

1 **STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION BOARD MINUTES**

2 *March 5, 2026.*

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4 The meeting of the Stafford County Historical Commission Board of Thursday, March February 5, 2026,
5 was called to order at 3:04 PM by Anita Dodd, in the ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr.,
6 Government Center.

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8 MEMBERS PRESENT: Anita Dodd, Jane Conner, Martha Newton, Aaron Mastin, Callie Knight.

9
10 MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Orrison, Emma Dietrich.

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12 STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Kotting, Harriet Donkoh.

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14 GUESTS PRESENT: Elena Prokos, Julia Lewis, Jeff Eastland.

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16 CALL TO ORDER

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18 Ms. Dodd called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM.

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20 ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

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22 Roll was called by Ms. Newton. There was a quorum.

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24 ADDITIONS, DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

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26 With no deletions or additions, Ms. Newton motioned to approve the regular agenda. She was seconded by
27 Ms. Conner. The Motion passed 5:0

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29 PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

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31 Jeff Eastland inquired about the status of the previously discussed Blaisdell Data Center. Ms. Dodd
32 clarified that it was not on the current agenda because there were no updates. Ms. Kotting reminded speakers
33 that this is a non-interactive three-minute public comment period.

34
35 Julia Lewis, a resident of the Falmouth District, invited the Commission to attend the Planning
36 Commission's public hearing on March 25 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Chambers regarding the proposed Buc-
37 ee's. She noted that Buc-ee's sells a wide variety of merchandise and suggested this as an opportunity to
38 showcase Stafford County's rich history by encouraging Buc-ee's to include a section in the store dedicated
39 to local historical materials, such as books, maps, and pictures highlighting sites like George Washington's
40 boyhood home, as well as the County's colonial and civil war history. She requested that members, when
41 speaking as private citizens, ask that Stafford County's history and tourism assets be visibly represented in
42 the store if the project is approved.

43
44 Elena Prokos inquired whether minutes from the previous meeting are available online and accessible to
45 the public, and further asked what rules, stipulations, or ordinances apply when land is donated to the
46 County, referencing prior discussion regarding fencing, access, and related conditions on donated
47 properties.

51 NEW BUSINESS

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53 1. Slave Dwelling Project Update (Staff)

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55 Ms. Kotting provided an update on the event associated with the Slave Dwelling Project, scheduled for
56 September 12–13, 2026. The National Park Service is leading the effort, with participation from the
57 Fredericksburg Area Museum, City of Fredericksburg, Ferry Farm, and Stafford Tourism, while she is
58 offering technical support. Multiple interpretive stops are planned in Stafford and Fredericksburg including
59 Chatham, the Mary Washington House kitchen, and the Moncure Conway House, with transportation
60 between sites. Because restoration of the Samford Burgess Slave Dwelling is not yet funded, the primary
61 overnight educational program will take place on the side lot of the Moncure Conway House, across from
62 Falmouth Beach, and will feature evening presentations, overnight stays, and morning storytelling.
63 Presenters will include interpreters from along the eastern seaboard, a cook, a laundress, and local artists.
64 Funding is pending from the City of Fredericksburg, a \$2,500 request to Stafford County, a grant
65 application, and an event website and social media promotion are forthcoming.

66
67 Ms. Dodd asked whether the Historical Society had been approached about participating in the upcoming
68 event. Ms. Kotting recalled a prior conversation with Ms. Dodd about the matter. Ms. Dodd agreed to raise
69 the event at the next Historical Society meeting and expressed concern that the event may have fallen
70 through the cracks during earlier discussions of events but agreed to follow up.

71
72 2. Comprehensive Plan Update Introduction and Overview (Staff)

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74 Ms. Kotting explained she has been tasked to recommend updates to the Cultural Resources section and
75 therefore brought the draft to the Historical Commission for comments. She invited suggestions for edits,
76 additions, or deletions, noting that members had received the material in advance. Ms. Dodd recommended
77 adding a reference in the “Brief History of Stafford County” (page 6-33) to the militia that was formed in
78 Stafford during the Revolutionary War and requested removal of the now-closed White Oak Museum from
79 page 6-38. She otherwise felt the history section looked good, recognizing it cannot capture every detail.
80 Regarding the Cultural Resources Management/implementation section, Ms. Dodd stated she did not see
81 anything that needed to be added, and no other members offered additional suggestions.

82
83 Ms. Kotting noted that Stafford County has only two enforceable tools to protect cultural resources, historic
84 resource overlay districts and federal review/mitigation when federal funds are involved, and that, under
85 current Comprehensive Plan policy, she can only recommend studies, but developers may not be influenced
86 by her recommendation. She therefore wants to add a specific objective to Goal 9 to pursue a stronger,
87 legally enforceable cultural resources ordinance within the limits of Virginia’s Dillon Rule and then follow
88 through to implement it.

89
90 Ms. Dodd noted that a preservation ordinance went to the Board of Supervisors about 20 years ago and
91 stalled in committee and offered to provide the paperwork for staff review. Ms. Kotting said it is time to
92 revisit it, highlighting the need for protective easements on county-owned historic properties, especially
93 Little Falls/Duff Green and the magistrates building, and recommended keeping these objectives in the plan
94 despite current staff capacity constraints.

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96 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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98 1. New Interpretive Sign for Government Island Status Update

Ms. Dodd reported that she has prepared an initial draft of text for new interpretive signage focused on the workforce at Government Island during the period of federal government ownership, noting that the workforce composition changes over time and becomes more complex under later private ownership. She relied primarily on Jerrilyn's book as the main reference material and has provided her draft to the author for review to confirm accuracy and interpretation. Ms. Kotting suggested that two signs may ultimately be needed to fully address both government and private ownership periods and emphasized the goal of full transparency, distinguishing between documented evidence, folklore, and triangulated but not fully confirmed information. She requested that commissioners provide content-rich drafts without worrying about length or sign space at this stage, explaining that it is easier to edit later. Drafts will initially be circulated only among a small working group until a strong working draft is ready for review by the full Commission.

2. Grant application for Magistrates Historic Structure Report Status Update (Staff)

Ms. Kotting reported capacity constraints and ongoing PDR program closings, noting that the magistrates building grant is a matching grant that requires Board of Supervisors' permission to apply, which adds time to the process. She stated she is doing her best to meet the application deadline and will contact Ms. Dodd for additional historical information as needed, in addition to what is already in county files. Ms. Dodd will offer further information if helpful, and Ms. Kotting reiterated that she is available to the public during working hours for questions.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None

CEMETERY COMMITTEE REPORT

None

REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Newton made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2026, meeting. Ms. Conner seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

BLOOMINGTON INTERPRETIVE PLAN WORK SESSION

There was a brief update on the Bloomington interpretive sign text, with additional input from Mr. Orrison on potential house reconstruction concepts deferred to a future meeting. Ms. Kotting suggested scheduling a special meeting, requiring one week notice and a quorum, dedicated exclusively to advancing the Bloomington Interpretive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Ms. Newton moved for the adjournment of the meeting. She was seconded by Ms. Conner. Ms. Dodd adjourned the meeting at 3:35pm.