and that will begin a 60-day comment period which will end on June 8th. R

JUNE BOARD MEETING/JUNE 19-20:

- This meeting will be a two-day affair focused on Winchester and its environs. Please plan accordingly!
 - Wednesday plans will likely include board participation in a marker dedication, a tour of Clermont, a working farm owned by DHR, a visit to the Third Battle of Winchester, a reception hosted by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation at the historic Frederick County Courthouse in Winchester, which is currently utilized by a museum and is protected by an easement held by the BHR.
 - While in Winchester, all activities will be located within the downtown Winchester Historic District and within walking distance of our base of operations at the George Washington Hotel.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS:

- Thanks to the efforts of Ivy Tan, DHR is regularly in the news! The best way to stay informed is by following DHR on Facebook and Instagram. If you aren't receiving our quarterly newsletter via email, please let me or Jen Pullen know and we will make certain to add you to the distribution list.

WHILE IN RICHMOND:

- VMHC: *Julia Child: A Recipe for Life*: DHR was able to support this exhibit with an object loan, a fat skimmer from Causey's Care, a site dating to the early 1600s in Charles City County.
- VMFA: *Ragamalas: Picturing Music & Emotion*, *Willie Anne Wright: Artist and Alchemist*, *Picture Windows: Photographs from the Collection*, *Theaster Gates: Wonder Working Power*, *Producing the Picturesque: Watercolors and Collaborative Prints by Kawase Hasui*, *Horses and Heros in the Age of Napoleon: The Equestrian Drawings of Carle Vernet*, *Jennie C. Jones: High as the Listening Skies and the Edges of Heaven, Rest*.
- Valentine Museum: has reopened after an extensive reworking of its spaces and exhibits, funded in part by the state historic tax credit program. Among other exhibits, *Sculpting History at the Valentine Studio: Art, Power and the "Lost Cause" American Myth* is on display.