

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

June 21, 2012

Middletown Town Hall Council Chambers  
Middletown, Virginia

- I) General Introductions
- II) Review of Meeting Notes from March 15, 2012
- III) Discussions continued from March 15, 2012, meeting:
  - Visitor Contact Station
  - Signage
- IV) Meeting Schedule: 2012–2013
- V) Old Business
- VI) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Diann Jacox, Designated Federal Official (DFO); Carl Bernhards, town of Middletown; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Nick Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Rick Redmond, town of Strasburg

Commission members absent: John Adamson, Belle Grove; Mary Bowser, private landowner; Patrick Farris, Warren County and chair; Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia; Pam Sheets, Shenandoah County

Others in attendance: Eric Campbell, NPS; John Christiansen, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Gerry Roberts Gunn, private citizen; Paul Martenson, intern with U.S. Representative Frank Wolf; Sarah Mauck, town of Strasburg; Elizabeth McClung, Belle Grove; and Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf.

In the absence of Chair Patrick Farris, the meeting was called to order by Superintendent Diann Jacox at 8:33 a.m. Jacox introduced the new town of Strasburg representative, Rick Redmon; he replaces Sarah Mauck. General introductions were made by members and all others present.

In the absence of a quorum the approval or amendment of the meeting notes was put off until the next commission meeting.

Eric Campbell reported on both the state of the exhibits and the leasing of a 2,000-square-foot space for the interim visitor contact station (VCS). The Space Management Office in Washington, D.C., is working on the terms of the lease and when negotiations are complete the location will be announced. No information can be provided until all aspects of the lease arrangements are completed and the document signed by the parties.

The exhibits have been underway since late winter, with the interim interpretive plan on which all key partners worked and approved, serving as the basic direction for the contractor. The draft plan from the contractor was lacking in direction and content, nor was it compelling or focused. Reworking based on comments from the park staff, from the key partners, and from the regional interpretation office means that the schedule will be adjusted. Right now the park is aiming at installation in late winter or early spring 2013. The lease on the space will be for two years with three, one-year options for renewal—a total of five years at the maximum. The thinking is that the exhibits will take up 1,000 to 1,200 square feet of space with the remainder being used for restrooms, office space, and an area where school groups or bus tours can be accommodated.

It was the sense of the commission members present that the schedule should be as aggressive as possible, so that the VCS could be opened this year if possible to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the park's establishment in December 2002. All felt, too, that it would be good to have Representative Frank Wolf attend the opening of the VCS.

Rob Nieweg reported on the contract that the National Trust and Belle Grove, Inc., proposed to initiate with Frazier and Associates. The aim is to (1) understand the signage needs and brand identity and (2) propose specific signs that will move visitors off the highways to the individual sites. Of the \$10,000 total estimated for the project, the National Trust has put up \$5,000. At present the contract is on hold because the NPS is pursuing a contract with Dennis, Konetzka Design Group. This contract seeks to draft guidelines about how the NPS and the partners would work with one another on signage and branding. They will look at partners' logos and signage needs. The goal is to come up with an approach that will create a family look rather than six different approaches to the common problem. Admittedly this is a difficult undertaking, but it is one that must be done. The deadline for getting contracts into the acquisition offices was June 15, 2012, and that deadline was met.

This contract cannot include specifications and cost estimates—that is beyond the scope of work and the present resources of the park. The park and partners will also need to work closely with VDOT, which has very strict regulations about signs that would be mounted in the department’s right-of-way.

John Christiansen spoke about the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation’s and the Town of Strasburg’s wish to have signs for their facilities on both the northbound and southbound lanes of I-81. The price for these signs given to them by VDOT is in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 range. In addition, they are required to sign an annual maintenance contract with VDOT’s vendor.

Rob Nieweg reflected that what is missing from these proposals is an introductory plan that would get something off the shelf and installed on land owned by one of the partners.

Jacox stated that she heard everyone’s frustration and noted that she shared those feelings as well. She would see what she could do. It all comes down to a competition for dollars, currently there are no dollars available for sign fabrication and installation.

Everyone agreed that the 150th anniversary of the battle of Cedar Creek, September 2014, is a date that everyone should remain mindful in any planning that is being done for the park.

Jacox talked about the meeting schedule for 2012/2013, which must be advertised in the Federal Register. She began by saying that she would like to see if the September meeting could be in October to coincide with the initial site visit of Dennis/Konetzka. That depends on the contract’s being signed. That meeting will be in Front Royal. The remaining meetings will be:

December 20, 2012	Strasburg
March 21, 2013	Middletown
June 20, 2013	Front Royal

### Old Business

None

## New Business

Several commission members stated that a goal worth pursuing would be to combine the tenth anniversary celebrations and the opening of the VCS.

Jacox announced that Tonia Horton has left the park and taken a position at Independence National Historical Park. We propose to fill her position in the next fiscal year with possibly a historian, landscape architect, archeologist, or other cultural resources professional.

The date of the next meeting will be announced when Jacox knows about the date of the initial site visit by the Dennis/Konetzka Design Group team.

Jacox adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

## Handouts

- Agenda
- 2012-2013 draft calendar
- Meeting Notes for March 15, 2012