

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 11, 2005
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #30 : NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Gaines' request for comment on a request by the Chairman of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) for \$10,000 in additional one-time funding for Carlyle House. This request (attachment) was made to help NVRPA defray costs associated with their current exhibit focusing on the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) is a multi-jurisdictional agency established to provide a system of regional parks in Northern Virginia. Alexandria became a member of the Authority in 1969. The City's operating and capital contributions to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority are based on its proportionate share of the total population of the participating jurisdictions, which include Arlington County, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church City and Loudoun County. (For FY 2006, the City's allocation is based on Alexandria's proportionate share of 8.2% of the total jurisdictional population.)

In October 2004, NVRPA submitted a written request for both operating and capital funding. The proposed FY 2006 General Fund appropriation of \$247,152 to NVRPA represents full funding of their operating budget request. The City's Proposed CIP includes \$332,757 for NVRPA's capital budget, which fully funds their request.

The following table depicts the City's operating and capital appropriations to the NVRPA in recent years. The amounts appropriated fully funded all requests.

CITY FUNDING FOR NVRPA

Table with 5 columns: Category, FY 2003 Actual, FY 2004 Actual, FY 2005 Approved, FY 2006 Proposed. Rows include Operating Budget, Capital Budget, and Total.

It should be noted that several other regional organizations, including the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, and the Northern Virginia Community College, base their requests for contributions on some type of per capita formula.

Due to the formulas regional cost sharing policy basis for NVRPA costs, it is not recommended that additional funding be appropriated to the NVRPA. The City has assisted with its French and Indian War activities including permitting use of Market Square and in the hanging of NVRPA banners in and around the Market Square/Carlyle House area.

Attachment



Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039 • 703-352-5900 • Fax: 703-273-0905 • www.nvrpa.org

March 9, 2005

William D. Euille
Mayor, City of Alexandria
106 East Nelson Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301-2036

Dear Mayor Euille:

This is a request for a one-time grant of \$10,000.00 in FY06 from the City of Alexandria to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) to help defray costs associated with Carlyle House Historic Park's focus on the 250th Anniversary of the beginnings of the French and Indian War. This is the foundation story of Alexandria and it is critically important it be told accurately and reach as many residents and visitors to the City as possible.

Carlyle House arguably is the most historic and oldest structure in all of Alexandria. Starting in March 2005, Carlyle House Historic Park has designed a series of events that will enable the public to better understand and appreciate the City's colonial roots and the historic events that occurred in Alexandria. This includes a film, lectures, reenactments, special displays, etc. Carlyle House is owned and operated by NVRPA, a special purpose government entity governed by representatives of the six political jurisdictions that constitute the Authority, one of which is the City of Alexandria.

As you may know, Carlyle House (and the adjoining Bank of Alexandria building) was purchased and restored in the 1970's by NVRPA at the cost of several million dollars. Since then, considerable investments have been made in the structure and its holdings - much of this being funded by private gifts and the Friends of Carlyle House. The park now attracts over 16,000 visitors a year and is fully accredited by the American Association of Museums, a rare honor, given that only a small percentage of museums throughout the nation have met the rigorous requirements for this recognition. Annually, the cost to NVRPA of operating Carlyle House is \$264,569, against income (primarily rental of the garden tent for special events and ticket sales) of \$85,890. This results in an annual operating loss to NVRPA from Carlyle House operations of \$178,679. In addition, we have set aside \$100,000 in FY05 and \$500,000 in FY06 for long needed capital improvements (roof replacement, fire suppression, heating and cooling) to Carlyle House. Further, over the past several years, Carlyle House staff has invested considerable staff time and funds in preparing for spring 2005 commemoration events. Arguably, this has amounted to more than \$100,000, although most of these costs have been covered by gifts, grants, loan of artifacts and donations. We have received assistance from the

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Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department for installation of banners marketing the special displays that will be at Carlyle House, and \$1,600.00 from the City's marketing fund to help advertise upcoming events. We believe this will result in attracting more visitors to Alexandria with consequential benefits to the local economy.

If Alexandria indicates it will be able to fulfill our request for the one-time grant of \$10,000, NVRPA is prepared to waive all admission charges at Carlyle House during the period of March 22 to April 17, 2005, when it will host the special exhibit "*George Washington Remembers: Reflections on the French and Indian War.*" As a consequence, we believe we will experience a substantial increase in the number of Alexandria residents and tourists visiting Carlyle House, and expand the opportunity to show off a prestigious and historically important resource that belongs as much to Alexandria as it does to NVRPA. Such an action resonates well with Principle C in the City's Strategic Plan (i.e. "Preserve and celebrate our historic roots and diverse heritage from the 18th Century to today, residents understand and appreciate Alexandria's colonial roots, and ...Alexandria's history contributes to the local economy through tourism development").

NVRPA finances about 80% of its annual operating costs of about \$13 million from user fees collected from park visitors. The remainder comes from appropriations provided by NVRPA's six member jurisdictions. For FY06, NVRPA is requesting an appropriation from Alexandria of \$247,152 for operational and \$332,757 in capital funds. The citizens of Alexandria benefit greatly from this investment by having access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities that cannot be provided within the City. When charges are imposed, Alexandrians are charged a reduced fee, given that the City is a member of the Authority.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at wdickin953@aol.com or 703-370-3089.

Sincerely,



William Dickinson

Chair, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

c: James K. Hartmann, City Manager, City of Alexandria
Members of the Alexandria City Council
David C. Hobson, Executive Director, NVRPA