



MILTON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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December 29, 2017

To: Senators Dick Mazza and Carolyn Branagan

From: Terry Richards, Director, Milton Historical Society and Chair, Vermont in the Civil War Heritage Trail Committee
Bill Kaigle, Director, Milton Historical Society and Co-Chair, General Stannard House Committee

Re: Vermont in the Civil War Heritage Trail funding

Dear Dick and Carolyn,

Despite its distance from the major areas of combat during the Civil War, Vermont is host to numerous sites important for understanding this conflict. These sites such as museums, old hotels, homes, parks, and cemeteries extend along the western half of the State within the Champlain Valley from Bennington all the way north to St. Albans. Notable sites include Manchester, home to the Equinox Hotel where President Lincoln and his family vacationed; Brandon, where Stephen Douglas the Great Debater was born and raised; Vergennes, the site of many a visit by Abolitionist John Brown; Milton, the post-war farmstead of General George Stannard who helped to break Pickett's charge at Gettysburg and St. Albans, site of the northernmost combat of the war.

A Steering Group of individuals and organizations associated with these sites spearheaded formation of the *Vermont in the Civil War Heritage Trail* (VCWHT) as a cultural heritage and tourism attraction focused on the state's rich American Civil War-related history along the entire U.S. Route 7 corridor. Formal establishment of this Trail unites a variety of sites (established institutions, buildings, unmarked sites, markers, etc), celebrates Vermont's crucial role in this great conflict, and provides a low shared cost but huge shared benefit to participating sites and communities and the State as a whole by enhancing Vermont's heritage destination offerings.

The Trail benefits from the cohesion already provided by Route 7, which passes through most all of the host towns. Planning meetings were held in 2017 at Rokeby in Ferrisburgh, the Bennington Museum and the Rutland Historical Society, and the Trail was launched in August with design, production and distribution of brochures, a simple web site www.VTCivilWarHeritage.net, a Facebook page, and addition to the state's tourism web site:
<https://www.vermontvacation.com/landing-pages/arts-and-culture/civil-war>

Planning for further development continues in 2018 with a meeting February 10th at the Saint Albans Museum. A PDF of the initial Trail brochure is enclosed for your review. The launch and this initial effort has given the Trail identity, recognition and response has been wide and very positive. New funds are now needed to maintain the momentum of this important regional effort. Today we are asking for state funds to assist with the continued development, materials production and management costs of the Trail. An outline follows:

PROPOSAL FOR STATE FUNDS FOR VCWHT

Summary

The VCWHT Steering Group requests \$30,000 in state funds for continued development of the Trail, to be awarded to the Milton Historical Society for management.

Request

Please review and provide comments. We will be pleased to follow up with formal paperwork as recommended after making any changes deemed necessary.

Amount

Although the project can move forward with a lesser amount, the \$30,000 funding would give some latitude for the scope of the activities and should cover expenses for the remainder of the next two calendar years. This will develop the project to a point where it may become self-sustaining and not require a further infusion of state funds.

Scope

The requested funds will be used in the next phase of full development of the project, to include the following action items, to be expanded as need arises and funding permits:

Marketing and Interpretation

- Develop and produce marketing and interpretive materials
- Formal site markers / signage
- Mobile app audio/video tours
- Video program or series production, to facilitate further collaboration among the various site owners/managers.
- More dynamic web site and next round of print materials and distribution

Infrastructure and Research

- Formal establishment of criteria for inclusion in the trail
- Identification of existing sites, organizations, and institutions suitable for inclusion
- Exploration of additional candidate sites and partners
- Creation of a database of information relating to the VCWHT
- Development of a plan for promotion of the Trail
- Determination of financial plan for ongoing development and maintenance of Trail

There are myriad ways that this Trail can be further promoted, developed and can cross-reference key Civil War sites throughout the state (through media, web site, and much more) to provide additional value, and we plan to work on that incrementally.

Schedule

- Starting date immediately upon receipt of funds and approval of action plan
- Deliverables on rolling basis by contracted persons

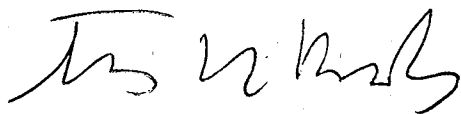
- Soft launch was August 2017. Goal of larger, formal launch with widespread collaborative event(s) late summer/early fall 2018
- Periodic reports on status of trail development

Administration

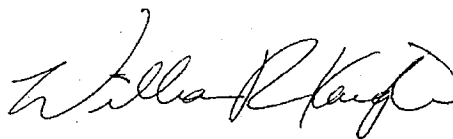
- Funds will be allocated to Milton Historical Society for disbursement as requested by Steering Group. Fiscal sponsorship agreement will be created, and Trail-specific accounting will be developed.
- Steering Group should identify priorities for action, persons responsible for deliverables, and procedures required for actions.
- Persons hired for actions will be Independent Contractors to be reimbursed for authorized expenses (travel, supplies, etc.) and paid an hourly fee for services.
- Individuals and Milton Historical Society shall be relieved of any personal or organizational responsibility other than usual and proper handling of funds.

The *Vermont in the Civil War Heritage Trail* is an exciting offering to tie together and promote Vermont's enormous contribution to the Great Conflict. Thank you for your review and consideration of this proposal, and we look forward to hearing from you. We can be reached directly any time to discuss any details: 802-893-6791, trichards@pshift.com / 802-734-0758, bill@yeolddesignshoppe.net.

Sincerely,



Terry Richards



Bill Kaigle