



PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE

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HFFI RECEIVES LARGE DONATION

Following action at its June meeting, the Board of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI) is pleased to announce an agreement which gifts three plots of land which total over 12 acres to the organization. Mrs. Rebecca Campbell Light, a long-time HFFI member and history aficionado, donated the land, assessed at a value in excess of \$600,000, on Mine Road in Spotsylvania County at the edge of the Fredericksburg Civil War Battlefield.

Because HFFI is not in the business of land management, the agreement allows for the sale of those properties with restricted covenants. Protected will be historic sites which include a cemetery and the basement ruins of a historic house as well as two very old “Witness Trees” reflecting the climatic history of the area. In the agreement, and in addition to the land, Mrs. Light gives HFFI money with which to carry out the stabilization and protection of the various sites. She also gives HFFI rights to her book on local, Fredericksburg history and other historic memorabilia.

“This gift will allow HFFI to better fulfill its mission of preservation in Fredericksburg and provide us with firmer, financial footing. Over the next few months, the Board can now more easily consider the possibility of additional staffing as well other needs of the organization,” said David James, President of the Board.

The mission of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. is to preserve, protect and revitalize the distinctive historic environment and cultural resources of the Fredericksburg area. Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. accomplishes this mission through education, advocacy, and financial support.

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The Board has been pleased with the refocused administrative and operational functions of the organization over the past few years, but want to place more emphasis on preservation: HFFI's principal mission. Most of the profit from the sale of the land will go into its already existing endowment.

At Mrs. Light's request, the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table is named in the agreement, acting as a secondary recipient in the event HFFI is unable to meet obligations in the future.

Discussions and negotiations for the project have been on-going since the first of the year, and coordinated for the Board by Scott Walker, HFFI Vice-President. "In Fredericksburg, in 2021, Preservation is still important. However, such efforts are neither easy nor are they inexpensive," Walker said. "This donation permits us to increase our local preservation efforts and can provide help reviewing and enforcing our already existing easements within the City. In our fast-developing region, sometimes Preservation needs legal backup, as well. This could support those efforts."

HFFI has benefited from similar donations over the last 25 years, and acknowledges those gifts in its "Hallway of Fame" at the Lewis Store, a 18th century building, itself a significant donation from Dr. and Mrs. Robert Wheeler. Sale of a previous office site, given by Mrs. Violet Stoner, funded some of the store's renovations required at that time. In addition, in 1997, Mrs. Doris Buffett gave a valuable and historic property to HFFI. The sale of that house established a healthy endowment which continues to support the organization.

Closing on and transfer of the properties will take place in July. Following site work required in the agreement, the land will be offered for sale.