

Virginia American Revolution 250 (VA250) Commission
African American Leadership Advisory Council
Fort Monroe Visitor & Education Center
Friday, March 29, 2024
10AM

Meeting Notes

Members present:

The Honorable Mamie E. Locke, *Chair*
Dr. Edward L. Ayers (*Virtual*)
Rev. Joe Ellison (*Virtual*)
Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee (*Virtual*)
The Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn
Connie Matthews Harshaw
The Honorable Martin D. Brown (*Virtual*)
The Honorable L. Louise Lucas (*Virtual*)
Professor Ervin Jordan (*Virtual*)
Patrice Lewis
Rita McClenny
Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander
Felix Sarfo-Kantanka, Jr. (*Virtual*)
Phyllis Terrell
Dr. Vanessa Thaxton-Ward
Cainan Townsend (*Virtual*)
James Warren (*Virtual*)
Major General Cedric T. Wins (*Virtual*)

Invited speakers and VA250 Staff:

The Honorable G. Glenn Oder, *Executive Director, Fort Monroe Authority*
Carly Fiorina, *VA250 National Honorary Chair*
Cheryl Wilson, *Executive Director, VA250 Commission*
Katherine Dabney
John Hennessey (*Virtual*)
Korin Taddei

Chair's Remarks and Charge to the Advisory Council

Senator Mamie Locke convened the second meeting of the Council, reiterating the charge of the Advisory Council in support of the VA250 Commission. She encouraged open dialogue at this meeting, leveraging the discussion questions in the agenda to inform the "next steps." These next steps will help ensure that from exhibits, to programming, and events on Juneteenth to July 4th there is greater connection and education.

Welcome Remarks from Fort Monroe

The Honorable G. Glenn Oder, Executive Director of the Fort Monroe Authority welcomed everyone to the Fort Monroe Visitor & Education Center. He shared a presentation about the history of Fort Monroe, overview of the partnership between the Authority, National Park Service, and the City of Hampton, and a presentation of the design and plans for the 1619 African Landing Memorial that will commemorate the landing of the first Africans in Virginia at Point Comfort.

More information on Fort Monroe can be found at www.fortmonroe.org, and the 1619 African Landing Memorial at www.1619landing.org

Remarks from VA250 National Honorary Chair

Carly Fiorina expressed her admiration for Senator Locke, citing her leadership as guiding us toward our principal goals to Educate, Engage, and Inspire through the 250th commemoration. She expressed that this is a generational opportunity to allow all Americans to rediscover and remember why we are a nation. In knowing who we are, we must understand and talk about our past so that we can move forward together. Discovering and telling every story that matters to this Nation is important.

Senator Locke recommended that July 4, 2025 be held at Fort Monroe in partnership with the City of Hampton. This would be the center piece of a three-year story we tell Americans. What happened here at Fort Monroe defined our Nation.

Cheryl Wilson gave a summary overview of the plans for July 4, 2024 in Richmond at Capital Square. With the theme “Towards a More Perfect Union: A Celebration of Freedom and Our Nation’s Founding” this year’s celebration will highlight human expression of all cultures of Virginia.

Key Points of Discussion

July 4th Programming: What are the cultural, artistic, and musical acts that could be included in the programming? Who are the speakers? What would you like to see highlighted?

- Carly suggested BK Fulton’s idea of hosting a culturally diverse drumming performance.
- Engage with a production company to assist in planning, filtering ideas, and crafting an immersive experience for July 4th attendees. Create a story over time, with acts I, II, and III over the three years of the commemoration.
- Integrate Lumpkin’s Jail in Richmond into the itinerary and tours, alongside other significant landmarks in the area.
- Look to other established Virginia events, conferences, and places to inform or and enhance with VA250 programming. The Big Dipper Innovation Summit and Tom Tom Festival were suggested.
- Prioritize engagement with schools by creating educational materials tailored to each grade level, ensuring accessibility and relevance.
- Create a framework that delivers a shared experience for all. What is the narrative that brings history, heritage, and culture together, keeping in mind the takeaway messages?
- Continue to look to local communities for guidance and input on programming.
- Ensure telling of all stories, from the founding children of the Bray School, the enslaved, those who self-emancipated, and free blacks who had agency, such as Sam Harris, who sent his child to Harvard to study neuroscience.

Next Steps

- VA250 to add links to 1619landing.org and Fort Monroe events to the website.
- Continue exploring plans for hosting July 4, 2025 event at Fort Monroe.
- Send ideas for who and what should be included in VA250 programming, exhibits, and events to VA250
- Forward events and programs happening in your communities to be included on VA250 calendar
- Next meeting will be virtual only on May 21, 2024 at 10am