

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



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| Agenda Date: | May 17, 2010 |
| Action Require: | Council Discussion |
| Staff Contacts: | Ric Barrick, Director of Communications |
| Presenter: | Ric Barrick, Director of Communications |
| Title: | City's 250 th Anniversary of Incorporation |

Background:

There are few US cities that can boast that they have been around for 250 years. In 2012 Charlottesville will celebrate that milestone with the recognition of the city's founding in 1762. Charlottesville was formed by charter in 1762 along a trade route called *Three Notched Road* (present day [U.S. Route 250](#)) which led from [Richmond](#) to the [Great Valley](#). The town was named for [Queen Charlotte](#), the [queen consort](#) of King [George III of the United Kingdom](#). It has been suggested that a community celebration of this anniversary is warranted and that the planning should commence as soon as possible to make sure that the events are well publicized, planned, and appropriate for the occasion.

Discussion:

Staff has begun the preliminary research into the celebration to establish some background for Council to consider and several community representatives have been approached to gauge interest in the event. They include Coy Barefoot, author and historian, Nancy Damon, director of the Virginia Festival of the Book, the Charlottesville Albemarle Visitors Bureau, and the Albemarle Historical Society. All have been receptive to participating in different capacities. In addition, several City Councilors have been engaged to brainstorm and provide basics for structuring the celebration going forward.

To assist in the research, two interns from the city-run *Summer Youth Internship Program* completed several weeks of online and phone research to provide some insight into how other communities with similar milestones have handled their community celebrations. Some examples range from commemorative publications to nationally branded and heavily marketed efforts. This basic research will be helpful for us if Council wishes staff to go forward with this community event.

In the discussions with Council members and community partners, the following ideas and considerations were brought up:

- Events should be educational in positive ways--things that will pull people together
events should involve things of interest to and involving as much of the entire community

as possible (not every event, but events that will be enticing to all.) there should be fun events. Given the economy, things should be done in an economical way.

- Events should tie into the initiatives that are already there; events like the film festival, book festival, African-American Cultural Festival, the Sister City Initiatives etc.
- Use young people from schools and organizations the city.
- Partnering with supportive agencies: Music Resource Center, The Bridge, Boys and Girls Club, etc.
- We should make use of the tons of musicians, artists and writers we have here.
- To start things, there should be an advisory committee which "visions" what things could be done. This can also be used to get people on board, and get involvement from many diverse areas of the community.

- This committee could be large, have an initial meeting, and then there could be much smaller and more workable committees to proceed with specific things:
 - Kinds of people who should be included:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Tourism
 - Realtors
 - representatives from big businesses
 - UVA
 - NAACP, Social Sororities and Fraternities Rotary, other clubs with leaders
 - Downtown merchants, Barracks Road merchants, the Corner Churches and the synagogue Organizations who work with newer members of the community, like the Latino community Historical society sports teams city employees-- somebody from the county, too the major performance venues the media, radio, all the weeklies, television
 - Kay Slaughter, Nancy Obrien, Alvin Edwards, David Toscano, Blake Caravati and Kendra Hamilton. Tim Hulbert. UVa.
 - Find people who are action-oriented and people that can bring closure
 - Mark Belisles as a possible committee member
 - Involve the Historic Resources Task Force/Mary Joy Scala
 - Involve the Historical Society

- Programming during Film Festival, Book Festival, African-American Festival, Vegetarian Festival that relates to the celebration.
- Use of Frances' Brand's exhibit on Firsts Tours of the local cemeteries
- Use of historical society for different kinds of tours use the Tourism bureau and others-- for example, there were archaeological digs going somewhere near here that showed Indian settlements.
- Utilizing the Indian Heritage program at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities for background.
- Perhaps have something that ties into revitalization of areas and clean-up.

- Ways to get people out into parts of the community they have not seen before--a scavenger hunt, tours of various neighborhoods something like picnics that bring people together from different parts of the city.
- Exhibits which show Charlottesville then and now. For example: Fry's Spring then and now, Belmont then and now, etc.
- Use public access tv to do some shows on then and now.
- Commissioning a local author, perhaps Coy Barefoot, to publish a history of Charlottesville.
- Bring out all the books that Neighborhood Services has published and make them available in the libraries for people to see, or use them as basis for programming.
- Available publications could be used to make an incredible website, and use of other social media to make our history available to people.
- Contests, but not too many, writing, photography, etc. to involve kids and the city.
- Incorporate celebration into what is already going to make it doable and economically feasible, without tons more work, or perhaps hire a resident to coordinate a year long celebration.
- Do a supplemental publication in the Daily Progress and also a commemorative program that you sell and that benefits a charity.
- Highlight growth of city with development/expansion and big historic events in some sort of time line.
- Tell the story of people who was living at the time of incorporation.
- Visitor's Bureau should participate.
- Invite a distinguished person to participate who might bring an historic perspective.
- Involve children/students at all levels.
- Find some sponsorship so the City can share in the funding.
- Create a video project leading up to celebration.
- Church involvement should be encouraged.
- Chamber of Commerce involvement should be encouraged.
- City staff key but should be citizen focused.

Budgetary Impact:

Staff research into other city year-long celebrations demonstrated that a budget was necessary to fully implement a successful initiative. As part of the FY 2009 Year End Appropriation, \$50,000 was set aside for the 250th Celebration. Additional private funding would be sought for publishing of a commemorative history of Charlottesville book.

Recommendations:

Staff recommends that Council approve the allocation of monies for planning the festival out of next year's Council reserve and create a citizen-based committee to begin planning this celebration with staff, Council, business and citizen support.

Attachments:

None