

RFCA General Membership Meeting

October 15, 2020

Minutes

(Zoom Meeting)

Introduction

The October 15, 2020, General Membership Meeting was held via Zoom Call due to the Coronavirus Stay-At-Home Executive Order issued by Governor Northam. Allan Robertson, President, called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The minutes from the May 21, 2020, General Membership Meeting were approved.

Business Meeting

Budget:

John Richie reviewed the FY21 budget with the membership and advised that the association is currently in the black with almost \$2800, however, there will be a projected loss in FY21. The printing of *The Farmer*, until this year with the pandemic, has been printed at the Key School for \$233/issue. Going to a commercial printer will cost more, perhaps three times as much, and we anticipate that the association will have less incoming revenue. However, our larger reserve fund should be able to handle the expenses for the coming FY. Katherine Craig, Ad Sales Manager, advised that revenue from ad sales will be about \$3800. The association will also save about \$1200 by deferring the annual BBQ from 2020 to 2021.

The membership discussed the possibility of raising the dues from \$15 to \$20. For the past 2-3 years, the association has been able to add \$2,000 to its reserve funds and decreased some of its expenses, for example, by firing the landscaper and doing the work with volunteers. The membership agreed that perhaps it is not necessary to raise the dues at this time. Allan mentioned that Civic Association Membership has gone down nationally. Scott mentioned that Block Captain participation has also gone down; however, Steve Beste's Door Hanger campaign for membership and the PayPal option to pay dues may help raise membership during these days of social distancing. Scott mentioned a booth will be set up at the school on Election Day to sell more memberships. Greg Ferrara will be able to sell memberships at the Boy Scout Hog Fest.

The FY20-21 was passed by the membership unanimously.

Announcements:

New RFCA President: Allan introduce the new RFCA President, Marcie Winitt. He announced he had resigned after the election in May 2021, and that the Board approved of Marcie's placement at the September 2021 Board Meeting, as specified in the By Laws.

Marcie introduced herself and said she and her family have lived in Ravensworth for seven years, has two daughters aged 11 and 5, that her husband works as a CPA for the government, and she works for Capital One.

Linda Beste thanked Allan for his many years of working as President of RFCA. Allan expressed great pleasure at the opportunity to serve, and he will continue to be involved as much as possible.

Boy Scouts: Greg mentioned there will be a Boy Scout sponsored Hog Fest on October 17, 2020, 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM at the Pool parking lot. Hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs and pulled pork sandwiches will be sold. It will be drive through pick-up for social distancing purposes.

November Food Drive: A neighborhood Food Drive will be held during the month of November with donations going to ECHO. Donations may be left in a drop box at the back door of the Community of Christ Church. Ginger and Greg will double check with Deb Van Heest, of the Church, to firm up arrangements.

Feature Presentation:

Mary Lipsey, Ravensworth Farm Resident

History of Ravensworth Farm and Surrounding area.

The high points of her presentation include such facts as:

The Algonquin were the first Native Americans to settle here. They were hunter and gatherers. “Accotink” translates to “at the foot of the hill.”

William Fitzhugh emigrated from England to America in 1671. He owned 22,000 acres of land stretching from Lake Barcroft to Stafford. He was an absentee landlord with 203 slaves and tenant farmers. In 1783 the tract was divided among five grandsons. The Ravensworth Plantation consisted of 8000 acres, 500 of which were used to farm and raise livestock and sheep. The area covered: Springfield, N. Springfield, Bristow, Ravensworth Farm, and West Springfield.

In addition to Ravensworth Manor, two other estates were built nearby: Ossin Hill, across Braddock Road, and Oak Hill on Wakefield Chapel Road, open to the public once a year.

Mr. Fitzhugh’s great, great grandson, also named William, lived on Ravensworth Manor, raising tobacco. The farm was the 4th largest in Fairfax County. His son, William H. Fitzhugh, died childless. His estate went to his niece, Mary Custis Lee (who was married to Robert E. Lee), on the death of his wife Anna. His 200 slaves were freed upon his death as stipulated in his will.

At the time of the Civil War, Anna Fitzhugh was living at Ravensworth Manor and hosted Mary Custis Lee. Robert E. Lee then moved Mrs. Lee from the Manor to protect Mrs. Fitzhugh.

During the war, the Union Army and General Winfield Scott provide safety to Mrs. Fitzhugh (who was against the war). The army agreed to pay her \$3/cord of wood if she

stayed loyal to the Union. Unable to prove her loyalty due to visits from the Confederates, she was denied payment after the war.

During the Civil War, the Confederates burned down the Accotink Railroad Bridge Trestle.

During Reconstruction dairy farming became a major occupation, public elections were held, and general stores opened. Ravensworth had formal gardens and peacocks on its property.

Ravensworth Manor passed down through the descendants of Mrs. Lee. In 1926 the Mansion burned down due to arson and a farmhouse was built on the mansion's foundation. It is believed that the son of the land manager (Russel Wood) burned down the mansion to cover his theft of wine from the wine cellar. The Alexandria Fire Department responded since there was no water on the property to extinguish the fire. The loss was \$100,000 although some paintings and furniture were saved due to the slow burning fire.

The property was inherited by Lee's six children. The last of the Lee daughters lived there until the 1950s. The property was sold for development in 1957. In December 1959, the first home sales were made. The homes sold for \$16,000-\$21,000.

Dulles Airport: On June 13, 1951, an announcement was made that the Burke area was to become an airport. At the time, Burke was a ghost town, but protests forced the change to build the airport at Chantilly. 600 acres were reserved for Burke Lake Park.

Rebel Hill now Braddock Road, was a two-lane road with a steep hill going from Ravensworth to Southhampton. The hill was so steep, cars would slide off into the ravine (Washington Post, March 29, 1962) during bad weather.

The Beltway was completed in 1964.

Lake Accotink went from a stream to a lake and was home to a Yacht Club from 1970-1982. Today there is an annual cardboard boat regatta.

Reference: www.braddockheritage.org

Adjourn: 8:57 PM