



Historic Vienna, Inc.

131 Church Street NE ♦ P.O. Box 53 ♦ Vienna, VA 22183

March 24, 2019

Laurie DiRocco, Mayor, and
Town Council Members
Town of Vienna
Vienna Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna, Virginia 22180

Re: 2018 Annual Report of Historic Vienna, Inc.

Pursuant to the lease between Historic Vienna, Inc. (HVI), lessee, and the Town of Vienna, lessor, this letter constitutes the narrative report of HVI's activities during calendar year 2018. It was a good year of activities in support of HVI's mission, to:

- Preserve and promote Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation and interpretation of historically significant places, events and persons,
- Educate the public through permanent and revolving exhibits, outreach programs and publications, and
- Enhance a spirit of community through an awareness of Vienna's past.

Our **museum exhibits** this year were again well received. The HVI museum committee created a unique exhibit *The Home Front and the Great War*. They also continued the series on women's suffrage with a hallway exhibit that looked at *The Women's Movement through Cartoons*.

The **used book sale** fundraiser in the basement, named the *Used Book Cellar*, has turned a corner. After two-plus years operating in the Store Cellar, the public has openly welcomed the book cellar as a great opportunity for purchasing fabulous inexpensive books. Shoppers frequently make a beeline to the used book area. Special Town events, such as Viva Vienna, Oktoberfest, Church Street Stroll, and multiple Chillin' on Church have also lured visitors to visit the Freeman Store and encourages shoppers to explore the Cellar.

We continued fundraising activity of offering several **English-style afternoon teas** in the parlor and dining room. Our volunteer chefs created and served beautiful and delicious teas, which attendees enjoyed while listening to programs on the Women's Suffrage movement, on the Language of Flowers, and on British Holiday Traditions. These teas continue to attract new visitors to the Freeman Store and Museum.

The **Freeman Store gift shop** continued to focus on new decorative arts and Vienna and Virginia themed souvenirs, and on enhancing the experience of the old fashioned country store. Our two engaged and engaging storekeepers, Patti Bentley and Susan Fay, have an enthusiasm for history and a love of community. Besides encouraging guests to visit the museum exhibits and learn about Vienna's history, they have transformed the retail and museum experience with their friendliness and their beautiful displays. We have 20 new merchandise items and 11 new vendors this year.

Annual events enhancing our community and awareness of Vienna's past such as the Old Fashioned Easter Egg Roll, Walk on the Hill, Viva Vienna, Stories Songs and Sprinklers, Oktoberfest, the Halloween Parade, Church Street Stroll, and Santa visits, went well and were well attended. Chillin' on Church Fridays, June through September, were very successful.

The 1897 **Little Library** continues to open on first Sundays when the Store is open, and for special events, and is available to small groups for meetings. We have an expanded hand-out about its history. Our volunteer and Vienna resident Dr. Robert Amsler continues to refine the catalog of the contents of 5,513 books and to develop a detailed history of the collection.

Visitation expanded dramatically since we began to implement new initiatives identified in our 2012 five year plan. We doubled the number of visitors to the Freeman Store and Museum, to over 13,500 in 2018. Attendance at the Little Library soared since we have been able to open it more frequently. In fiscal year 2012 we had 270 visitors at the Library, compared to over 1,600 in 2018.

Board members responded as usual throughout the year to genealogical and historical inquiries, and attended quarterly Civil War Trails meetings in Northern Virginia. Tours of the Freeman Store continue to be sought after for school groups, scouts, history buffs, antiques clubs, and genealogists.

As we approach the anniversary of the closing of the **trestle bridge**, we are glad that the Town was able to secure a grant so that the historic connection of the Freeman Store to the railroad is restored and we can again welcome wheelchair users to the store. W&OD Bike Path users will enjoy this special access as well, as it echoes the access of generations of railroad users.

We thank the Town and especially the Department of Parks and Recreation for all that you do, including partnering with us on special events, maintaining the building and technology infrastructure, and providing funds to offset payroll costs. We could not accomplish all that we do without this support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Anne G. Stuntz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anne" being the most prominent.

Anne G. Stuntz
President

Enclosure: Historic Vienna, Inc., 2018 Summary of Activities

Historic Vienna, Inc.
2018 Summary of Activities

January and February 2018

- The Freeman Store was open by appointment only, as usual, to allow for maintenance, cleaning, museum exhibit work, inventory, and other projects. Vienna Paint donated gallons of paint, and HVI hired painters to paint the exhibit rooms and hallways and stairways and part of the basement.
- The Museum Committee, with support from the entire Board, developed and installed our upstairs exhibit celebrating the 100th anniversary of World War I (The Great War). Images and objects were solicited and collected to tell the story of the war, the home front, and even the influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919. Specific recognition was given to the 73 men from Vienna who served, and those among the group who died in the service.
- The hallway museum exhibit, *Women's Rights through Cartoons*, was the third in the five-year series of exhibits chronicling the struggle for women's rights. The exhibit featured more than 50 political cartoons and images collected from newspapers, postcards, and other publications from the 1850s onward that made a statement about what people were really thinking about at the time. The cartoons focused on the right to vote as well as other women's rights for which Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought, including rights related to parental custody, property ownership, employment and income, divorce, economic health of the family, and birth control.
- HVI installed cabinets in the former apartment bathroom, completing its transformation to a kitchen-like storage room.
- The Town's electrician installed track lighting in the kitchen, in the bathroom hallway, and in an exhibit space reclaimed from a storage closet.

March 2018

- The World War I exhibit opened with an enthusiastic response, and continued straight through the end of December.
- A late 19th century Franklin stove that could not be used in our exhibits and had been stored in the basement of the Freeman Store for decades was sold to a collector-restorer.
- Various collections of books and photographs were donated and added to HVI's historic collection.
- At the Spring Membership meeting on March 20, a program on World War I was delivered by Jon Vrana. HVI presented its Heritage Preservation Award to Victor Mendes for the restoration and reuse of the Old Stone House for Vienna Vintner.
- The Old Fashioned Easter Egg Roll was enjoyed by many children and their families.
- Mike Berger's Wilmar Place aircraft lookout tower model and its case were exhibited at Town Hall.

April 2018

- Five Hills Garden Club rededicated its Blue Star Memorial By-way Marker on April 28, at Centennial Park, with refreshments at the Freeman Store and Museum.
- The annual Walk on the Hill at Windover Heights included a Hickory Grove concert, Vienna Community Band performance, the Green Expo, Ayr Hill Garden Club's flower show, and refreshments. Many thanks to Carey Sienicki for running this important annual event.
- Various historic items throughout the Freeman Store were rearranged and relabeled to enhance their appeal and better describe their purpose. A large butcher shop scale was donated and assumed a prominent place in the exhibits on the first floor.

May 2018

- HVI hosted Ayr Hill Garden Club's plant sale on the side lawn.
- The Mayor @ Your Service meeting on May 8, at the Community Center, was a showing of the movie *American, Vienna*, with remarks by Mike Berger. It runs for 94 minutes. (The Town of Vienna, Virginia portion comes in at the 33rd minute and lasts for six minutes.)

- The “War Garden” was planted with vegetables and cover crops.
- At Viva Vienna the Little Library was also open and received over 500 visitors.
- The security system was upgraded with additional sensors and a wireless doorbell in the basement.
- There was a joint HVI/Patrick Henry program on May 17 at Patrick Henry Library titled *Helen Mondloch Brings Readers’ Theater to American History and Literature*.
- There were two sold-out *Language of Flowers* teas.

June 2018

- Stories, Songs, and Sprinklers was held Wednesdays from June to August, organized by Sylvia Taylor. Stories and songs under the oak tree by Nancy Bronez were followed by sprinklers on the Town Green.
- An African American Historical Van Tour of Vienna: Sylvia Taylor and Gloria Runyon reprised the popular tours they created for First Baptist Church of Vienna’s 150th anniversary year.
- Chillin’ on Church was held June 15 from 6:30 to 9:30.
- Roof leaks were repaired, and interior repair and painting in the parlor were done by Town staff.

July 2018

- Chillin’ on Church was held July 20 from 6:30 to 9:30.
- We held our first Teddy Bear Picnic on July 14 with 21 children in attendance.

August 2018

- There was a Book Signing and Talk on August 11 by 95 year old George Atkisson. His novel *The Chalice and the Stirrup Cup* is about growing up in Vienna.
- Ayr Hill Garden Club held an event to make herbal vinegars on August 11 at the Freeman Store front porch.
- The Freeman Store and Museum was open for a Saturday evening Friends of W&OD race festivities.
- Chillin’ on Church was held on August 17 from 6:30 to 9:30.

September 2018

- On September 8 we held a Vintage Fair, consisting of an antique sale and appraisal event and local vendors. After a hiatus, we again offered an appraisal day for the public. We had three professional appraisers who offered 10-minute evaluations and enjoyed pricing treasures in numerous categories. All time slots were sold out for this popular feature and attracted many curious passersby. A mix of vendors, merchants, crafters, and demonstrators participated outside; HVI involved Church Street retailers and also welcomed Vienna food vendors. There were old fashioned children’s games and hand cranked ice cream. Funds were raised and fun was had until rain washed it out.
- American Legion’s 9/11 ceremony was held at the Freeman Store side yard.
- A proposal for a Phase I Archaeological Survey of the area at and around the Freeman Store was offered by archeology student Yvonne French.
- Chillin’ on Church was held on September 21 from 6:30 to 9:30.
- West End Cemetery – a narrow strip on the neighboring subdivided property was scanned by ground penetrating radar to make sure that there were no graves on that part of private property.
- The *Suffrage Tea* on September 29 sold out. The event focused on World War I.

October 2018

- During Oktoberfest, on October 6, the Store, Museum, and Little Library opened all day. Nearly 300 visitors enjoyed the Little Library.
- Front porch activities such as apple peeling and applesauce making were held during the Town Green Halloween event.
- HVI’s float with its beautiful model of the Little Library was adapted to the parade’s theme, *Celebrating Great Cities of the World*, using our own theme, *All the Viennas in the World*. We carried signs of the 20 other Viennas (17 in the U. S.) with distances from our Vienna.

- At the Fall Membership meeting, Cameron Rittenhouse-Smith, a knowledgeable book dealer and HVI member, spoke about rare books, *Finding Treasures on Your Bookshelves: Rare & Valuable Books*.
- HVI held a thank you lunch for Town of Vienna staff liaisons at Freeman Store.
- The 2018 HVI Volunteer of the Year Award was given to Patricia Kratzer.
- The Vienna National Bank ornament by Rachael Peden became available.
- 30 James Madison High School ESOL students came for a bilingual tour.

November 2018

- The Freeman Store, Little Library, and Caboose were decorated for the holidays by the Ayr Hill Garden Club.
- The annual Church Street Holiday Stroll, November 26, was again organized by HVI and the Town and local merchants. The Freeman Store and Little Library were open during the Stroll. There were musical performances, a petting zoo, and bonfires. The decorations from Ayr Hill Garden Club were beautiful. The Christmas tree was donated by the Optimists. Santa Claus visited with children on the front porch.
- 307 Cabin Rd. SW, Vienna, a circa 1937 log cabin, is to be demolished upon planning permission to subdivide. This owner will allow photography and measurements before demolition, and hopefully metal detecting. A plaque is being considered.

December 2018

- Santa paid two more visits in addition to his appearance at Church Street Stroll.
- There were two *British Holiday Tea and Parlor Talks*; both sold out.

HVI Board members continued to be active in other areas, such as

American Legion Post 180
 American Legion Post 180 Auxiliary
 Ayr Hill Garden Club, local churches, scouting
 Burke Historical Society
 Civil War Trails Marker Program
 Fairfax County Animal Shelter
 Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association
 Fairfax County History Commission
 Falls Church Military History Group
 Flint Hill Cemetery Association
 Friends of the Virginia Room
 Historical Society of Fairfax County
 Oakton Library Friends
 Vienna Business Association