



**Thomas Balch Library  
Advisory Commission  
Agenda  
7PM – 14 April 2021**

- Call to Order
- Electronic Participation and Recording Statement
- Approval of Minutes – 10 March 2021
- Guest: Susan Berry Hill, Director Planning and Zoning – Legacy Leesburg Town Plan
- Guest: Donna Torraca, Chair, Commission on Public Art, Town of Leesburg – Historic marker – Potters Field
- Library Director’s Report – April 2021 (for March activity)
- Friends of TBL, Inc. Report – Don Cooper, President of the Friends
- TBL Foundation Report – Alexandra S. Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer, TBL Foundation Board
- Old/Continuing Business:
  - Library Strategic Plan - Catalog Project Discussion/updates-Gressitt/Hershman
  - Historic marker for Leesburg’s Potters Field – Pellicano/Jewell
  - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration
  - Election of Officers
- New Business: Boards and Commission Portal
  - Legacy Leesburg Town Plan
  - Virtual/Hybrid meetings
- Comments from Councilmanic/Commissioners

**Next Advisory Commission meeting Wednesday, 12 May 2021 @ 7PM.**

All Town Council, Board and Commission meetings are recorded and may be found on the Town’s Web site at [www.leesburgva.gov](http://www.leesburgva.gov).

If you require any type of reasonable accommodation, as a result of a physical, sensory, or mental disability, to attend and/or participate in this meeting, please contact Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director at 703-737-7195 or [Balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:Balchlib@leesburgva.gov). Three days advance notice is requested.

TBL ADVISORY COMMISSION ATTENDANCE SHEET FY 2021												
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
<b>NAME:</b>												
Bohanon, Donna (2020) appointed 1/2017 -1/2021 [Campbell]	P	N	A	P	N	A	C	X	X	X	X	X
Hershman, James H Jr Chair (2022) appointed 7/1994 [Martinez]	P	N	P	P	N	P	C	N	P			
Jewell, Thomas, Vice Chair, 2017-18 (2022) appointed 5/2015 [Fox]	C	N	A	A	N	A	C	N	A			
Kinne, Mandy (2022) appointed 7/2019 [Steinberg]	P	N	P	P	N	P	C	N	V			
Mattina, Adrian (2024) appointed 1/2021 [Cummings]	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	N	V			
Pellicano, Mary (2024) appointed 1/2017 [Reid/Thiel/Bagdasarian]	P	N	P	P	N	A	C	N	P			
Schonberger, Martha (2024) appointed 9/2017 [Dunn/Nacy]Vice chair 2019	P	N	C	P	N	P	C	N	V			
Woolard, Russ (2022) appointed 1/2017 [Burk]	P	N	P	P	N	P	C	N	V			
Cummings, Zachary, Council Manic as of 1/2021									V			
Campbell, Ron Councilmanic as of 3/2018-12/2020												
Umstatt, Kristen C., Board of Supervisors from 1/2016												
P = Present												
A = Absent												
C = Covid												
N = No Meeting (2/10/21 meeting cancelled due to weather)												
V= Virtually present												
X = Not Member												
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>												
Alexandra S Gressitt, Library Director	P	N	P	P	N	P	C	N	P			
Don Cooper, FTBL President	C											
Susan Berry Hill, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning (ToL)												
Donna Toracca, Chair Commission on Public Art												
James Roberts, former Commissioner	P											
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>			

**Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission**  
**10 March 2021**  
**Library Director's Report**

**Activities:**

**Exhibits:** Beth Wilson who was scheduled to present a weaving exhibit (The Barefoot Weaver) in March, withdrew after publication of the newsletter so, for March in the Mercer Room the exhibit is a continuation of The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity curated by the Black History Committee (Alicia Cohen and Gertrude Evans) [and in the Meeting Room for January-March Friends of Leesburg Arts (FOLPA) Show coordinated by Mary Pender. Viewing is by appointment only. Town press releases will be issued for both exhibits.

**Grants:** The Library remains appreciative of the many grants received through the years and continues to look for opportunities for grant funding for processing and preservation of our collections. At this time we do not have sufficient staffing to be considered for to implement any new grants.

**Lecture Series, Classes, Tours & Other Activities:** Classes are virtual and exhibits are by appointment only. In person events and tours remain on hold due to social distancing requirements. In conversation with one of the tour guides a request has been made to postpone until spring 2022. Two Virtual events, author talks, have been scheduled. We are also discussing hosting a panel discussion for the Genealogical Forum including first person accounts of DNA research. All classes have been scheduled as virtual through December. We are working on pop-up virtual sessions. See newsletter for these proposed events. Two virtual events were held in March: Greg May in conversation with David Stewart on Stewarts recent publication on George Washington and Norah Schneider's class on Writing Your Family History.

Due to pandemic activity we still limiting reservations to one (1) researcher per two hour appointment and no more than two (2) individuals at a time to visit exhibits. Unfortunately we are also having a lot building contractors coming and going as well as members of the public who just show up. Collection donations remain on hold until further notice and while we offer ILL service our ability to fulfill requests continues to depend on the operational status of lending institutions.

**Publications/Products:** The Winter Spring 2021 newsletter has been posted to the website, copies have been mailed along with manual distribution to libraries and other venues. The link to the newsletter:

<https://www.leesburgva.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=35799>

**Building and Grounds:**

The original leak in the Mercer Room has been repaired with the dry wall patched and painted. Two new leaks were identified and fixed; painting has been mostly completed.

Issues remain with the fire panel periodically going off and correcting itself. This may be connected to outdated smoke detectors and monitoring software. The smoke detectors in the building are original with reconstruction in 2000 and are under consideration for replacement.

**Outreach:** Outreach for February included assisting with the Care & Preservation of Textiles Class; installation of the BHC's exhibit "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity" in the Mercer Room and filming a "virtual visit" to the exhibit with Alicia Cohen. Norah and Laura spoke virtually to and provided an introduction to TBL's resources to George Oberle and Cynthia Kierner's George Mason University graduate level history class. Research assistance was provided to staff of the Loudoun Museum and the Loudoun County Historic Court Records Department. Enslaved Papers 1757-1865", and a Judges Training Webinar for Virginia History Day. The Library worked cooperatively with the BJC and the Loudoun County NAACP to provide virtual access to the first author talk of the season by James R Morgan III on his recent book *The Lost Empire: Black Freemasonry in the Old West (1867-1906)*. There were approximately 100 registrations and about 40 active participants. The event was recorded and we hope to be able to share it soon. Norah attended a meeting of the New England Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists (NEAPG) presenting on remote research services available at Thomas Balch Library as well as resources available to genealogists, including resources for those conducting research outside of Virginia. During February, TBL staff attended webinars including Florida State Genealogical Society's "Researching African American Ancestors Funeral Programs and Photo Archives", Loudoun County History Court Records Department Program "Expanded Access to History Digitization of Loudoun's Free Black and Public access to our social media posts for **FY21**: Total reach for February 2021: 67,026 and the number of engaged Facebook users: 5,257. The number of Instagram views in February 2021: 674 and the number of Twitter views: 4,453.

## **Collections:**

### **February 2021 Activity:**

Accessions: 3

Collections Processed: 0

Additions made to collections: 0

Additions to Vertical files/Maps: 1

Collections being processed: 5

Photographs catalogued or scanned: 0

Collection guides sent for posting to NUCMC: 0

Collection guides posted by NUCMC (for a total of 401): 0

Collection guides posted to VIVA (for a total of 318): 3

Collection guides updated on VIVA: 0

Collection guides posted on town website (for a total of 358): 347 collection guides; 1 digital collection; and 10 indices): 0

Collection guides updated: 0

Web updates: 21

Items listed on Archives Grid: 700 (less 314 VIVA): 386

Books and Periodicals sent to LCPL for cataloguing: 0

Books and Periodicals returned from LCPL: 47

### **Accessions:**

Donation acceptance was temporarily paused at the end of November due to increasing Covid cases and to give staff time to catch up with 2020 accessions.

Limited small accessions of books and additions to existing collections were accepted in February.

Donations for February included the books *A Barrett Family of Northwestern Virginia* by John Kelly Barret and James Robert Barrett and *Spotlight on Drakes Branch, Virginia Centennial Celebration 1903-2003*.

Additions were also accessioned for existing collections including Leesburg Garden Club Collection, 1920 - (M 044,) Town of Leesburg Records and the library's growing collection of Covid-19 related documentation.

**Inventory:** Everything was inventoried by Bryan Fisher during the last quarter of FY2020 except for items stored in Town Hall. This portion of the inventory will be completed as the pandemic permits and furloughed staff returns.

**Digital Collections, Computers, and Microfilm:** Nothing new to report.

**Manuscript and Visual Collections:** Nothing new to report.

**Printed Collections:** During January a total of 152 items were added to the catalogue: 0 books was added to or corrected in the catalogue by TBL staff, 36 journals were added to the catalogue by TBL staff, 69 newspapers were received and inventoried, and 47 books/periodicals were returned by Loudoun County Public Library cataloging since the last report to the Commission.

**Vertical Files (VF):** Additions and or updates to the microform index (0) ephemera files (0), vertical files (0) unpublished papers (1); and maps (0).

#### **Personnel:**

**Interns/Student Researchers:** Due to the pandemic, as of 14 March 2020, the on-site internship program has been suspended until the health crisis is resolved.

**Staff:** All reference flex staff remains furloughed. Three full time staff are working; the Library admin is working up to 6 hours per week, an 84% reduction in time, and 1 flex staff member is processing the Elaine Thompson Collection utilizing grant funds for approximately 11 hours per week.

**News of Former Staff:** Nothing

**Volunteers:** Due to COVID19 and social distancing guidelines Volunteers are on hiatus until such time as the health crisis ends.

#### **Cumulative Statistics for FY2021 (July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021):**

Effective March 14 at 4PM due to the COVID19 health crises the library was closed to the public. Commencing in June the Library moved through Phase 1 reopening to Phase 3 in July. In response to rising numbers of COVID cases, commencing December 7 and continuing at least through February 28 the Town implemented more stringent guidelines as directed by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Admission to the library for research or to view exhibits is by pre-scheduled appointment only. Based on our normal schedule (7 days a week including 3 evenings) during February the library was closed **24** days COVID19 (20), weather (1) and holidays (3). Total closures for FY21: **205.5** (*Covid 172.5; Weather 3; Holiday 30*). Please note the Library is open by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff works on-site Monday through Friday handling virtual reference, tasks otherwise completed by the 10 furloughed staff and of the admin staff whose hours were cut 84% as well as their own assigned duties. All figures below are based on extant information at time of computations. Figures may change as heretofore unreported data is received.

**Facility Use Only (does not include off site events):** February 2021: **363**  
FY21: Cumulative July 1, 2020 – January 2021: **3,172**. The Library was closed to the public **205.5** of **243** days so far this FY but open for work **159** days averaging **20** visitors/donors and workmen to the library per work day.

**FY21 Totals:**

TBL Event/Meetings Attendees onsite: **451**  
TBL Event/Meetings Attendees offsite: **370 (not included in building count)**  
TBL Event/Meetings Attendees TOTAL: **827 (includes virtual presentations)**  
TBL Events/Meetings: **(onsite 39/offsite 9): 48**  
TBL Events Cancelled: **8**  
Meeting Room Bookings (external): **2**  
Meeting Room Bookings Cancelled: **16**  
Meeting Room Attendees (external): **11**  
TOTAL number of people served in person: Onsite and Offsite: **3,999**  
Reference Questions Town Employee (in course of town work): **33**  
Reference Questions: **38,745**  
Reference Questions TOTAL: **38,778**  
Photographic Reproduction Orders: **51**  
Photographs Reproduced: **132**  
Archive Collections Use: **158**  
Facebook Postings FY21: **160**  
Twitter: **136**  
Instagram: **111**  
Electronic Outreach Patron Use: **47,138**  
Electronic Outreach Patron Engagement: **597326**  
Website Postings/Corrections: **120**  
Wi-Fi Registrations (New): **4**  
Revenue *(including sales tax)* Collected: **\$3,841**  
Volunteer Hours: **0**  
Intern Hours: **0**  
ILL Requests: **23**  
ILL Requests Filled: **23**

**Action Items:** None

**Notes:**

- 🚧 Thomas Balch Library is open by appointment only due to COVID19
- 🚧 The Library meeting room remains unavailable for use until further notice.
- 🚧 Library staffing is limited to 3. Reference work has increased exponentially. All staff is focused on reference service with all other responsibilities being delayed and/or funneled into backlog for whenever additional staffing is made available.
- 🚧 The next TBL Endowment Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 16 March 2021 and will be held in person.

**Upcoming Events:**

Due to COVID19 in-person lectures and tours are not being scheduled until social distancing permits. Research in the Library or visiting exhibits is by appointment only. Pre-registration required for all virtual events:

- ✚ Art display by Friends of Leesburg Arts (FOLPA) coordinated by Mary Pender–  
Meeting Room
- ✚ Display in the Mercer Room: Black History Committee – The Black Family  
Representation, Identity and Diversity
- ✚ Ellen Crosby in conversation with the Library Director on her recent publication  
*The French Paradox* a wine country mystery 28 April 2021 @ 1PM –  
preregistration required.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt

## Thomas Balch Library Commission

- Meeting convened at 7:02 pm, 10 March 2021
- The Electronic participation and Recording statement was announced
- The new commissioner and new councilmanic were introduced and welcomed by the commission
- Minutes of the 9 December 2020 meeting were approved
- Received the library director's report—The reduced staff (3) have been fielding a high volume of reference calls as well as planning and conducting online classes, lectures, and author talks—sign-up and participation has been good for all events and participants have been not only local but national—the success of these programs, the director and some commissioners noted, opens new possibilities for conducting future, post-pandemic programs—despite the restrictions on in-person use, Balch's outreach has provided a vital public service during this difficult time
- The library director read the Friends of Balch report for the group's president—the Friends latest newsletter contained a mail in ballot for the board of directors—the next meeting will be by Zoom 9am, Tuesday 16 March 2021
- The report of the Thomas Balch Library Foundation was given by Alexandra Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer of the Foundation's Board—the next foundation board meeting is at noon, 16 March 2021—the foundation received \$46,000 in donations in 2020, a donation of \$146,000 is awaiting a tax clearance, and the foundation ended the year with over \$1,004,000—the foundation made several expenditures in 2020 to add items to the library's archive and to protect material in the library as well as enhancements for the garden
- Under Old Business the library's strategic plan and the catalogue project and the reopening of the library were joined in a general discussion—the library director noted that in light of staff furloughs the catalogue project was on hold—the director also said that she had been directed to prepare a plan for a gradual or phased reopening—looking to the library's future, the commission then turned to the statement regarding the library in the draft town plan—the statement, the commissioners felt, understated the role and importance of Balch and what it's future would be in the town—commissioners were urged to relay their thoughts on the plan to the commission chair
- Under New Business, the library director noted several requirements regarding training and other commission housekeeping matters—the commission decided: to take a picture for the town website in June; that the commission chair will prepare the annual report before the end of the fiscal year; and the April meeting will be a hybrid meeting
- Remarks followed from the new council liaison—Councilman Cummings discussed aspects of the upcoming town budget process and its outlook—he said he would consult



with the commission chair regarding changes to the draft town plan and indicated he was most willing to represent the commission's views and the library's interests to the town council

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm