

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting*

June 19, 2014

Strasburg Town Hall
174 East King Street
Strasburg, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions
Patrick Farris
- 2) Adoption of Minutes
- 3) Status of FAC Member/Nomination Process
Jim Northup
- 4) New Park Brochure
Amy Bracewell
- 5) Highway Direction Signs
Amy Bracewell
- 6) Summer Programs
Amy Bracewell
- 7) Volunteer Program
Amy Bracewell
- 8) Shared Graphic Identity
Amy Bracewell
- 9) Planning/Development of Park Trails
Amy Bracewell
- 10) U.S. 11 Bridge Project
Jim Northup
- 11) I-81 Bridge Replacement
Jim Northup
- 12) 150th Anniversary
Amy Bracewell

- 13) NPS Centennial Planning
Amy Bracewell
- 14) Future Land Protection
Amy Bracewell
- 15) Recognition for Congressman Wolf
Amy Bracewell
- 16) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Amy Bracewell, NPS; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF); Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF); Richard Redmon, Strasburg; and Pam Salokangas, Shenandoah County.

Commission members absent: Katie Donahue, USFS; Patrick Farris, Warren County and chair; and Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia

Others in attendance: Mary Bowser, private landowner and former FAC member; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Kristen Laise, Belle Grove, Inc.; Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf; Julia Vermeulen, National Trust for Historic Preservation

In the absence of Chair Patrick Farris, Vice-chair Pam Salokangas opened the meeting at 8:37 a.m. Salokangas asked that everyone present give their name and affiliation.

The meeting notes from March 20, 2014, were approved.

Northup reported that all member nominations have cleared the White House and have been sent to the Department of the Interior. He hopes that all approvals will be in hand by the next FAC meeting. All current members and officers will remain in place until all approvals are received at the park.

The new park brochure has been printed, shipped, and the copies have arrived. Thanks to everyone who participated in this process.

The highway signs are being installed. It turns out the CCBF signs are about to be installed in the wrong location; Virginia Logos will check on getting this corrected. Northup and Bracewell will meet with Chief Engineer Burgess in Richmond about the I-66 sign.

At the end of March, operations began running seven days per week. Visitation is growing, and programs are given daily. Two seasonals—Kyle Rothemich and Chris Nelson—have returned from previous years and two others—Jeff Driscoll and Susan Merila—have been hired. History at Sunset programs will begin the end of June.

Twenty-two of last year's 25 volunteers have returned for this season. Some additional persons may be needed for the 150th anniversary programs. An orientation program for everyone was given in March.

Bracewell and Northup met with Irene Kirilloff, a graphic designer, to talk about the shared graphic identity. The micro purchase program was used to speed getting the designer involved. She will create three unique concepts for a starting point for discussion by mid-July. Once she has comments on the three concepts she will work to make one final approach and produce a vector file, which can be used at any size.

The Shenandoah NP trail crew marked the Vermont Monument and the Belle Grove entrenchments trails April 28, 2014. Currently we need to work through the various compliance issues—environmental, historic, and endangered flora—need to be addressed and resolved. There are no rare plants to avoid, but the regional office does have concerns about disturbance of archeological remains. Neither horses nor mountain bikes will be allowed on any trails. The park is currently working with Ursula Lemanski on an overall trail strategy document; a draft is being reviewed. The plan will address what the trails will look like, the surface material used, and policy and maintenance issues implemented. The Vermont trail will serve as a pilot project.

The NPS and partners met with VDOT about the U.S. 11 bridge. VDOT explained that the changes requested would increase costs by \$1.5 million. They will work to make the structure more “NPS-like.” Generally the NPS is satisfied with this process. VDOT is listening to us, but also has to listen to local emergency services and governments. The idea is to keep working with all participants.

There has been no recent activity on the I-81 bridge. VDOT is trying to determine if the bridge needs to be replaced or just repaired. A consultant has been hired to undertake such a study given that all state budgets are tight. This situation raises the question about whether the park should have a comprehensive infrastructure plan, so policies and positions would be place before situations about roads arose. This might be a means for finding out what is in the works for I-81 generally. It could raise the visibility of the park with VDOT, build on the goodwill generated with the Staunton office on the U.S. 11 project, and promote the sensitive nature of park preservation issues and those issues to VDOT.

The plans for the 150th anniversary are moving well along. CCBF and Belle Grove are working on agreements for ticketing, shuttles, and programming. Belle Grove has received a grant from the Virginia Tourism office for placing ads in local media. Though VDOT owns the Ramseur Monument, the park and partners will work together and with

VDOT to restore and preserve the monument. The Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, Maryland will do the work.

Planning is underway for the centennial of the National Park Service in 2016. The National Park Foundation is taking the lead on promoting the commemoration, which will have six to eight “signature events.” Locally the park and partners should use the opportunity to establish goals on improving visitor service improvements. This should also be a time we all talk about how best to connect with the communities and to reach all audiences. A video prepared by Grey Advertising of New York City on the NPS and the upcoming anniversary was shown.

Bracewell, Northup, and Picerno briefly talked about land protection and a Department of Historic Resources symposium on contemporary battlefield conservation and management that they had attended in Richmond. “Once land is gone, it is gone.” Talks with the Civil War Trust on preserving land inside and outside the park will continue.

With the retirement of Congressman Frank Wolf at the end of this congress, the park and partners want to think of a way in which they can honor him for the support he has given over the years. Perhaps if he can come to the 150th events that would be an appropriate time to honor him. WASO is planning an event for him that will include all the parks in his district. Anyone who has ideas should email Bracewell.

New Business

Bracewell presented a new schedule for FAC meetings through December 17, 2015. The proposed schedule was approved and the starting time changed to 9 a.m. The meetings will be:

September 18, 2014, Middletown Town Hall
December 18, 2014, Warren County Government Center
March 19, 2015, Strasburg Town Hall
June 18, 2015, Middletown Town Hall
September 17, 2015, Warren County Government Center
December 17, 2016, Strasburg Town Hall

Nick Picerno announced that Keven Walker from Antietam NB has taken a job with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the new Chief Executive Officer.

There was a question about a possible Jubal Early monument in Middletown. Evidently it is an idea that has been around for some time, but the current mayor has made mention of it. Very little information is available at this time.

Belle Grove is having a variety of programs currently in keeping with the 150th commemorations.

The SVBF will be having a fundraiser at the George Washington Hotel in Winchester, September 19, the anniversary of the battle of third Winchester. The next day will feature a descendants reception.

Shenandoah County has received a donation of 300 acres.

Pam Sheets announced that she has recently married and that her last name is now Salokangas.

The next meeting will be at the Middletown Town Hall, September 18, 2014, at 9 a.m.

Pam Salokangas adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Handouts

Agenda

Meeting Notes for March 20, 2014

Suggested Meeting Schedule through December 17, 2015

Letter from Matt Dana, Stanton District Location and Design Engineer, VDOT

150th Anniversary Guest Lecture Series

History at Sunset News Release