

2023 Annual Report



**Community
Development**

Message from the Director

On behalf of the Department of Community Development, I am pleased to submit the department's Annual Report for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

A little over 20 years ago, the City of Manassas adopted its first Comprehensive Plan. The Plan presented a vision for revitalization and redevelopment to allow the City to continue to grow while delivering world class facilities and infrastructure. In many ways, 2023 saw the realization of much of this vision with the completion of new public facilities like the Manassas Museum and Public Safety Facility. The City's investment in its pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure were recognized with a bronze level designation as a Bicycle Friendly City by the League of American Bicyclists. Work is now underway at Dean Park, Annaburg Park and Historic Site, the Grant Avenue Streetscape project and redevelopment of the Holmes Heights neighborhood, which will transform the Downtown south community over the next year. In June of 2023, the department hosted a Community Conversations on the future of the Olde Towne Inn property. The community input we received will be used to guide the redevelopment of this key downtown property.



Lastly, the City has taken substantial steps to begin addressing the growing issue of housing affordability, to include the approval of affordable projects and the most significant overhaul of its residential zoning codes in the last thirty years. None of these accomplishments would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the Community Development team. They are the true heart of this department and it is an honor and pleasure to serve alongside them each day as we strive to deliver exceptional customer service and beautiful places to live, work, and play in the City.



Matthew D. Arcieri, AICP
Assistant City Manager
Director of Planning & Community Development

Long-Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Division is responsible for articulating the community's long-range vision for land use and implementing that vision through policies and ordinances, planning studies, capital project planning, and development review. The division is dedicated to improving the quality of life for City residents through appropriate land use policies and regulations while fostering a competitive business environment.

The focus of the Long Range Planning Division is to provide planning support for new development and redevelopment, to enhance neighborhoods and the supply of quality housing options through the implementation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In FY23, the division completed work on a comprehensive review of City zoning policies in support of improving the affordability and quality of the City's housing stock.



*Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and People Inc. received approval to develop 12 affordable homes and a new VFW Post on Prince William Street. *Photo courtesy of Prince William Times.*



The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association selected the Historic District Design Guidelines Update as the winner of the Old Dominion Innovative Approaches award. The award was presented at the Annual Virginia APA Conference in July 2023. Pictured above are members of the Architectural Review Board and Staff with the award.



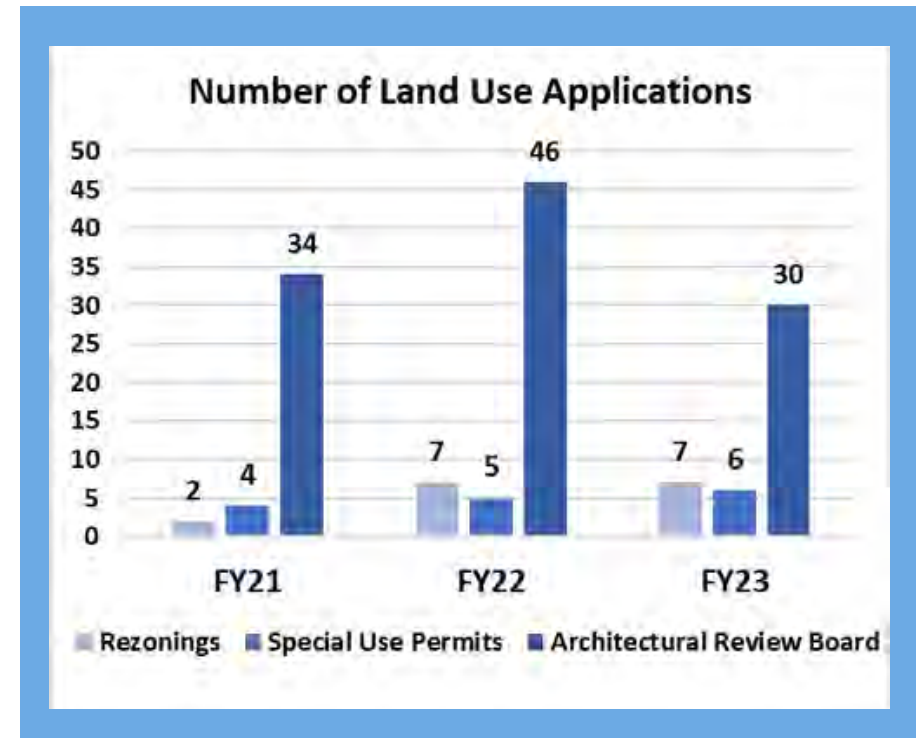
Land Use Cases

The Planning Commission held a total of nine meetings to review and act on land use cases. In addition, the Commissioners met in one special meeting to attend Planning Commissioner training.

Some highlights include the following:

- A rezoning for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and People Inc. to develop 12 units of affordable housing and build a new VFW Post at 9511, 9513, and 9517 Prince William Street.
- A rezoning for 17 residential homes at 9207, 9211, and 9213 Prescott Avenue.
- A rezoning for 36 townhomes and preservation of 24 multi-family units at 8812 Wesley Avenue.
- A rezoning and special use permit for a place of assembly at 9025 Centerville Road.
- Two city-initiated rezonings to change the zoning at 9720 Capital Court to B-1 Business Office to allow medical office uses and at 10371 Central Park Drive to I-1 Light Industrial to allow personal improvement service uses.
- A city-initiated rezoning to change the zoning at 8800 Mathis Avenue to R-2 Single Family Residential to support the preservation of the Liberia House Historic Site.
- A special use permit for a telecommunications tower at 10490 Colonel Court.
- Two special use permits to extend approval of portable classrooms at Weems and Haydon Elementary Schools.

In addition, the Architectural Review Board met twelve times and acted on 32 applications. The Board of Zoning Appeals met two times and approved a variance for a reduced setback. The Local Board of Building Code Appeals met once to conduct administrative business.



Long Range Planning:

- The Zoning Ordinance Review Committee discussed affordable home ownership and rental opportunities over three meetings and provided guidance.
- The draft 2023 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Implementation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is ongoing. Since the Plan's adoption in 2020, 31 short-term strategies out of 46 total are in progress or completed.

Code Updates:

- A zoning text amendment for housing technical updates to increase affordable home ownership and affordable rental opportunities, to make technical corrections and to implement the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Planning

This year the department secured \$13.4 million in state and federal funding for existing and planned CIP projects to improve the City's transportation network. Over the last two years alone, a total of \$25.4 million in state and federal funding has been awarded to the City for transportation projects.

Events & Incentives:

- Promoted Car Free Day (Sept 2022)
- Presented progress on growing the city's bicycle and pedestrian network at the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition Quarterly Meeting (April 2023, pictured top right)
- Celebrated National Bike Month including Bike to Work Day (pictured bottom left), Annual Bike/Ped Meeting, and Bicycle Rodeo held by MCPD Bike Team at the Boys and Girls Club (May 2023)
- Supported ribbon cutting for Route 28 Widening Project (June 2023)
- Received the Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the League of American Bicyclists (June 2023)



Bike Infrastructure:

- Supported the installation of 4.4 miles of new bike facilities, including bike lanes, sharrows and shared use paths – for a total of 21.4 miles in the last 5 years.
- 30 bike racks were installed at schools and parks throughout the City, bringing the total number of upgraded bike racks to 129.

Scooters:

Bird Rides, Inc. renewed their shared mobility device permit in April 2023. Since April 2021, 17,000 rides have been taken for a total of 18,000 miles.

Projects in Planning Phase:

Sudley Bike Facilities - New 1.2 mile bike connection along Sudley Road between Godwin Drive and Grant Avenue

Wayfinding:

Installed 18 wayfinding signs as part of the citywide wayfinding project

Development Services

Development Services strives to provide thoughtful, knowledgeable, timely, and reliable plan review, permitting and inspections to the development community, property owners, other City departments, and other public agencies. They proactively monitor project progress and strive to resolve outstanding issues.

Greg Bokan

Assistant Director of Planning & Development / Zoning Administrator

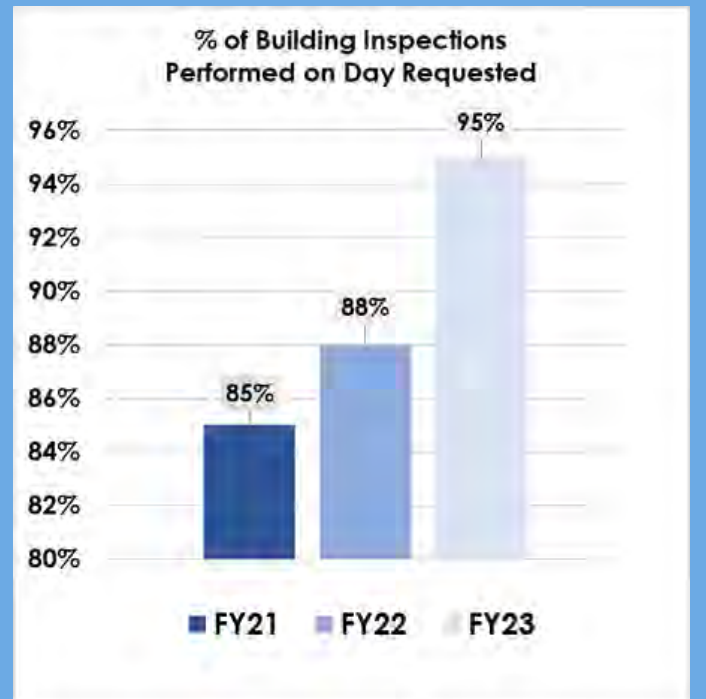
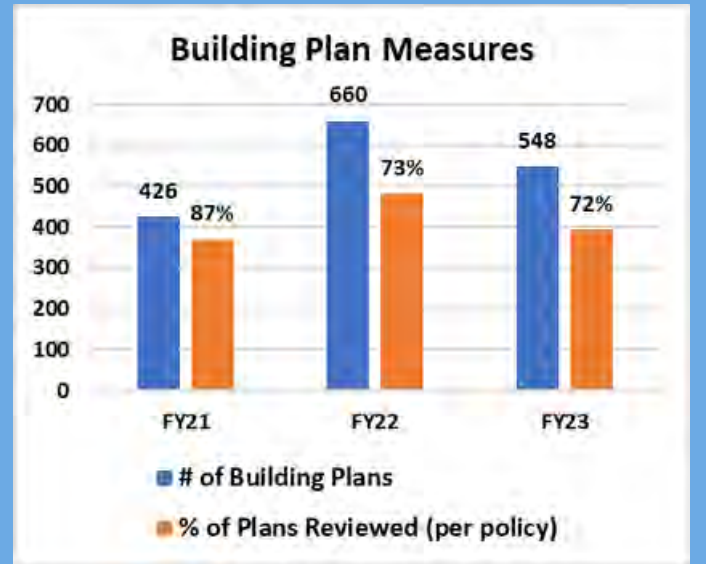
Eric Lowe

Building Development Manager / Building Official

The division reviewed 86 site plans, issued 1,376 building/trade permits and completed 2,668 building inspections in support of residential and commercial projects in FY23.

Work was completed on major development projects including:

- Completion of the City's new 90,000 square feet Public Safety Facility.
- Continued construction of the Manassas Museum Addition.
- Completion of 59,000 square feet of new office and support building space for Didlake.
- New construction projects include the 28,700 square foot Team Member Center at Micron Technology, as well as, the redevelopment of the former Glen Gery Brick plant.
- Residential development includes the renovation of the 80 unit Quarry Station Senior Apartments, as well as continued construction of the 105 unit Jefferson Square Subdivision.



Projects Under Development



The Jefferson Square project at Prince William Street and Jefferson Street includes 85 townhomes and 20 single family homes. The project is nearing completion.



The Harris Building addition on Battle Street is in the final stages of construction.



Two new restaurants on Center Street to include Gadfly Gastro Pub (9110) and Zengo (9112) are currently under construction.



Van Metre Homes at Manassas includes an integrated mix of 233 residential dwellings: 10 single family detached homes; 97 single family attached townhomes; and 126 multifamily back to back units. Demolition work is underway.



The Sudley Road Wawa at 8708 & 8712 Sudley Road has completed demolition is beginning construction.

City Projects

In FY23, the City continued improvements on City owned buildings, properties and historic sites through redevelopment and renovations.



The renovations and addition to the Manassas Museum at 9101 Prince William Street are complete.



Demolition of the Olde Towne Inn is complete and redevelopment is coming.



The renovations to City Hall are ongoing.



The stabilization of the Annaburg Park and Historic Site are ongoing.



The new Public Safety Facility on Grant Avenue is complete.

Property Code Enforcement

Property Code Enforcement (PCE) staff is responsible for enforcing the City's nuisance codes, including tall grass and trash ordinances, the Virginia Property Maintenance Code, the Building Code for work without permits, and the Zoning Ordinance. This type of complaint-based and proactive code enforcement is critical to our city's neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts.

Carlos Perez

Property Code Enforcement Supervisor

PCE maintains an aggressive goal that within 45 business days a case:

- Should be abated; or
- Should be under an abatement plan; or
- Transferred to the City Attorney or Public Works for court action or clean-up.

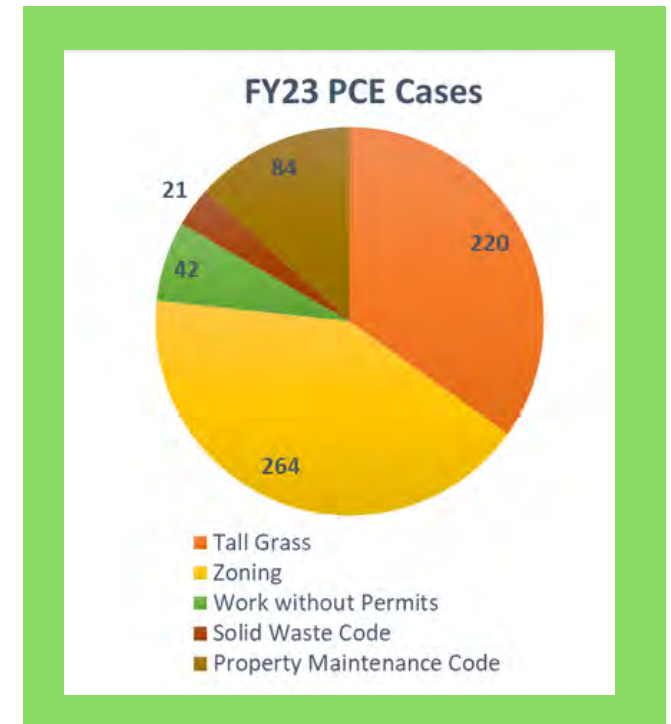
In FY23, there were 1,631 inspections performed and 90% of the cases were abated within the 45-day goal. PCE focused its efforts on neighborhood maintenance issues, including tall grass and inoperable vehicles. Additionally, the division focused on abating blighted properties and properties with significant maintenance issues.



Pictured above is a property on Ashton Avenue before and after replacement of a shed and fence.



Pictured above is a blighted property on Main Street before and after demolition.



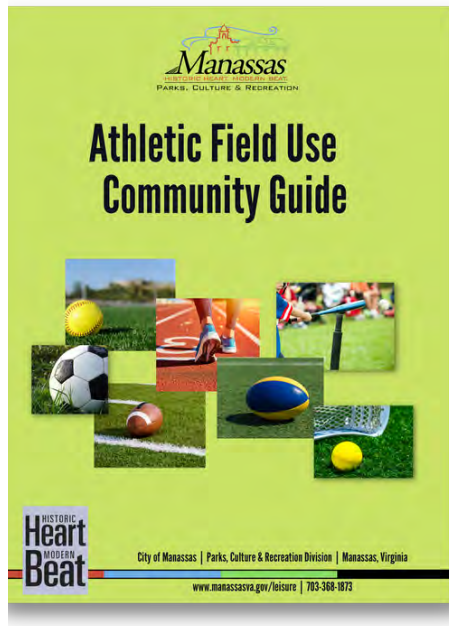


Parks, Culture & Recreation

Parks

This was a special year for the parks with the 150th celebration highlighting Dean Park, the City's largest park. During the event, the excitement of the groundbreaking ceremony helped us kick off the future park improvements. The community can expect temporary closures over the next year or so while we work to bring enhanced play areas, walking trails, additional athletic fields and facilities, and overall site improvements.

With the future addition of athletic fields, an Athletic Field Subcommittee was formed under the Parks & Recreation Committee to review and create a fair rental process. Over the past year, the subcommittee collaborated and developed the first Athletic Field Community Guide. This guide was piloted this past year and has received positive feedback from the community. Over 11,000 park maps were mailed to residents.



Athletic Field Use Community Guide



Community Meetings

- 7/2 – Athletic Field Committee Work Session
- 8/17 – Athletic Field Committee Meeting
- 9/13 – Athletic Field Committee Meeting
- 1/16 – Park Tour for Parks & Recreation Committee Members
- 4/1 – Ground Breaking for Dean Park



Dean Park Groundbreaking April 1, 2023



Dean Park Site Plan for Phase 1 Improvements

Park Volunteers

\$54,918.50

**= THE VALUE OF
1,727 HOURS OF SERVICE
CONTRIBUTED BY OUR
VOLUNTEERS**

*The independent sector values
each volunteer hour at \$31.80*

- \$54,918.50 = the value of volunteers serving 1727 hours in the parks (Independent Sector rates the value of each volunteer hour at \$31.80)
 - Eagle Scouts and Life Scouts have been busy this year developing educational nature signs to be used along park trails and building an amphitheater for programming and events at Liberia House.
 - Approximately 76.5 bags of trash and debris were removed from the parks by volunteers.
 - A total of 422 volunteers took time to give back to the community through maintaining trails, conducting park cleanups, gardening, and completing park beautification projects.
- Heavy Construction Contractors Association (HCCA) chose the City of Manassas Stonewall Park for their leadership project. Their hard work enhanced the safety and beauty of the park by stabilizing an area of erosion.



*MHCAA ribbon cutting at
Stonewall Park*



*Micron volunteers plant
flower pots at Stonewall
Park Pool*



*New amphitheater built by
Eagle Scouts at Liberia House*



Lucky's Dog Park receives new shades

Other Notable Highlights:

- Ballfield annual and weekly grooming to enhance the safety of the playing surface.
- Stonewall Park sport court enhancements to include new tennis practice wall, permanent pickleball courts, resurfaced basketball court, and a new futsal court.
- Stonewall Park Pool safety improvements included a new baby pool white coat and water quality enhancements.
- Increased comfort with new shade structures installed at the Dog Park with help from the Wellington Community donation.
- Playground improvements at Mayfield Intermediate and Weems Elementary School included resurfaced basketball court, new playground amenities, and safety enhancements.

Recreation

Harris Pavilion

The Harris Pavilion was once again a hub for activity in the City! Along with hosting many of the City's events, there were also many great private events and performances small and large.

- On Tuesdays, you could always count on a great performance due to the Acoustic Tuesday Summer Concert series continued. The series brought in 17 acoustic performances of varied styles and backgrounds, all of which were talented and showcased their skills to the audiences.
- The Sunday Funday concert series was as the name suggests, a lot of fun! Large audiences were able to witness acts such as Carleigh Jane, Prince William Community Band, King Park Concert Band and more.
- Quickly becoming the staple of the summer concert series is the Saturday Night Concert Series. To get a good seat at one of these events, you had to get there early! Starting off the series was a local performer of American Idol fame, Mike Parker. With events such as Beatlegacy, US Navy Band and Silver Tones Swing Band drawing large crowds, there was always plenty of entertainment at the Pavilion! The always popular Special Occasions Band once again rounded out the season with an energetic performance.



Performer Mike Parker at Harris Pavilion - June 3



*Stonewall Park Pool
Opening Day morning.*

Pool

The Stonewall Park Pool nearly doubled in attendance this year. With a full staff of certified lifeguards and customer service-minded recreation attendants, patrons were able to always feel safe and attended to at the Pool.

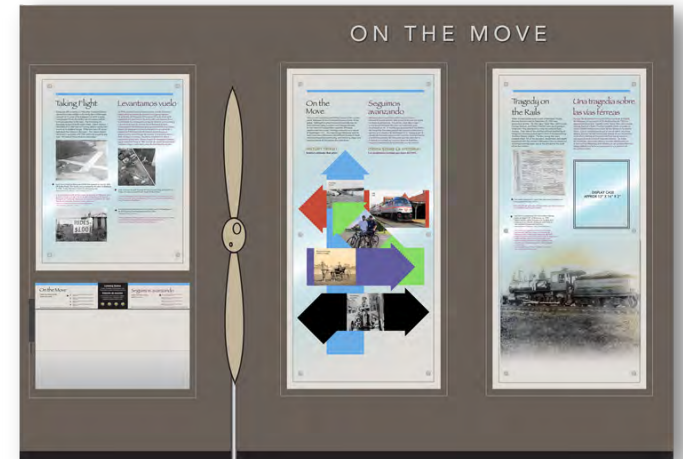
The Pool hosted the Stonewall Park Swim Team, which provides an opportunity for youth swimmers to learn the fundamentals and compete in a supportive group. There were even three action packed swim meets at the Pool this swim season.

Museum Renovation

In FY22, work began on the renovation and expansion of Manassas Museum. Architects GWWO led the way with a contemporary design that seamlessly blended old and new to create a building that anchors the lawn with the rest of historic downtown. RJ Crowley Construction built the new wing and updated interior spaces, while Capitol Exhibit Services worked hand in hand with staff to design brand new exhibitions that embrace the City's rich history while bringing in new stories about communities and residents that have not been told before. The Manassas Museum plans to come fully on line in FY24.



The Manassas Museum nears completion in this May, 2023 photograph.



Proposed design for "On the Move," one of the new exhibits being planned for the main gallery space.



City Council and Historic Resources Board Chair Mark Olsen at the groundbreaking for the new Museum building, August 2022.

Programs

With the end of the pandemic bringing people out to in-person programs in higher numbers than we've seen in the past few years, Museum staff seized the opportunity to explore some new partnerships, offer outreach in new places, and activate the city's historic sites in new and fun ways.

While programs such as Liberia Basement to Attic tours and Museum at the Market continue to be two of our most popular and well attended programs, some new offerings that activated the City's historic sites included two sold out Paranormal Investigations of the Candy Factory building, and two History Hikes at Cannon Branch Fort. In total, museum staff offered almost 50 programs that served over 2000 attendees during FY23.

In addition to public programs and workshops, the Museum's school programs were also popular this year, serving over 500 students through our Education trunks and other K-12 programs.



At the Virginia Association of Museums conference in March, Museum staff presented the work they did to seat and collaborate with an exhibition committee to create the exhibits that will be on view in the galleries when they reopen in the Fall of 2023.



Other Program Highlights:



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6

Museum staff continues their ongoing work with locally and nationally recognized historic interpreters to tell the complicated history of the people who were once enslaved at Liberia House. In August of 2022, The Slave Dwelling Project returned to Liberia with historic interpreters Cheyney McKnight and Dontavius Williams who were joined by Virginia historians and storytellers Dylan Pritchett and Marion Dobbins. The program focused on the lived experiences of enslaved men and women at Liberia prior to the Civil War and included storytelling, music, a panel discussion with the interpreters, and a tour of Liberia House.

Marion Dobbins returned in June of 2023 to reenact the day Nellie Naylor, an enslaved woman, met President Lincoln at Liberia House.

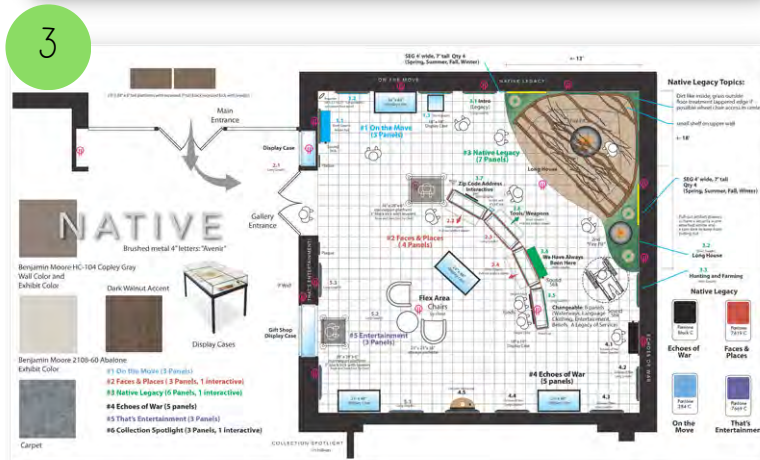


- 1) *Shades of Our Past* performed an original puppet play on Family Day at Liberia.
- 2) Museum staff hosted members of the Naylor family for a reunion at Liberia House.
- 3) *Old Spirits Investigations* conducted the two sold-out paranormal investigations at the Candy Factory.
- 4) Nellie Naylor talked to a crowd of curious attendees on Juneteenth at Liberia.
- 5) Museum staff conducted a workshop to familiarize homeschool families with the Museum's resources.
- 6) School groups toured Liberia house and met with Col. Rice of the Union Army.
- 7) Families learned about the Manassas Museum and created their own galleries.

Exhibitions



The Museum offered two exhibitions in FY23. The annual Osborn High School art exhibit, *Artistic Expression*, was in its milestone 10th year. Staff again partnered with Jirani Coffeehouse to host the exhibit in their spaces where it was well received by their patrons. A second exhibit was created in honor of the City's 150th anniversary. For this exhibit, staff designed a timeline display that was mounted to pop up banners. This exhibit debuted in April at the 150th celebration and since then has been traveling around the City to various host locations. To date, the timeline exhibit has been seen at The Freedom Museum and several branches of the library system. It will continue to travel the rest of the year to other partner sites.



Finally, throughout FY23, Museum staff collaborated with a special Exhibition Committee to envision the exhibits that will open in the new gallery spaces. This Committee was made up of members of the local community that met monthly for half a year to discuss exhibit themes, potential stories, and how the gallery spaces should be laid out.

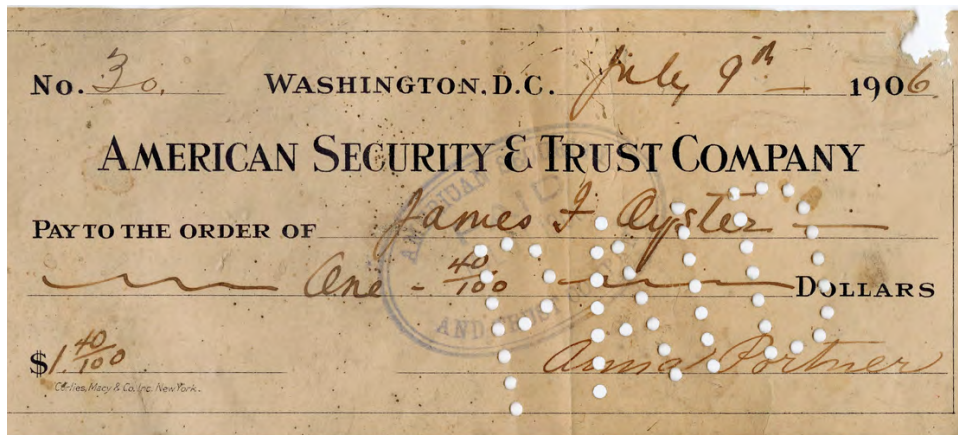
- 1) Lt. Col Justin (Jerry) M. Martin, USMC (Ret) sits for an interview about his service during the Vietnam War. His story is currently on exhibit in the new gallery space.
- 2) The Manassas Timeline exhibition on display at Central Library on Mathis Ave.
- 3) The floor plan of the new gallery space shows five new exhibition areas for guests to enjoy.

Collections

FY23 was another strong year for the museum's collections. Seven individuals donated 37 new objects and images to the museum covering everything from the history of dairy farming to education.

Of particular importance was an embosser found in the basement of City Hall. This embosser features the original 1873 Town of Manassas seal and was used to mark official documents during the early 20th century. This is the fourth embosser to come into the collection.

Another interesting find was a group of objects that were discovered above the ceiling at Liberia during renovation work to that site. These included old papers, a set of workman's clothing, and an old soda bottle. Objects like these help us further our understanding of who lived at Liberia and how the house was used over the years.

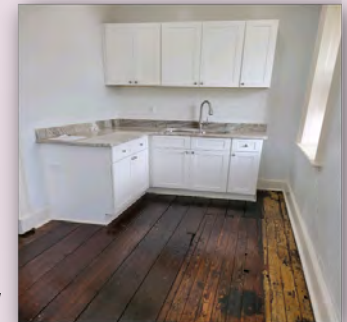


This check signed by Anna Portner was found above the ceiling on the second floor of Liberia.

Liberia House

During FY23, Liberia House underwent significant renovations to the interior of the home. On the first floor, the old kitchen was removed and upgraded cabinetry and lighting were put back in. In addition, the original floor in the kitchen was uncovered and repaired, and the exterior side door was put back in. Upstairs, work started in the bathroom area to remove modern plumbing, wiring, and other features. The damaged ceiling was also removed and

a new one put back in. Both of these projects were done in consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Architectural Review Board to insure all state and local guidelines were followed to protect this historic house.



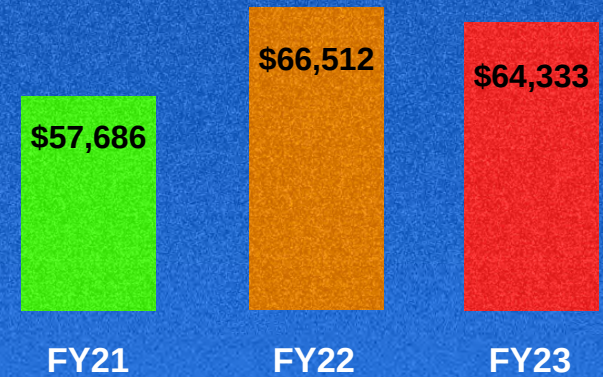
The renovated kitchen area at Liberia provides a much needed space for programs staff to work during events.

Echoes

Echoes' revenue from FY22 to FY23 remained steady despite its temporary location in the Train Depot/Visitor Center. This was due to:

- Regular traffic among Amtrak passengers, VRE commuters, and guests at the Visitor Center
- An outstanding response to the new merchandise offered at the 150th Anniversary Celebration
- Our online platform, Shopify, being used more regularly and offering free local pickup & delivery
- Successful sidewalk sales in preparation for our move back into the museum

ECHOES STORE REVENUE



New merchandise to celebrate Manassas' 150th Anniversary.



Sidewalk Sale outside of the Train Depot to reduce inventory prior to the move back into the museum.

Other Echoes Highlights:

- Analyzed trends and brought new items to the Thursday Farmers Markets at Harris Pavilion, including many honey products made locally that have proven popular
- Offered merchandise for sale at Stonewall Park Pool such as branded pool towels and sunglasses, as well as items such as sunscreen, goggles, and pool toys
- Increased revenue at events such as the Manassas Railway Festival where we saw a 43% increase in sales from last year, and the Manassas Bee Festival, which brought a 28% increase in sales from the year prior



Locally made honey products are popular in-store and at the Thursday Farmers Markets at Harris Pavilion.



Merchandise offered at Stonewall Park Pool includes some branded items and other necessities such as sunscreen.



Community Development Organizational Chart

