



George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee (GWBCC)

Monday, March 3, 2025

7:00 PM

Lloyd House

Minutes

Attendance: Sue Johnson, Michele Longo, Peter Duggan, Carol Myers, Jeanne Jacob (virtual), Lauren Augustine, Carol Myers, Stephen Konya, Bob Garbacz, Hunter Ihrman, Kristen Eastlick, Patrick Wilson,

Excused: Tyler Vanice, Colin Eilts, Jacque Martin, Sandra Welch,

Unexcused: Ally Collender, Edgar Bates,

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.
2. Minutes
3. Marketing and Public Relations Report:
 - Sue reviewed a proposed partnership agreement between GWBCC, Office of Historic Alexandria, and Visit Alexandria. It includes the creation of a focused winter events promotion and paid advertising efforts by Visit Alexandria. In return, GWBCC is encouraged to add a section to the webpage "Make it a Weekend in Alexandria."
 - The Alexandria Gazette and Old Town Crier include parade coverage in their most recent issues.
 - Instagram had great engagement on parade day, though still small
4. VA250, Alexandria250, and other community reports:
 - The committee spent \$2000 on paid Facebook advertising. It performed well and increased our followers to over 1000 people. The ad received over 250,000 views and a total engagement of 6841.
 - \$1500 on photography of the parade and associated events—Sue is going through the photos now.
 - \$1500 parade videographer completed a full video of the parade.
5. Unfinished Business
 - 2025 Parade Day debriefing
 - i. Weather: Parade policy has been that the parade goes on rain or shine. This year the Alexandria Emergency Event Manager, Special Events police representative, OHA Director and parade liaison and chair met the day (Friday) before the parade at 10 a.m. to determine if the parade could safely proceed. Sue recommended the committee consider having a parade rain date or adjust cancellation policy.
 - ii. Parade participants: Approx. 50 units registered with over 1100 individuals. There were a number of cancellations at least in part due to the weather, but those who came brought a lot of spirit.
 - iii. Dignitary Division: It ran smoothly and had more than enough cars. Sue noted other parades have the dignitaries walk together instead of having individual cars with signs. The GWBCC may want to consider alternatives to having a car per dignitary.
 - iv. Parade Review Stand: The stand ran out of chairs even though not everyone who was on the list even came. The review stand needs a dedicated social media volunteer.
 - v. Photography: Next year encourage getting more pictures with groups watching the parade. For our guests, like the French embassy, they need photographs quickly to be able to post on social media, which will only help us. Also, ideally we would provide

winners with a photo of their unit in the parade—could the photographer walk through the assembly area to take group photos in advance?

- vi. Judging panel: Sue noted we had a new judging panel this year, to include business representatives alongside long-time judges. This year we were even able to announce winners at the post-parade reception.
- vii. Wreath-laying ceremony went well.
- viii. Hotel AKA post-parade reception took place 4:30-6:30 p.m. They want to host again, but the committee should move the reception a half-hour earlier so there is less of a gap between the end of the parade and the reception.
- Parade unit awards: The unit awards will be posted online after the newsletter goes out. Certificates have arrived and Kristen will drop them off at Gadsby's Tavern Museum so Michele can mail them.
- Parade expenses & revenues to date:
 - i. We are awaiting City bills for the parade and a sponsor check for \$2500. As it looks now, we have \$66,300 in income (\$35,000 from City; \$23,750 private sponsorships and donations; \$3800 from fundraising events; \$4200 from parade registration fees). We anticipate \$58,000 in expenses.
- Reports from other February 2025 events
 - i. Cherry Challenge: Over 900 votes came in. Entrée—Dishes of India; Appetizer and Dessert—Bastille; Drink—Lighthorse;
 - ii. Friendship Firehouse breakfast: FFVA sends their regrets for not being able to participate in the parade and plan on attending next year. The breakfast had 165 guests and the separation between the parade and breakfast did not impact the attendance.
 - iii. George Washington's Alexandria tours
 - iv. Hunt for Washington
 - v. Masonic events
- City Council vote on 2025 George Washington Birthday Proclamation: Sue brought the signed copy of the proclamation.

6. New Business

- Rescheduling of *Unearthing History: Mount Vernon's Cherry Discoveries*—it is being rescheduled for Cherry Blossom season (March 20-April 13). 6:30-8 p.m., \$30; includes reception 6:30-7 p.m.
- 2026 Market Square construction and impact on 2026 parade: Starting in 2026 the area around City Hall and Market Square will be impacted by construction through the end of 2028. We will need to consider alternative parade routes for at least 2027 and 2028.
- City Council deliberations on 2026 city budget: March 10 is the budget hearing where committee members can give three-minute testimonies, ideally along with key coalition members. The wider variety of constituents, the better. Council members have until April 22 to make recommended additions to the budget.
- Next meeting Monday, April 21

7. For the Good of the Cause

8. Public Comment

9. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.