



George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee (GWBC)

Monday, December 15, 2025

7:00 PM

Lloyd House

220 N. Washington Street

Minutes

Attendance: Sue Johnson, Michele Longo, Peter Duggan, Jake Sweely, Lauren Augustine, Edgar Bates, Colin Eilts, Carol Myers, Steve Konya, Hunter Ihrman, Patrick Wilson, Kristen Eastlick, Sandra Welch

Excused: Tyler Vanice, Jeanne Jacob

Unexcused: Casey Clark

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.
- 2) Motion to approve November 17, 2025 minutes made by Edgar Bates seconded by Kristen Eastlick. The committee approved the motion.
- 3) Chair's Report—Sue said she still has the plaque for former committee member Bob Garbacz, and she is still trying to get in touch with him to schedule a plaque presentation.
- 4) Marketing and Public Relations Report—Another press release will be released by early February. Kristen Eastlick will prepare a press release for the opening of the Cherry Challenge. Sue Johnson participated in a phone interview with AARP, and is scheduled for an in-person interview with FOX 5 Wash DC this week. Bud Jackson, the GWBC's voluntary public relations advisor, is working on short videos to publicize the parade, which will be given to Visit Alexandria. Kristen Eastlick announced that all Social Media viewership is up and increasing on all our social media platforms. Our Instagram page viewership has tripled from last year to 330,000 views.
- 5) VA250, Alexandria250, and other community reports—The tall ships have been identified for Alexandria 250th Operation Sail event in June. Ships' names will be publicized on Visit Alexandria web site.
- 6) Unfinished Business
 - a) Marching band/performance group update—Three marching bands have been confirmed: Washington Commanders Marching Band, US Army Old Guard Fifes and Drums and C. D. Hilton High School in Woodbridge, VA. As a George Washington University (GWU) alumni, Hunter Ihrman has reached out to GWU to inquire about potential parade participation.
 - b) Parade participant registration update—There are approximately 24 registered or paid participants to date, including First VA Regiment, Catholic Daughters of America, American Friends of Lafayette, Kate Walter Barrett Chapter NSDAR, Tinkus Kay'Sur Bolivian Dancers. Hard Times Café, Mount Vernon, American Legion Post 24, Pentagon Chapter DAR, Nelly Custis Chapter DAR, Rocklands Barbeque, Old Dominion Boat Club, Alexandria Democratic Committee, Christ Church, Knights of Columbus Potomac Assembly 2204, Roof Top Chimney Sweeps, Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, District 5 VA DAR, Mount Purnnon Cat

Café, Scout Troop 680, Cub Scout Troop 129, Girl Scout Association 60, American Heritage Girls Troop 0325.

- c) Due to the parade being on Valentine's Day, there was a discussion on designing a Valentine logo "Alexandria Love George" for placement on handheld signs.
- d) 2026 fundraising
 - (i) Port City Brewery Trivia Night—Thursday, November 20—GWBCC Team tied for second place in trivia contest on World Celebrations. Flyers were put on all tables to include a QR Code for donations. We have received \$353 (total) from the event.
 - (ii) Sponsorship/donor update/outreach—So far, total paid sponsorships total \$16,150. \$5,000 Gold Sponsors - SAR George Washington Chapter and Fraternal Order of Eagles. \$1,000 Bronze Sponsors - Kathleen Casey, Friendship Fire Veterans Fire Engine Association, Patrick Wilson, GW National Masonic Memorial, Kate Waller Barrett Chapter NSDAR. \$500 Supporting Sponsors - Scott and Vicki Byant. \$400 George Washington's Alexandria Sponsor - Exterior Medics. \$250 Parade Donors -, Virginia District 5 DAR, Jeanne and Gerry Jacob, Elisha Dick Chapter NSDAR. Others have committed to sponsorships but have not yet made payment.
- e) 2026 Event Schedule—Sue passed out updated event schedule for committee review. Event schedule needs to be submitted to Visit Alexandria by end of the month. Sandra Welch will follow up with OPMH to ensure they will be open on parade day.
- f) Preparations for adverse weather—March 14 or 21 are the potential alternate dates for a rain/snow date, if permitted by the City. Michelle Longo submitted paperwork for the parade route approval for the February 14 parade to the City and is still awaiting feedback/approval. The advanced timetable for Market Square construction may cause a change in the February 14 parade route, which also could affect approval of a rain/snow date.

7) New Business

- a) Parade dignitary invitations—Patrick Wilson will send invitations to VA Governor and Lt Governor, and to Congressman Don Byer and the two VA Senators. Sue will send invitations to Alexandria City Council members and other city/community dignitaries.
 - b) Parade volunteers—We will not need as many drivers a previous year given Bob Garbacz' departure, and since most VIPs choose to walk. Carol will create a Volunteer Sign-up Form, and we will be asking for volunteers on our website and newsletter.
- 8) For the Good of the Cause—Patrick presented details for a trophy-like award (Silver Plate) for the parade unit award winner. Next meeting we will discuss criteria for winning the award as well as preparations for the Mayor's Tea reception in January.

Edgar Bates wanted to formally document his email providing information on New York City Police Department (NYPD) support for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. "The NYPD does not receive direct payment from Macy's for providing security for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. The security is considered a public safety cost covered by the City of New York's budget, as it is a major public event. The parade is a privately funded event by Macy's, but the associated public security costs, which run into the millions, are borne by the city, primarily through police overtime."

Kristin Eastlick stated that registration is open for the Cherry Challenge on the GWBCC web site.

There was a discussion on getting parade swag items (i.e. hats/Scarfs) for parade volunteers.

Sue mentioned that we need to distribute flyers to homes and businesses along or near the parade route in January, with information about parking restrictions and street closures on Parade Day. The committee will discuss plans for flyer distribution at the next meeting.

Sandra Welch stated that the Kate Waller Barrett DAR Chapter at their meeting recognized Sue Johnson for her community service for her work on the GWBCC. Patrick Wilson then made a motion

for the GWBCC to formally recognize Sue for her work over the past years on the GWBCC. Motion was seconded by Edgar Bates. The committee passed motion.

- 9) Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:16. Motion made by Edgar Bates, second by Colin Eilts.

Dates to Remember

GWBCC Meeting (Virtual): Monday, January 5, 2026

Mayor's Sponsorship Tea: Saturday, January 24, 2026

GWBCC Meeting (Lloyd House): Monday, January 19, 2026

GWBCC Meeting (Virtual): Monday, February 2, 2026

City Council approval of GW Proclamation: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Parade Day: Saturday, February 14, 2026