

**ACTION ITEM
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

DATE April 1, 2008

TO Board of Supervisors
FROM Timothy J Baroody *TJB*
Director of Economic Development
ISSUE Support Nomination and Funding of Aquia Landing for Inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program

RECOMMENDATION N/A

BUDGET IMPACT N/A

ATTACHMENTS (2)

- [1] Memo dated 03-25-08
- [2] Reso/Ord/Proc # R08-214
- []
- [] Reso/Ord/Proc #
- []
- [] Reso/Ord/Proc #

REVIEW County Administrator's Office *[Signature]*
 Legal _____
 Budget _____

- Consent Agenda**
- Discussion Item**
- New Business**
- Other Business**
- Presentation**
- Public Hearing**
- Unfinished Business**

PRESENTATION BY Tim Baroody
Director of Economic Development

ELECTION DISTRICT Aquia

Memo

Department of Economic Development

To: Anthony Romanello
From: Tim Baroody
Date: March 25, 2008
Subject: Underground Railroad Nomination – *Aquia Landing*

Background Information

Aquia Landing has a documented link to the historic Underground Railroad. Before the railroad line bridged Aquia Creek, Aquia Landing was the terminus of the R F & P Railroad (Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad) and a steam ship landing for passengers heading north. This location became a prominent point to which enslaved African Americans journeyed in pursuit freedom.

The Union Army's arrival to Falmouth created a "Gateway to Freedom." In 1862, there was an estimated exodus of over 10,000 African American freedom seekers riding the train from Falmouth Station and Fredericksburg to Aquia Landing, according to the "Official Records of the War of the Rebellion." For these reasons it is believed that Stafford County should pursue National Park Service National Underground Railroad (UGRR) status for historic Aquia Landing.

Background and Eligibility for National Park Service Designation

Currently, there are only 13 designated UGRR Network to Freedom Sites in Virginia. Stafford County is on that list, represented by The Moncure Conway House site in south Stafford. With Aquia Landing's designation, Stafford would be the only county in the Commonwealth with two such sites. This would be an important factor in the ongoing work to create an UGRR Network to Freedom Trail nationwide.

Designated as part of the National UGRR Network to Freedom Program, the site would be eligible for additional grants. This designation would also strengthen Stafford's involvement in the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateway Program and the Potomac Heritage Trail system. The designation would bring additional positive exposure to Stafford. This would not only preserve our heritage, but also create the potential for additional heritage tourism traveler spending in the county.

Designation as a National UGRR Network to Freedom site would not bring any additional federal requirements or burdens to Stafford County.

Nomination to this program involves proving the significance of this transportation route in supporting documented escapes. Application preparation would entail a combination of

- 1 Historical research
- 2 Primary source documentation
- 3 Mapping
- 4 Photography
- 5 Interpretation (i.e. interpretive sign, informational brochure, educational programs)

- 6 Application to the National Register (*optional, side benefit*)
- 7 Archaeological survey (*optional side benefit*)

Timeline

Though there is a great deal of history about Civil War activity in Stafford, little is known about the UGRR. Detailed research will be necessary in order to prove Aquia Landing's use as an UGRR site. Research would be conducted through electronic records as well as in the physical archives at the following locations: Library of Congress (Washington D C), Library of Congress Freedmen's Records (College Park, MD), Library of Virginia (Richmond), University of Mary Washington and the Central Rappahannock Regional Library – Virginiana Room (Fredericksburg), White Oak Museum & Stafford Research Center, and at the Stafford Courthouse.

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing how quickly the necessary resources will be found. At minimum, research will take 30-60 days. My recommendation is to document 3-5 cases of significant UGRR use of Aquia Landing within 60 days. With that in mind, the following is a suggested timeline:

Apr 1-30	Research
May 1-31	Research & Site Photography
Jun 1-30	Complete Nomination Application
	Draft Interpretive Sign & Informational Brochure
Jul 1	Editors Review
Jul 15	Submit Nomination Application

Proposed Partnerships

The local National Park Service (Fredericksburg Spotsylvania National Military Park), headquartered at Chatham, has a great need for this UGRR historical information about Stafford and the region. NPS staff members have identified a volunteer and are presently seeking a graduate student who may be interested in helping conduct the research to outline such facts. NPS may be able to provide reimbursements for travel expenses to these researchers. Additionally, we will work with others, including Mr. Norman Schools – owner of the Moncure Conway House, the Stafford County Historical Society, and Stafford County staff members to accomplish the task.

Budget

Stafford's UGRR history needs to be formally documented. The actual amount of research-associated resources cannot be determined in advance, the costs for this process can only be estimated. However, the large, necessary expenses can be identified with relative accuracy:

Nomination Process Expenses (Apr-Jun 08)	\$4,500.00
Post-Nomination Expenses (Jan-May 09)	\$8,200.00
(To include brochure development and signage)	

Funding will come from existing FY2008 Tourism Fund allocations.

Action

It is therefore requested that the Stafford Board of Supervisors support the nomination of Aquia Landing for inclusion in the National UGRR Network to Freedom Program by passing a resolution to authorize the County Administrator to apply for designation. Upon passage, staff led by the Department of Economic Development – with assistance from Megan Orient - will begin this process immediately, working toward the goal of application submission on or before July 15, 2008.

PROPOSED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF STAFFORD
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, Stafford County Administration Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 1st day of April, 2008

MEMBERS

VOTE

George H. Schwartz, Chairman
M. S. "Joe" Brito, Vice Chairman
Harry E. Crisp II
Mark Dudenhefer
Paul V. Milde III
Cord A. Sterling
Robert "Bob" Woodson

On motion of _____, seconded by _____, which carried by a vote of _____, the following was adopted

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT AN APPLICATION SEEKING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DESIGNATION OF AQUIA LANDING AS AN OFFICIAL NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM SITE

WHEREAS, Stafford County recognizes its key role in America's formation and history, and seeks to document and preserve our diverse heritage, and

WHEREAS, Aquia Landing served as a critical commercial trading link between the northern and southern states, and an important passenger connection for the traveling public during the 18th and 19th centuries, and

WHEREAS, Aquia Landing is known to be a point of departure for African American slaves seeking freedom to the north – an important link in the Underground Railroad Network, and

WHEREAS, Designation of Aquia Landing as an official National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site would preserve and promote Stafford's heritage, and make available new tourism marketing and grant opportunities, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors supports the pursuit of this designation for Aquia Landing in honor of those who sought freedom at its shore,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 1st day of April 2008, that the County Administrator be and he hereby is authorized to apply for designation of Aquia Landing, as well as support funding, advance, and adequately promote the site upon designation, to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program

AJR TJB