

Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments

January 26, 2024

MINUTES

The special meeting of the Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments was held as a virtual meeting via Google Meet. The meeting was chaired by Secretary Rebecca Flora.

Commissioners Present: Nancy Kurtz, Lauren Schiszik, Ellen B. Chase, C. Ryan Patterson, Cheryl A. Jewitt, Gail Schnell, Peter Morrill, Jenny M. Carson, Ph.D., Susan Cooke Soderberg, Raymond H. Shipley Jr., Stephen S. Hammond, Alfred Mendelsohn, Hon. Victor Kuras Butanis, Rebecca Flora (chair)

MDP Staff: Elizabeth Hughes, Stacy Montgomery

I. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Rebecca Flora called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. A quorum of Commissioners was recorded as present. Commissioners provided a brief biography.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Flora called for approval of the minutes. Commissioner Butanis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morrill, that the October 25, 2023 meeting minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was approved unanimously, with one abstention from Secretary Flora.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present who wished to provide comment.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

Stacy Montgomery presented the financial report.

FY2023

\$150,000 Capital Budget line item for stripping and rewaxing of all 41 monuments

- Contract awarded to Art Solutions Lab, LLC for \$184,422.59.
- The first part of this contract was completed in Fall of 2023

\$17,000 general fund item to support conservation of miscellaneous projects, to include:

- M404: Kenmore High School World War II Plaque, Elkton (\$2,600) - completed January 2024
- M164: Civil War Tablets (GAR), Cherry Hill Cemetery, Elkton (\$13,467)

FY2024

\$17,000 general fund item to support conservation of miscellaneous projects, to include:

- M348: Keedysville World War II Monument (\$14,775) - completed November 2023
- Maryland History Day Prize (\$500)
- Others TBD

V. OLD BUSINESS

Maryland History Day Prize – FY24

Ms. Montgomery gave an update on the proposal to award a prize at [Maryland History Day](#). At the October 2023 meeting of the Commission, the Commissioners voted in favor of sponsoring a History Day prize as part of the Maryland Humanities Council History Day program:

Title: Excellence in Military History, sponsored by the Maryland Military Monuments Commission

Description: This prize is awarded to projects involving any aspect of military history, including commemorative artworks, architecture, programs, events, etc., associated with military service.

MHT staff, at the direction of the Commission, followed up with the Maryland Humanities History Day staff to ensure that the prize description wasn't too narrow to be awarded. In the discussion, the Maryland Humanities staff believed that there would be plenty of projects that might qualify, especially since the topic for 2024 is Turning Points in History. They shared that in recent years many of the projects about war and the military, that the Maryland Humanities Staff would consider for the prize, were critical of both. They would also consider entries about Wars in and between other countries.

Judging of which projects receive awards is conducted by Maryland Humanities Council staff based on direction provided by prize sponsors. Ms. Montgomery asked if the feedback from the Maryland Humanities staff would impact the Commission's award proposal. Prize proposals are due to the Maryland Humanities by the end of February 2024 if they will be a part of the 2024 History Day on May 4, 2024.

Commissioners Mendelsohn, Patterson, Morrill, Schiszik, and Butanis commented that they were ok with these kinds of projects being awarded the prize. Commissioner Mendelsohn suggested that the title be modified to include United States History. Judge Butanis asked the Commission to consider limiting the award to Maryland; however, after some discussion, specifically about the national nature of the competition, it was determined that limiting the award to Maryland might make it too narrow.

Secretary Flora summarized the discussion- that MHT staff should proceed with submitting the award to the Maryland Humanities Council, with the addition of "United States" to the title.

Several commissioners stated that they had been and planned to be judges for Maryland History Day and asked to confirm that there would be no conflict with judging if this prize was awarded. It was determined that this was not a conflict since the judges did not get to award the prizes.

Commissioner Mendelsohn encouraged others to participate as judges.

Secretary Flora asked Ms. Montgomery to send commissioners information on how to get involved in Maryland History Day.

Town of Elkton Doughboy Monument / MSAC Public Art Across Maryland Conservation Grant

Commissioner Kurtz updated the commission on the Town of Elkton's MSAC application for the Doughboy Monument. The town will apply for a planning grant this year.

Memorial Grove, Druid Hill Park, Baltimore City

Commissioner Morrill asked that the commission look into sponsoring work on the Memorial Grove in Druid Hill Park in Baltimore City. He requested that MHT staff arrange a meeting between Baltimore City Recreation and Parks and other groups with an interest in this. The commission can learn about any plans in the works and can the commission help to fundraise. Commissioner Patterson seconded this idea, stating that this would bring resources and attention to this area.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

[HB133 To establish a Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland](#)

Ms. Montgomery shared that several commissioners had expressed interest in providing a letter of support for this bill as a commission and wanted to discuss this at the meeting today.

Secretary Flora shared that there is a companion bill, SB448, and asked if commissioners had more specifics to share.

Commissioner Morrill stated that he was in favor of the bill.

Commissioner Schiszik shared that the bill did call for a member of this commission to serve on this commission. Commissioner Schiszik also shared that the bill called for the formation of a commission to study African American soldiers who served in the Civil War in Maryland, to make findings and recommendations regarding the funding, design, construction, and location of a memorial dedicated to African American Civil War soldiers in Maryland, that a report shall be prepared by December 1, 2024, and that the commission will be staffed by the Maryland State Archives.

The commission discussed previous precedents for support of bills, whether the format of a task force might be appropriate, and how previous memorial studies have been organized. The commissioners discussed their overall support of the intent of the bill and that the details could be worked out in the legislative session.

Ms. Hughes shared that the Maryland State Archives has a lot of material on USCT, that there is not much of a fiscal note as the costs will come with the creation of any memorial that the study from this bill might suggest.

Secretary Flora called for a motion. Commissioner Morrill made a motion that a letter of support be sent on behalf of the commission, and that the letter state that the commission will identify a member to serve on the proposed commission. Commissioner Soderberg seconded the motion. There were 9 votes in favor (Kurtz, Schiszik, Chase, Patterson, Jewitt, Morrill, Carson, Soderberg, Shipley), 4 abstentions (Schnell, Mendelsohn, Butanis, Sec. Flora), and 3 members absent (Villanueva, Fischer, Hammond).

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Commission will take place on April 24, 2024. In the intervening months, Stacy Montgomery will identify opportunities for Commissioners to observe monument conservation work being undertaken.

VIII. ADJOURN

Secretary Flora called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Commissioner Butanis and seconded by Commissioner Patterson. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.