

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

December 17, 2015

Strasburg Town Hall
174 East King Street
Strasburg, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions
Jim Northup
- 2) Adoption of Minutes
John Adamson
- 3) Nomination Process Update
Jim Northup
- 4) FY 2016 Budget Update
Jim Northup
- 5) 151st Anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 6) Update—Signage/Wayside Project
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 7) Update—Trails Projects
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 8) Update—U.S. 11 Bridge Project
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 9) Update—Vermont Monument Restoration
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 10) Historic Structures Report—Bowman Hite
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 11) Park Foundation Document
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 12) National Park Service Centennial
Karen Beck-Herzog
- 13) Priorities
Jim Northup/Karen Beck-Herzog
- 14) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, chair, Belle Grove, Inc.; Karen Beck-Herzog, site manager, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Dave Blount, Private Landowner; Katie Donahue, USFS; Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Lee Meyer, Warren County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF); and Richard Redmon, Strasburg.

Commission members absent: Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia and Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF)

Others in attendance: Bob Grogg, NPS Volunteer; Kristen Laise, Belle Grove, Inc.; Rachel Mahoney, *Northern Virginia Daily*; Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock; and Keven Walker, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF);

John Adamson, chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Jim Northup announced that Karen Beck-Herzog, who has been acting site manager, has been selected for the permanent position. She is an eighteen-year veteran of the National Park Service. Thirty-two people applied for the position, and Northup interviewed five before making the selection.

John Adamson asked that everyone attending give their name and affiliation.

The notes from the last meeting were approved.

Northup reported that he is waiting to hear from the White House and the Department of Interior about the appointment of Paul Coussan, Civil War Trust, to the commission. He is also waiting to hear about the Federal Register Notice seeking representatives for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Shenandoah County, and Strasburg. He announced that Katie Donahue is leaving her Forest Service position here and heading for a new position in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Though the federal budget has been prepared, the details are unknown. The consensus is that the NPS has done well, and that some additional funding is available for centennial projects. Dave Blount asked if the budget gave any direction about a possible alignment of Virginia parks with National Capital Region. Northup replied that although that talk has quieted down, the idea has not completely gone away.

Karen Beck-Herzog began her presentation by saying how pleased and excited she is to have been selected for the site manager position.

The 151st anniversary went well. The numbers were down from the 150th, but that was expected. Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation and Belle Grove shared the profit of \$25,000.

The waysides and signage projects are coming along. The park now has funds for fabrication.

Four park trails pilot projects are proceeding. The Vermont trail is being extended onto the adjacent Claytor property (Claven Lane). The actual route for the trail from the New York monument to Belle Grove is being determined. The Thoburn trail and the trail from the CCBF headquarters to the Heater House are also part of this project.

VDOT will meet with the NPS and partners to discuss that state of the U.S. 11 relocation. The hope is that the project will be advertised in November 2016 for a project to be finished in 2018.

The Vermont monument and the fencing have been cleaned and repaired. Gravel was removed and sod has been laid down. The NPS Historic Preservation and Training Center did the work.

A Historic Structures Report for the Bowman Hite House has been completed. It will be the guide for management and for interpretive programs.

The costs for removing some of the non-historic structures are greater than expected. The Washington Office is looking for either additional funding or considering narrowing the scope of the work. None of the structures has any endangered species that could be adversely affected by removal; nor is any structure within the habitat range of any such species. The NPS is committed to reducing the footprint of any dilapidated structures, so that scarce renovation funds need not be spent on properties that have no historic integrity or park use. The NPS is working with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure that any work is done in compliance with laws and regulations. Safety issues and stewardship commitments are keys to doing the right thing as well. Some commission members suggested that perhaps some buildings might be able to be moved.

A foundation document will be created in 2016 in a one-day workshop for the partners and the FAC. Rob Nieweg suggested that no date be set for the workshop until all the vacancies on the FAC are filled. An individual from the regional office will work with the park, partners, and FAC to produce a draft document. If some members' positions are not confirmed by the White House and Department by the time of the workshop, those individuals will still be invited to participate.

The theme of the 2016 Rose Parade on New Year's Day will be the National Parks ("Find Your Adventure"), and this event will begin the centennial year's commemorations. The Philadelphia Flower Show will also feature national parks. Specifically Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP will aim to increase awareness of the park in the Washington and Baltimore areas. Locally the park will work with tourism units as well.

Karen Beck-Herzog completed her presentation by saying that she would appreciate hearing from members of the FAC and anyone else what she should be focusing on in the next one to three years. She said her own thoughts on the subject included projects related to infrastructure, education, outreach to the general public and to private landowners within the park and adjacent to the park boundary, communication, land protection, training, a visitor center site, how to fund a visitor center, and long-term a friends group. This list covers the next 18-24 months for the park staff. She distributed a list of key projects drawn up by the FAC at the December 2014 meeting as a reminder. She stressed that her door will always be open to hear from anyone about the park's direction. John Adamson said he believed it important that anyone involved with the FAC commit to the park and take part in its programs.

New Business

We have talked about a field trip twice a year. The consensus is that one will take place this next March 2016.

Some commissioners asked about the meeting with the CCBF about the Confederate flag. Jim Northup reported that a candid and open discussion took place. All options are being considered. The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation has respectfully declined to remove the flag from their headquarters. The building is leased to an operator and the foundation has no control over what is sold. Rob Nieweg confirmed Jim Northup's report.

The next meeting will be at Middletown Town Hall, March 17, 2016. 9 a.m.

John Adamson adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Handouts

Agenda

Meeting Notes for September 17, 2015

NPS Budget Fact Sheet

Memo from the NPS Director to Region Directors on the Confederate Flag

Memo from the NPS Director to Cooperating Associations, Partners, and Concessioners

List of park priorities from the December 18, 2014, meeting notes