

## **Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments**

October 24, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Pursuant to notice, the regular meeting of the Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments was held by teleconference.

Commissioners Present: Sandra Schrader, Chair; Nancy Kurtz, Lauren Schiszik, Ellen Chase, Barrett McKown, Cheryl Jewitt, Gail Schnell, Peter Morrill, Susan Soderberg, Jari Villaneuva, Andre Martel, Bryan Fischer, Alfred Mendelsohn, Stephen Hammond, Anthony Wisniewski.

Commissioners Absent: David Craig, Jenny Carson, Dennis Rude

MHT Staff: Steven Allan, Nell Ziehl

MDP Staff: Maria Sofia

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schrader called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM and welcomed two new Commissioners - Ellen B. Chase and David R. Craig.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Allan reported that Commissioner Wisniewski requested the January meeting minutes be amended to include the following language: "Commissioner Wisniewski suggested that the rule of law has not been adhered to by the City of Baltimore, and that prudence should give way to decisiveness at a certain point."

Commissioner Wisniewski made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hammond, that the January meeting minutes be approved as corrected. The Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

### **III. Financial Report**

Mr. Allan reported that the Fiscal Year 2019 monument conservation work is complete. Expenditures included \$14,453 plus \$115 disbursed to the conservator for work on Western Maryland maintenance group 2. \$1,200 remains reserved in the Special Fund for the paver repair at the Hammann-Costin WWI Medal of Honor Memorial (Baltimore City) but there has been no movement on this project.

Mr. Allen explained that the Department of Budget and Management redirected funds for FY20 from the MDP budget due to the COVID-19 emergency, which resulted in cancellation of the RFP that had just been issued. A subsequent request made to the MHT Board of Trustees Heritage Preservation Fund to pay for this work was approved which allowed the RFP to be reissued. The Commission is grateful to the Board of Trustees for this action.

MDP has issued a contract totaling \$12,370 for conservation and maintenance of 17 monuments and tablets located in northeast Maryland and the Eastern Shore. The Special Fund balance remains at \$3,438.

Commissioner Martel made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McKown, to accept the financial report as submitted. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### IV. Babcock Monument Removal and Conservation.

The Fort Babcock Military Monument, relocated to the Port Covington area in the 1950s, consists of a cannon atop a granite plinth with an affixed bronze plaque. The monument was erected by the National Star-Spangled Banner Centennial Commission in 1914 to mark the site of Fort Babcock, a small military installation significant to the 1814 Battle of Baltimore which was impacted by the construction of I-95 in the mid-twentieth century. The Port Covington developer, Weller Development, has requested that the monument be moved to a new location due, in part, to concerns about the language of the plaque which honors Captain John Adams Webster, a slaveholder.

The War of 1812 Society owns the monument and is in possession of the plaque. The cannon is now being conserved by the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory and the plinth remains on site. The Society has offered to affix a new plaque to the monument which would omit Captain Webster's name. The Society is seeking the Commission's support for their efforts to retain the monument in its current location.

The Commissioners discussed various options for the monument including alternative locations and contextualization of the monument and site with new interpretive signage.

Chair Schrader made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Martel, in support of the relocation and preservation of the entirety of the Fort Babcock Military Monument. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Schrader directed Mr. Allan to work with Commissioner Schiszik and the Baltimore Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) on the preparation of a letter indicating the Commission's support for preservation of the monument.

#### V. Changes to Scope of Work for FY2019 and FY2020

Mr. Allan reported that a change to the scope of work for conservation treatment in FY2019 included the reassignment of funds from the Confederate Monument in Cumberland (M004) to the Western Maryland Railroad World War I Honor Roll monument in Hagerstown.

Mr. Allan presented the list of 17 (revised to 16) monuments to receive conservation treatment in FY2020. These monuments (Maintenance Group 3) are located in northeast Maryland and on the Eastern Shore and will include:

M238 Harford County World War I Monument, Bel Air

M240 G.A.R. Monument, Havre de Grace  
M241 John O'Neill Monument, Havre de Grace  
M172 Memorial Gate Civil War Tablets, North East  
M169 World War I Doughboy Memorial, Elkton  
M165 World War I Monument, Chesapeake City  
M190 World War I Doughboy Monument, MD 331, Hurlock  
M185 Thomas H. Hicks Monument, Cambridge  
M187 World War I Memorial Fountain, Cambridge  
M188 World War II Memorial, Cambridge  
M373 Wicomico County War Memorial, Salisbury  
M385 World War I Monument, Snow Hill  
M386 World War II Monument, Snow Hill  
M383 Korean War plaque, Snow Hill  
M384 Vietnam War plaque, Snow Hill  
M319 Spirit of the American Doughboy Monument, Crisfield

Mr. Allan reported that funds originally allocated for the Talbot Boys Monument (M329) in FY2020 have been reassigned to the Elkton WWI Monument (M169) which is in greater need of repair at this time.

Commissioner Schiszik inquired if the Commission had concerns about the conservation of Confederate monuments located in cemeteries. Commissioner Soderberg responded that cemeteries, as burial places, are considered to be hallowed ground and the role of monuments in that context is different from that in a public space. Discussion ensued regarding whether the Commission wished to foster a continuing conversation about the role of monuments in society today. Chair Schrader suggested that time could be dedicated to that discussion at a future meeting. Commissioners Mendelsohn and Schiszik expressed their interest in participating in the discussion.

#### V. Announcements

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on January 27, 2021. If conditions allow, the meeting will be held in person at 100 Community Place in Crownsville, MD. Otherwise, the meeting will be held by teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.