

STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES
February 6, 2025

The meeting of the Stafford County Historical Commission on Thursday, February 6, 2025, was called to order at 3:00 PM by Anita Dodd in the ABC Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Martha Newton, Frank White, Jane Conner and Anita Dodd

MEMBERS ABSENT: James Powell

STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Kotting, Crissy Kendall

GUESTS PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Dodd called the meeting to order at 3:00.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Ms. Newton called roll and stated there was a quorum.

VOTE TO ACCEPT/AMEND AGENDA

Ms. Kotting requested to move item number 6 under New Business to the Cemetery Committee Report

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Election of Chairperson

Martha Newton made a motion to nominate Anita Dodd as Chair. Jane Conner seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0.

2. Election of Vice Chairperson

Anita Dodd made a motion to nominate Jane Connor as Vice Chair. Martha Newton seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0.

3. Election of Secretary

Anita Dodd made a motion to nominate Martha Newton as Secretary. Jane Connor seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0.

4. Review Staff Liaison Guidelines and Basic Legal Information for BACC

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Ms. Kotting confirmed there had been no changes since the last review in January 2024. There were no further questions.

5. Staff Updates on VA250 celebration plans- Hunters Iron Works

There will be a three-day event that will include a family reunion/gathering of Hunter descendants. It will include a 1- or 2-day educational symposium. The location has not been determined. They are looking at Riverside Theater, the Holiday Inn or Belmont. It is open to the public. Nancy will provide the date and sign-up information when available.

6. Staff Update: Lexington Farms/Walnut Hill Farm Slave Cemetery identification and delineation

See Chairman's Report

7. 2025 Calendar Approval

Jane Connor made a motion to accept the draft 2025 meeting calendar. Martha Newton seconded. The motion passed, 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Development Review: Stafford Technology, TM Parcel 38-124 and 38-29A. Site contains three potentially eligible for National Register listing archeological sites with Phase II survey recommended based on results of Phase I survey. Update from Anita Dodd regarding letter.

The Historic Review is complete. The developer will avoid all national register eligible areas. They will fence off some of the sites and have agreed to delineate all of the sites on all the development plans.

2. Scheel Map Sales Proceeds- Interpretive Sign Inventory Evaluation Status/
Update on interpretive signage inventory and conditions assessment/Staff

Tourism has replaced/repared 17 signs in 2024. Ms. Kotting isn't sure if the inventory is complete. Ms. Kotting notified the members that the Director of Parks and Rec recently retired, and the Assistant Director retires at the end of the month. Stay tuned for information on replacements.

3. Counting House Update: Request for Proposal Status

It is still with legal. Final insurance questions were answered this morning.

4. Interpretive signs for Sanford Burgess Farm and Sanford Burgess Slave Dwelling

Ms. Kotting provided hard copies of the sign for review. She said there is still temporary security fencing around the property. This will remain in place until the restoration is complete. There is a budget request in to fund the completion of restoration. After reviewing the text for the interpretive sign Ms. Connor recommended the final paragraph be changed. Ms. Dodd agreed it needs to be divided into 2 sentences. Ms. Kotting will work on the wording to make it two sentences.

5. Review proposed By-Laws change to allow remote attendance

This item can be removed from the agenda.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Kotting requested the cemetery committee report be a regular part of the Historical Commission Agenda. Ms. Dodd presented the report from the previous meeting.

The cemetery committee has identified 10 individual gravesites that are accessible to the public to lay wreaths on this coming Memorial Day, May 2025. The committee will be making the wreaths. There was a question if VA250 goes from July 4, 2025 to July 4, 2026 or if it starts in March, 2025. Nancy will confirm the start date.

In the late 80's, Homer Musselman documented the cemeteries in Stafford County. The cemetery committee has decided it is time to update the book. It will be divided into two books, church and family cemeteries. They will start with a re-inventory of the church cemeteries and include a small history of the church. Once they complete that book they will do a re-inventory of any family cemeteries that are still active.

There are approximately 100 cemeteries that the committee knows of in the county that they are unable to find, or they are landlocked, and they are unable to access them to survey. Recently the committee was given access to survey one of these cemeteries. Ms. Dodd asked Ms. Kotting to provide coordinates to help her locate the site.

There is a residential development called Lexington Farms being developed on property adjacent to Walnut Hill Farm. There is an oral history of a slave cemetery on the property. The developer made an attempt to delineate the cemetery. They scraped and didn't find anything. Based on the lack of findings the historic review passed at that time. The development came under review again due to a boundary line change and at that point Ms. Kotting was able to interview an 80-90-year-old gentleman who had farmed that field when he was a child. She made a recording of him telling her exactly where the cemetery is. She has failed the review and requested that they attempt to delineate it again. Nancy suggested they use cadaver dogs but needs warm weather for them to work. Members expressed interest in witnessing the dog work and Ms. Kotting will check to see if that's a possibility. On this particular farm, those that were enslaved in the house are buried with the family in the family cemetery and those that labored in the field were allegedly buried in the field.

REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Anita Dodd made a motion to approve the minutes from November 7, 2024.

Jane Connor seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Anita Dodd adjourned the meeting at 3:46.