

MINUTES
PAGE COUNTY SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL
WAR COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2009
REGULAR MEETING

Members Present

Rod Graves – Luray Caverns Corporation - Chairman
Sharon Sampsell – Page County Department of Recreation – Liaison and Secretary
Art Candenquist – Summers/Knootz Camp of Confederate Veterans
Terry Heder – Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation
Gary Drum – Appalachian Outdoors Adventures
Shelby Hartman – United Daughters of the Confederacy

Call to Order

Rod Graves, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM on September 28, 2009 at the Luray Caverns “Stalactite Café”.

There was no agenda or previous meeting minutes available to be approved.

Old Business

Third Winchester Reenactment and Living History Field Trip: Rod Graves informed the committee that the Civil War Reenactment held on September 11-13 was a great success and wonderful exposure for the Page County Sesquicentennial Committee. He estimated that there were approximately 500 visitors, not including the middle school children, with 320 re-enactors. He felt that all goals that had been set for this event were accomplished, but recommended better signage and more advertising. He did thank Sharon Sampsell for making the sandwich boards with such late notice. He stated that the Civil War Ball in the Caverns went over exceptionally well and that he would place photos, etc. of the ball on Facebook and You-tube. He suggested advertising the Ball next year and added that this Ball was the first since 1910. He also added that he wished that more had participated in the church services as Clyde Jenkins did a wonderful job impersonating John Kline.

Rod expressed his gratitude for the successful school field trip coordinated by Sharon Sampsell and presented numerous letters from middle school students thanking Mr. Graves and Ms. Sampsell for coordinating the living history field trip on 9/11. Sharon Sampsell presented pictures from the field trip and said that 436 children from the two Page County Middle Schools participated. There were 9 sites established which included: 1) Page County Civil War History, 2) Basket-making, 3) Restored barn and freight wagon, 4) Restored Elk Run Meeting House and field hospital, 5) Sutlers, 6) Camp life, 7) Star Fort Earthworks, 8) Artillery drill and 9) Calvary drill. She thanked the volunteer guides (Mary Lou Sours-Jenkins, Laura Butler, Rod and Isabel Graves and Seth and Chelsie Scarborough) and others (Shelby Hartman, Frances Menefee, Frances Yates and Juanita Sedwick) who helped make the event such a success. Rod suggested that maybe next year he would offer passes to Page County School Age children for the

reenactment on Saturday instead of having a field trip on Friday. He felt that having the field trip/living history on Friday was premature in that many re-enactors were not present. Sharon stated that she felt that the living history field trip was well received by the students and the school administration and hoped that we could continue to offer this.

Art stated that he would submit an article about the reenactment in the Civil War News. Rod stated that he hoped to have 1,200 re-enactors in the 2010 event. He said that he hoped that the Page News and Courier would do a walk-up article in 2010 and/or an insert with schedule and map. He also expressed his regrets for not being able to attend and added that he hoped to have the SCV color guard participate next year.

Terry Heder added his support to make the reenactment a two day event in the future. The entire committee agreed that this was a wonderful experience, with great success and enjoyed by all.

Gary Drum suggested having a Civil War parade next year and all thought this would be a grand idea to help bring folks back to the re-enactment site.

Treasurer/Checking Account: Sharon distributed ATM cards and account information to Art and Rod that had been received at her office. Art asked Rod if the Caverns had made a decision on a donation of seed money for the account. Rod said that he would speak with John Graves again but felt that it could be done, but how much did we want. Art asked for \$1,000 and Gary Drum, on behalf of Appalachian Outdoor Adventures would donate \$50 towards the account seed money.

State Sesquicentennial Logo: Sharon presented the appropriate MOU and Logo Use Application for signatures and stated that she was requesting the use of the logo on the Historical Driving Brochure and a local Sesquicentennial committee banner.

New Business

Historical Driving Brochure: Sharon advised that the committee needed to decide specific information regarding the brochure, especially for the grant application. Terry asked how many did we plan on having printed. Sharon said that she would e-mail each member for their suggestion, as well as in-pur on printers to contact. Art asked if we were planning to have any fund-raising events to raise funds. The committee agreed to discuss fund-raising opportunities. Rod Graves said that the Luray Caverns would volunteer to distribute brochures in conjunction with distribution of their on marketing material. He said that this would save the committee approximately \$20,000 in distribution costs. Gary Drum added that they would be happy to help.

Rod asked Terry if Richmond (the State Commission) was aware of what we were doing here in Page County. Sharon stated that Dr. Robertson had requested copies of the Historical Driving Brochure to present to the Commission's executive committee at their next meeting and that she had sent those, plus copies of the Newsletter to him.

Rod and Sharon stated that we needed to be sure we had permission to use the photos in the brochure. (Note: Sharon talked with Karen Riddle after the meeting and it was decided that we are going to take our own photos of each of the sites to avoid any possibility of copyright infringements.

Update from Terry Heder: Terry Heder announced that the a second round of Virginia Tourism Marketing grants were now open with a deadline of November 3 to be received in Richmond. The grant amount has been increased to \$5,000 but it is still a matching grant needing at least three partners. Sharon stated that she would e-mail today specific questions for information from the committee so that she could begin drafting the grant application.

Terry reminded the committee that he and Rod would be the guest speakers and the Chamber's Business Networking Breakfast on October 8, at 7:30 am at the Mimslyn and suggested that our committee members attend. This would be a good opportunity to present our committee to the Chamber members.

Terry indicated that he was pleased with the outcome of the Third Winchester Reenactment and the Living History Middle School Field Trip. He added that Page County continues to be strong in their commemoration efforts.

Terry informed the committee that the SVBF had opened their Harrisonburg orientation center at the Hardesty Higgins House, and that in this was an already established visitor's center and that their would be no extra costs incurred.

Terry reminded the committee of the Annual SVBF meeting on Saturday in Winchester which included a tour of the battlefield and a BBQ.

Terry advised the committee that the Regional Education Committee, of which Sharon is a member, had met and talked about possible educational efforts. He stated that Dr. Robertson's DVD's would be completed by October 1 and would be available to all Virginia schools. However, he stated that the DVDs would not have a teacher's resource and that could possible be an effort of the Regional Education Committee. Sharon suggested that each locality develop educational resources reflective of their own locality. We have detailed state educational resources of major civil war involvement, but in most cases local civil war history resources are not available or taught. Terry added that we need to talk with the schools and find out what they are looking for or need and perhaps develop on-line resources.

Web Page: The entire committee agreed that we needed a local Sesquicentennial web exposure. Sharon and Gary advised that there were many free websites available and that most importantly all sites need to be linked (Caverns, County, Chamber, SVBF, etc. to that site). Rod is going to talk with Chad Painter (Luray Caverns web master) regarding this. Rod stated that he wanted this to be a top priority for discussion at our next regular meeting.

New Event & Fund-Raising Possibility: Sharon Sampsell suggested having a Civil War Days in Page County which included a bus excursion to the 24 historical sites. We could contract with Richards Bus Lines, advertising heavily and charge for tickets. The committee agreed to pursue this and decided on April 10, 2010 as a tentative date. It was also decided to have a boxed lunch and possible BBQ at the Caverns at the end of the bus excursion. Sharon reiterated that it be a county-wide project.

Next Meeting: Sharon advised that we possibly needed to meet again just to discuss the marketing grant application for printing the driving brochure. It was decided to meet on 10/5 with those involved with providing information for the grant application.

The committee agreed to have a regular meeting on October 19 to review the draft application prior to submission.

Note: October 19 agenda items will include the marketing grant application, local committee web-site and April fund-raising event.

Closing

Rod Graves adjourned the meeting at 1:00 PM.