

Battersea to host 19th annual reenactment of Battle of Petersburg Battersea moving forward

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PETERSBURG - The future of Battersea, one of the city's most historic homes, is now in the hands of a non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of the home.

Earlier this month the Battersea Foundation began its official capital campaign to raise money for the project. "We're really excited about it," said foundation Executive Director Tempy Barbru.

But while the foundation is excited about the possibilities for the house and property, they're not completely sure of what to do with the entire property. Battersea is more than just a historic house - it includes just over 37 acres of land and several outbuildings, not all of which are historic in nature.

Last month the foundation invited out a team of experts including architects, landscapers and others to tour the property and then go through a design charette.

Barbru said that they were invited to develop ideas about the best possible uses for the property and its outbuildings. "This is an interactive approach," Barbru said.

While the idea of the charette was to develop ideas for the best use of the entire property, the foundation is already moving forward with Phase II of the restoration of the house once owned by John Banister, first mayor of Petersburg. "Phase II includes the stucco replacement and extended studies of the paint samples from inside," Barbru said. Additionally, it includes fixing drainage issues near the house. Currently water collects near the foundation of the Palladian-style home.

The goals of the capital campaign are to raise enough money to support full restoration of the house and purchase of the property. Additionally, the Battersea Foundation is in the process of identifying work that will need to be performed in subsequent phases of work.

While the nonprofit works to do that, it will also continue with its educational outreach activities and events.

"This year we have more events planned than ever," Barbru said. "One of the reasons is that we want to introduce people to the house better."

Some of those events include the annual Revolutionary War re-enactment scheduled for next weekend, a wine festival to be held during the summer, a history class through John Tyler Community College, an antiques appraisal fair and a Christmas open house in early December.

Larry Shifflet who also works closely with the foundation said that he felt the charette was a good start for the future of the property.

The future of the property soon will rest solely in the hands of the foundation.

In February City Council approved the sale of the property to the Battersea Foundation.

"We're very pleased with the City Council for approving this," said Battersea Foundation Board President Barbara P. Moseley after the vote at the Feb. 16 meeting. "Now we have a lot of work to do. We will continue in our endeavor."



The historic home was acquired in 1985 by the city. City Manager B. David Canada said that since that time, the Historic Petersburg Foundation and other entities including the Battersea Foundation have made improvements to the site and the historic home.

Since the foundation's inception, it has raised \$484,515. Nearly half of that - \$227,210 - has been spent on stabilizing the villa and outbuildings.

But much more needs to be spent to bring the villa back to its former glory. "We estimate that it could cost up to \$3 million," said foundation Vice President Sandy Graham at the Feb. 2 regular meeting during a presentation on the group and its activities.

As part of the sale agreement if the Battersea Foundation should ever dissolve, the property will return to the city at no cost. Additionally, if for whatever reason the foundation would wish to sell the historic property, City Council would have to approve the sale.

Canada said that the property will also remain accessible to the public for special events, particularly the annual Revolutionary War re-enactment held each April.

- F.M. Wiggins may be reached at 732-3456, ext. 3254 or fwiggins@progress-index.com. PETERSBURG - Next weekend, residents of the area can relive some of the earliest history of this nation - and this area with the 19th annual Revolutionary War re-enactment at Battersea.

The 229th anniversary of the 1781 Battle of Petersburg which occurred April 25, is next weekend. The event is sponsored by the City of Petersburg and the Department of Tourism.

The event kicks off Saturday at 9 a.m. and continues until 4 p.m. Sunday. More than 125 reenactors portraying American, British and German troops will camp on the grounds of Battersea for the weekend.

This historic weekend event will provide the public with the opportunity to experience and learn about the soldiers who fought for independence and those that sought to keep the American colonies as part of the British Empire.

The re-enactors will hold regimental drills, training exercises, skirmishes and battle demonstrations throughout the weekend.

Period music will be performed by the Appomattox Chamber Ensemble, drawn from the Petersburg Symphony at 5 p.m. on Saturday evening in front of Battersea house and on Sunday at noon by A Company of Waites for all attendees to enjoy.

Historic Battersea, a beautiful eighteenth century Neo-Palladian style home, will be open for tours daily. Battersea was built in 1768 by a founding father, Colonel John Banister, a signer of the Articles of Confederation and the first mayor of Petersburg.

Please join us for this historic weekend event. Tickets for the event are \$5 for adults, children 12 and under are free. For additional information call (804) 733-2402 or visit: www.petersburg-va.org.

The event is open Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at 1289 Upper Appomattox Street in Petersburg.

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