

**Minutes of the  
One Hundred and Fourth Meeting of the  
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority  
July 11, 2024**

The one hundred and fourth meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened in person on July 11, 2024 at 100 Community Place in Crownsville and was open to the public.

**Authority Members/Designees Present**

Secretary Rebecca M. Flora (MD Department of Planning and serving as the Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); Melissa Archer (representing MD Department of Housing & Community Development Secretary Jake Day); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson); Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Pete Leshner (Maryland Association of Counties representative); Natalie Chabot (Maryland Greenways Commission representative); Dennis Doster (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Peter Ramsey (representing MD State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury); Julie Schablitsky (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld); Sandy Turner (Maryland Tourism Development Board representative); Jonathan Hughes (Speaker of the House representative); Nathan Brown (Maryland Municipal League representative); John Turgeon (representing MD Department of Natural Resources Secretary Josh Kurtz)

**Authority Members/Designees Absent**

Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as the Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); Geoffrey Newman (representing Maryland Department of Higher Education Acting Secretary Sanjay Rai); Mary Anne Harms (Speaker of the House representative); Nicholas Redding (President of the Senate representative); Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks)

**Staff Present**

Ariane Hofstedt (Administrator, Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Martha Waldron (Assistant Administrator, Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Andrew Arvizu (Assistant Administrator, Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Adam Snyder (Office of the Attorney General)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Secretary Rebecca Flora convened the meeting at 12:01 PM and thanked everyone for attending.

Mr. Andrew Arvizu conducted the roll call.

Secretary Flora introduced the newest Authority member, Mr. Nathan Brown, Mayor of the City of Brunswick. Mr. Brown thanked Secretary Flora and expressed his excitement to serve in this role.

### **MHAA Chairperson Report**

Secretary Flora asked if Ms. Hofstedt could provide an update on the member terms and appointments.

Ms. Hofstedt reported that there is one vacant position on the Authority: one of the two appointed positions by the President of the Maryland Senate. Staff and Secretary Flora are hoping to get this position filled, perhaps in an interim capacity, by the end of the year.

Ms. Hofstedt also reported that there are several Authority member terms that will be ending in September of 2024. These members are Nicholas Redding, Mary Anne Harms, Natalie Chabot, and Bob Campbell. According to statute, "At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed..." Ms. Hofstedt recognized these members for their commitment and service to MHAA and expressed hope that they stay in their positions while a successor is replaced. The earliest these positions would be replaced is April 2025 – after being confirmed by Senate during session.

Additionally, Ms. Hofstedt noted that Mr. Campbell is currently sitting as the Vice Chair and with his term ending, a new vice chair will need to be elected. This election typically takes place at the July Authority meeting, but we will be pushing this vote to the October meeting. She urged the group to think about nominating someone (or themselves) for this position.

Secretary Flora expressed the importance of new leadership and encouraged everyone to consider stepping into this role.

### **Action Items**

#### **Resolution R-100 to Approve Minutes from April 11, 2024 meeting**

Secretary asked for comments and called for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 11 MHAA meeting. Ms. Natalie Chabot made the following motion which Ms. Elizabeth Fitzsimmons seconded.

The motion passed with Mr. Nathan Brown abstaining.

**RESOLVED**, that the Authority approves the April 11, 2024 Minutes as presented.

#### **Resolution R-200 to Approve a Not to Exceed Cap on the Reservation of Emergency and Unspent Funds Available for FY 2025**

Secretary Flora noted that this action has been a topic of discussion before. As we've seen recently with the Key Bridge collapse, having an emergency fund is incredibly useful. This resolution should give us an answer to the question of "how much emergency funds are too much?"

Ms. Hofstedt reminded the Authority that the reserve fund is made up of the accumulation of unspent funds from previous years' grants and any unspent money from reserved emergency funds that have been set aside from previous years. The Authority is being asked to discuss if a cap should be set – and how much – on the amount of reserve funds available above and beyond the current year FY25 emergency \$100,000 allotment. COVID emergency grants awarded in FY20 are an example of how these funds have been used. The Maryland Heritage Areas Financing Fund balance is currently \$338,826.76.

Secretary Flora asked the Authority how much is reasonable to reserve beyond the emergency allotment and opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Liz Fitzsimmons said that since the reserve fund is made up of dollars from projects that were unable to spend their full grant award, this fund shouldn't technically exist because we want all these dollars to go into the landscape.

Ms. Julie Schablitsky asked about how much money was used during COVID.

Ms. Hofstedt replied that all the available money in the fund was used: \$600,000.

Secretary Flora expressed that she feels that there is a desire to set a cap so we can put this money to work. COVID is the only metric or incident to reference.

Ms. Natalie Chabot asked if the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition has an opinion.

Ms. Lucille Walker, co-chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition, replied that they have had a variety of conversations about it and are eager to see what the Authority thinks. There is certainly a need and would like to see as much as possible put to use. She thinks that the more money that is sitting there, the more there is a chance that it could be taken away. She suggested reserving a minimum amount for emergency and utilizing the rest.

Mr. Pete Leshar also worried about the state budget crunch/claw back and would hate to see these funds allocated for heritage tourism taken back and echoed Ms. Walker's sentiment. He suggested that \$500,000 might be too high of a cap but would not go below \$100,000. Mr. Leshar suggested a number within this range.

Secretary Flora agreed that the state budget is a continual concern and reminded the Authority that just because we set a cap this year doesn't mean we can't change it in the future. She asked Ms. Hofstedt to remind the Authority how much emergency money was used last year.

Ms. Hofstedt replied that approximately \$35,000 was drawn down from emergency funds set aside in FY24.

Ms. Melissa Archer said that because she is in favor for the upcoming resolution R-300 to fund reserve list grants with these funds, setting a cap is important and asked about the process for identifying reserve list grants.

Ms. Hofstedt pointed out that Resolution R-300 outlines the process: "... in the order in which they appear in the Chart. If the amount of the Reserve Funds that exceeds the Reserve Funds Cap is less than the amount of the next grant on the Reserve List Grants, then grants may be awarded out of order or funds can accumulate until the next grant on the Reserve List Grants is able to be funded."

Mr. Jonathan Hughes asked about how much emergency funding has been granted in the past.

Ms. Hofstedt replied that there has been a huge range, but we tend to typically see \$10,000-\$40,000 emergency requests, but it varies.

Secretary Flora proposed that the Authority set the cap at \$100,000. Any remaining funds beyond \$100,000 will be utilized as a source of funding for the FY25 applications on the reserve list.

Mr. Peter Leshar made a motion. Ms. Natalie Chabot seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions.

**RESOLVED**, that the Authority approves setting a not to exceed amount of \$100,000 for the reserve funds in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund. The reserve funds are comprised of (i) cancelled or unspent prior years' grant funds returned to MHAA, and (ii) unspent reserved emergency funds from prior fiscal years (together, the "Reserve Funds"). The not the exceed amount stated above for the Reserve Funds is referred to as the "Reserve Funds Cap." Reserve Funds do not include FY 2025 emergency funds in the amount of \$100,000 approved by the Authority under Resolution R-300 at its meeting on January 11, 2024.

#### Resolution R-300 to Approve FY25 Reserve List Grants

Ms. Hofstedt said that this resolution is to approve the use of funds *in excess* of the \$100,000 cap that was just put in place to go towards projects that are listed on the reserve list. If the reserve fund cap is less than the amount on the list, awards can be made out of order or wait until funds have accumulated. She also pointed out that there is one FY25 project that was partially funded, simply because these were the only remaining funds when the funding threshold was reached. The Authority can choose to fully fund that project using funds from the Reserve Fund.

Ms. Chabot asked why the remaining amount of this application did not go, on the reserve list?

Ms. Hofstedt replied that usually applications that are approved, either fully or partially, don't go on the reserve list. This is an unusual year in that the Authority is taking action on the reserve list at the same time they are acting on the fiscal year grants. Ms. Archer expressed desire to make motion to fully fund the last application in the chart.

Mr. Leshar agreed and wanted a record of the rationale, which in this case, is that there was not enough money to fully fund the project without using the additional funds.

Secretary Flora clarified that the intent is to ensure that a project that wasn't fully funded simply because we ran out of money, would be funded out of this pot.

Secretary Flora asked for motion to approve the resolution with an amendment to recommend the partially funded project be fully funded.

Mr. Leshar made the following motion, which Ms. Archer seconded.

**RESOLVED**, that the Authority approves the use of funds in the Reserve Funds that exceed the Reserve Funds Cap approved in Resolution R-200 at its meeting on July 11, 2024 to fully fund the one FY 2025 grant that, because of insufficient funds, had been only partially funded (i.e., the Galesville Community Center's project entitled "From Tragedy to Transformation: Crownsville Hospital Story through Oral Histories"), and to use any remaining excess funds to fund the grants designated as the FY 2025 "Reserve List Grants" on the chart titled the "Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Awards: Fiscal Year 2025" (the "2025 Chart"), in the order in which they appear in the Chart. If the amount of the Reserve Funds that exceeds the Reserve Funds Cap is less than the amount of the next grant on the Reserve List Grants, then grants may be awarded out of order or funds can accumulate until the next grant on the Reserve List Grants is able to be funded.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Resolution R-400 to Approve Funding Requests: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Management, Marketing and Block Grants (collectively referred to as the "Resolution R-400 Grants")

Secretary Flora thanked the Authority for adhering to confidentially on grant chart that was distributed prior to the meeting and asked for a motion to approve this resolution.

Ms. Archer made the following motion, which Mr. Leshar seconded.

**RESOLVED**, that the Authority approves funding for Resolution R-400 Grants consisting of thirteen management grants, three marketing grants, and thirteen block grants, as detailed and

in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart, attached to these resolutions, and made part of Resolution R-400, for the management and marketing of certified heritage areas, including Anacostia Trails, Chesapeake Crossroads, Baltimore National, Beach to Bay, Canal Place (Passages of the Western Potomac), Heart of Chesapeake Country, Heart of the Civil War, Lower Susquehanna, Montgomery County, Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West, Patapsco Valley, Southern Maryland National and Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Areas.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Resolution R-500 to Approve Funding Requests: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Capital and Non-Capital Grants (collectively referred to as the “Resolution R-500 Grants”)

Secretary Flora explained that this resolution and the resolutions to follow are broken out separately to account for Authority members who needed to recuse themselves from the vote. She asked for a moment to look at these wholistically and then gave the opportunity to the Authority to ask a question before moving forward with voting.

Ms. Hofstedt explained that typically, Kevin McDonald, chair of the state MHAA Grants Review Panel, gives an overview of the grants up for approval, but he was unavailable to attend the meeting. He submitted a memo, which Ms. Hofstedt summarized: the grants review panel is recommending 55 capital and non-capital project grants, for approval (not including the reserve list grants). The grants review panel noted this was a particularly high-need year with a large proportion of capital asks. Because of this, and the rising cost of construction and inflation, the panel decided to fund all recommended requests at 100%. Ms. Hofstedt also highlighted that there was over \$9.1 million in total requests over 167 applications and \$6.5 million were just in capital needs alone. The panel made a concentrated effort to and succeeded in funding at least 20% of every Heritage Area’s total ask. All but one Heritage Area had their top three projects land above the funding line.

Ms. Hofstedt reminded the Authority that, per their request last October, the staff made a concerted effort this year to more fully support local heritage area 1 -2- 3 priorities by adjusting the way state scores were averaged and inputted into the algorithm so they mimicked how it was done at the local level. In addition, the grants review panel was reconfigured into 8 small groups that were all assigned the same 20 or so applications from only 2 - 3 heritage areas This allowed them to get to know heritage area priorities more closely and provided more time for the heritage areas to present their ranking letters and answer panelist questions in a small group meeting that took place before the two final decision meetings. . Formal feedback sessions with the grants review panelists will be done this fall.

Ms. Walker said that the Coalition appreciates these efforts.

Secretary Flora thanked Ms. Hofstedt and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve Resolution R-500.

The following motion was made by Mr. Peter Ramsey and seconded by Ms. Chabot.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Area Authority approves funding of Resolution R-500 Grants consisting of (i) 27 capital projects; (ii) 16 noncapital project grants for projects and activities within the CHAs (not including the Separately Approved Grants approved pursuant to Resolutions R-600, through R-1700 below), as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-500 as “Full Funding” or “Partial Funding”.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Resolution R-600 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants to (i) Historic Sotterley Inc. for the “Southern Maryland Heritage Festival” Project; (ii) Historic Sotterley Inc. for the “Rehabilitation of Existing Structure into a Visitor Center” Project; and (iii) Calvert Marine Museum Society, Inc. for the “Patuxent: A Pictorial Encyclopedic History of Maryland’s Forgotten River” Project

The following motion was made by Mr. Leshner and seconded by Mr. Ramsey.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves grants to Historic Sotterley Inc. for the Southern Maryland Heritage Festival project and the Rehabilitation of Existing Structure into a Visitor Center project, and to the Calvert Marine Museum Society, Inc. for the Patuxent: A Pictorial Encyclopedic History of Maryland’s Forgotten River project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-600. (Recused: Mary Anne Harms)

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution R-700 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants to (i) Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the “Renovation of Edna E. Lockwood Deck” Project; (ii) Sultana Education Foundation, Inc. for the “Public Heritage Programs at the Lawrence Wetlands Preserve” Project; and (iii) Maryland Center for History and Culture for the “Painted Screens: A Baltimore Folk Art Tradition” Project

The following motion was made by Mr. Dennis Doster, which was seconded by Ms. Chabot.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves grants to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the Renovation of Edna E. Lockwood Deck project, the Sultana Education Foundation, Inc. for the Public Heritage Programs at the Lawrence Wetlands Preserve project, and the Maryland Center for History and Culture for the Painted Screens: A Baltimore Folk Art

Tradition project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-700. (Recused: Peter Leshner)

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution R-800 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants to (i) University of Maryland, Baltimore for the “Historic Fountain Restoration at Donaldson Brown Center” Project; (ii) The National Washington Rochambeau Association for the “Washington Rochambeau National Historic Trail 250th Trail Town Inclusion and Awareness Campaigns in BNHA and LSHA” Project,; and (iii) County Council of Dorchester County for the “Revealing the All American Road” Project

The following motion was made by Ms. Archer and seconded by Ms. Schablitzky.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves grants to University of Maryland, Baltimore for the Historic Fountain Restoration at Donaldson Brown Center project, The National Washington Rochambeau Association for the Washington Rochambeau National Historic Trail 250th Trail Town Inclusion and Awareness Campaigns in BNHA and LSHA project, and the County Council of Dorchester County for the Revealing The All American Road project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-800. (Recused: Sandy Turner)

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution R-900 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to (i) Baltimore Streetcar Museum, Inc. for the “Baltimore Streetcar Museum Exhibition Upgrade, Phase 3: Outer Room Exhibits” Project; and (ii) Preservation Maryland for the “Ellicott City Jail Rehabilitation” Project

The following motion was made by Mr. Ramsey and seconded by Ms. Chabot.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves grants to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum, Inc. for the Baltimore Streetcar Museum Exhibition Upgrade, Phase 3: Outer Room Exhibits project, and Preservation Maryland for the Ellicott City Jail Rehabilitation project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-900.(Recused: Nicholas Redding)

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution R-1000 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2025 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to the City of Brunswick for the “Berlin House Rehabilitation Project: Exterior Restoration” Project

The following motion was made by Mr. Ramsey and seconded by Ms. Archer.

**RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves a grant to City of Brunswick for the Berlin House Rehabilitation Project: Exterior Restoration project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the 2025 Chart made part of Resolution R-1000. (Recused: Nathan Brown)

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution R-1100 Authorization to MHAA Staff

Secretary Flora summarized that this resolution allows for the staff to efficiently administer the grants process and called for a motion.

Ms. Fitzsimmons made the following motion, which was seconded by Ms. Turner.

**RESOLVED**, that the MHAA staff is authorized to prepare any documents necessary or useful in order to carry out the grants approved each fiscal year by the Authority, in conformance with the terms set forth in the grant chart approved each fiscal year by the Authority (a “Chart”). Staff is further authorized to make minor adjustments to the approved grant scopes of work, timetables, and budgets set forth in a Chart and the grant applications, including the allocation of Authority grant funds to specific line items in the project budgets, and the required amounts of matching funds. Such adjustments shall be made in compliance with MHAA statutes and regulations, and shall not materially alter the work, activities or products of the grant projects as approved by the Authority.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Leshar complimented the program staff for the preparation of this meeting and the grant round in general, especially when it came to providing the materials to the Authority well in advance of the meeting.

Secretary Flora hopes that this reflects that she and the staff are listening.

**Member Announcements/New Business**

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes shared that the Maryland Museums Association and many partners, including the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition, were successful in passing legislation this past session which gives returned attention to the Museum Assistance Program that operated within the Maryland Historical Trust for many years. This legislation spoke to a desired funding level of

\$5 million but did not mandate it. She also mentioned that MHT has received some inquiries from the public about when the application will be available and wanted to clarify that the program is not funded at this point in time. For anyone who expresses interest in the program, she hopes they'll advocate for funding in the next legislative session.

Secretary Flora mentioned that there will be a Board of Public Works meeting soon to discuss reductions in state agency budgets. She shared that Governor Moore is committed to dealing with the structural deficit starting with internal cuts. So far, MDP programs have not been cut.

Ms. Fitzsimmons shared the Department of Commerce's recently published economic impact numbers.

### **Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition Report**

Ms. Walker shared that the Coalition is hopeful that the upcoming strategic plan process will clarify confusion between MHT and MHAA both at the state and local level. They also want to outline ways in which state agencies can support certified heritage areas, as stated in the original statute.

Ms. Walker also referenced the memo that was sent to the Authority from the Coalition regarding the \$300,000 allocated to the MHT Non-Capital Grant Program from the Maryland Heritage Areas Financing Fund. They respectfully asked for this allocation not to be requested for fiscal year 2025 and instead, be incorporated into the available MHAA funding.

The Coalition continues to advocate for the program within another challenging funding year. Ms. Walker suggested that Program Open Space has a big target on it this year and the Coalition is advocating on numerous levels, including at the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and Maryland Association of Counties (MACo).

Mx. Baco gave brief update on the outreach they've done for the program at MML with Shauntee Daniels.

Ms. Walker then asked the heritage area directors and staff present to introduce themselves to the new Authority members and specifically welcomed Amber Sanders, director of Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area, to her first in-person MHAA meeting.

Secretary Flora thanked the Coalition for the work they do and took note of Ms. Walker's comment about engaging with other state agencies. She wants to connect, perhaps, with these representatives before the October meeting.

Secretary Flora also requested a follow-up conversation with the Coalition co-chairs to better understand the memo that was sent around before the next MHAA meeting.

### **Adjourn**

Ms. Hofstedt reported that October 8, 2024 is the 2024 Main Street Maryland Conference, which conflicts with the next in-person MHAA meeting and asked if any Authority members plan to attend.

Secretary Flora requested a poll to figure this out.

Lastly, Ms. Hofstedt brought the heritage area highlights that were distributed prior to the meeting to the attention of the Authority and reminded everyone that Governor Moore's office will be issuing a press release about the grant making decisions made today. This press release will go out on Friday, July 12 and the grant decisions made at today's meeting are confidential until then. Once the press release is issued, notifications to applicants will be sent.

Ms. Fitzsimmons motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Hughes.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:03 PM.