

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MEETING
Thursday, January 23 at 10:00 AM

Pursuant to notice, the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Historical Trust was held as a virtual meeting.

Trustees present: Laura Mears, Jeffrey Buchheit, Albert L. Feldstein, Sarah Kunkel Filkins, Benjamin Ford, Darius Johnson, Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., Kristine Roome, and Rebecca L. Flora.

Area Representatives present: Dean Camlin, Dickerson Charlton, Sakinah Linder, Lisa Sasser, Harry T. Spikes, II, Tom Vitanza, and Kirsti Uunila.

Office of the Attorney General: Adam Snyder, Rieyn DeLony

MHT Staff: Elizabeth Hughes, Anne Raines, Kathy Monday, Marcia Miller, Heather Barrett, Jessica French, Grace Davenport, Rod Cofield, Collin Ingraham, and Matthew Migliozi.

Members of the Public: Gerard (Rod) Wm. Wittstadt, Jr., Terry Klima

AGENDA

R1 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laura Mears called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. A quorum of Board members was present.

Chair Mears welcomed new Board member Dr. Benjamin Ford who will fill the Maritime Archaeology seat on the Board which was previously held by Dr. Jim Delgado.

Chair Mears reported that Mr. Sam Parker has decided to resign from the Board effective immediately. After a 15-year tenure on the Board, Mr. Parker indicated that he is seeking to pursue other interests and wishes the Board the very best. Mr. Charlton recommended that a letter of appreciation be sent to Mr. Parker in recognition of his service on the Board.

R2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Spikes made a motion, seconded by Ms. Roome, to approve the December 5, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

R3 PUBLIC COMMENT

Gerard Wm. Wittstadt, Jr., Esquire, counsel to the Sons of Confederate Veterans, expressed his concern about potential threats to the Baltimore City Confederate Monuments from the wildfires burning in the Los Angeles area and inquired if they are property insured. He asked that MHT

provide the Sons of the Confederate Veterans with an update on their location and the status of their insurance. He noted that the Sons of the Confederate Veterans had previously offered to buy the statues in exchange for the establishment of a scholarship for Baltimore City public high school students who sought to study history and that this offer still stands.

Terry Klima, Division Commander, Maryland branch of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, expressed concern about the dual role of Harry Spikes who serves on the MHT Board, has acted as a liaison between Baltimore City and MHT on the Confederate Monument issue, and serves as the Chair of the Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, which is staffed by Eric Holcomb. He expressed disappointment that there was an offer by a Maryland organization to take possession of the monuments but instead they were sent to Los Angeles where he feels they are under threat. He urged that the proposed RFP to relocate the monuments once they return to Maryland be handled with fairness and equity.

R4 COMMITTEE REPORTS

R100 Capital Programs Committee

R101 Monument Relocation Working Group Report

Mr. Robinson reported that the Working Group had completed work on the draft RFP recommended for use by Baltimore City to solicit interest in host sites for the Baltimore City Confederate monuments once they return to Maryland. The RFP document has been sent to the City for its consideration.

He also reported that a loan agreement with the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, which will be hosting the exhibit developed by The Brick (formerly LAXART), is being drafted. OAG and MHT staff have met with representatives of MOCA, The Brick, and the City of Baltimore to ensure that the MOCA loan agreement includes the same provisions that MHT requested be included in the agreement between The Brick and Baltimore City.

Regarding Mr. Wittstadt's inquiry during the public comment period about the threat to the monuments posed by the current fires in Los Angeles, Mr. Robinson explained that the monuments are in storage in a location outside of the State of California and therefore are not under threat. He also clarified that it was Baltimore City's decision, not MHT's, to loan the monuments for the purpose of the MONUMENTS exhibition, since Baltimore City is the owner of the monuments.

He indicated that the MONUMENTS exhibit opening is currently scheduled for October 19, 2025.

Mr. Charlton indicated that it will be important for MHT to respond to the concerns expressed by Mr. Wittstadt and Mr. Klima in the public comment period regarding insurance and other issues.

Ms. DeLony informed the Board that the monuments are insured with a fine arts wall-to-wall insurance policy.

R200 Survey, Registration, Community Education & Museums Committee

R201R JPPM Strategic Plan

Rod Cofield, Executive Director of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM), presented the JPPM Strategic Plan to the Board. He explained that the plan is used to establish priorities, focus resources, and strengthen operations to ensure that staff and other stakeholders are working toward common goals.

JPPM’s most recent strategic plan was approved in 2013. Since that time, JPPM has accomplished many of the 2013 plan's goals, undertaken multiple capital projects, and has increased visitation and programming. The 2025 strategic plan presented here reflects those changes and includes updated goals and objectives. Revisions to the plan demonstrate how JPPM is aligning its efforts with the Maryland State Historic Preservation Plan (Heritage 2031) approved by the MHT Board earlier this year, and the MDP Strategic Plan finalized in the summer of 2023.

Development of the plan began in August 2023. JPPM staff worked with Max van Balgooy, principal of the firm Engaging Places, to develop a revised mission statement, goals, values, and interpretive themes. Five meetings occurred between August 2023 and April 2024. The first four meetings involved all staff, some volunteers, and interested members from the JPPM Friends group. The final meeting consisted of a cross-sectional working group to finalize draft concepts. In August 2024, the final draft plan was presented and discussed at an all-staff meeting. Revisions to the plan were made based on feedback from that meeting. The JPPM Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the draft strategic plan at its October 2024 meeting. The final step in the plan approval process is MHT Board approval.

Secretary Flora expressed her appreciation for JPPM staff’s work on the plan.

Mr. Robinson offered the following motion, seconded by Ms. Uunila, which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Historical Trust Board of Trustees approves of the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum Strategic Plan, 2025-2030.

Following the vote, Mr. Cofield reported on ongoing activities at JPPM and reported that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Patterson House project is tentatively scheduled for May 7th. All Board members will be invited to that event.

R202R Non-Capital Grant Fund – Reallocation of FY21 Recaptured Funds

Jessica French, National Register Administrator, reported that the FY21 Historic Preservation Non-Capital grant project known as the Maryland Slave Dwelling Survey was completed with a balance of \$16,976.20 in unused funds; all work was accomplished, and all deliverables were received. As part of the project close out, MHT will recapture these funds. As the remainder of

the FY21 grant projects are already closed out and the FY22 projects are substantially complete, MHT seeks to reallocate the funds to support an ongoing project from the FY23 grant round.

Ms. French explained that MHT's Office of Research, Survey and Registration is requesting that this money be reallocated to the Cedar Haven Civic Association on the Patuxent River, Inc. The FY23 grant funded the completion of a National Register nomination for the Town of Eagle Harbor and a Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form for Cedar Haven, both early twentieth century African American beach resort communities located on the Patuxent River in Prince George's County. After completing research and documentation of Cedar Haven, the project consultant recommended that the Cedar Haven community also be nominated to the National Register. The additional funds allocated to this project will produce a National Register nomination for Cedar Haven and further documentation of the nearby c.1934 Woodville Colored School. This school is where children from both communities (having transitioned to full-time residences in the post 1940 period) attended school until Prince George's County closed it in 1955. The additional documentation and National Register nomination will add to our understanding of these important communities.

Mr. Spikes remarked that he was very familiar with the Cedar Haven community, having spent time there as a child, and that he supported these efforts to recognize its historic significance.

Following discussion, Mr. Spikes offered the following motion, seconded by Ms. Filkins, which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Historical Trust, that an expenditure of \$16,976.20 in recaptured funds from the FY21 Historic Preservation Non-Capital grant round approved by the Board at its October 22, 2020 meeting be reallocated to increase the scope and deliverables of the existing grant entitled Historic Preservation of Cedar Haven & Eagle Harbor, Maryland, approved for funding as part of the MHT Non-Capital Program Approved Grant Chart for Fiscal Year 2023 at the Board's October 20, 2022 meeting.

R300 Management & Planning Committee

R301 Investment Committee

Ms. Hughes reported that the Investment Committee met on January 16th with Brown Advisory. The Heritage Preservation Fund is performing well, with portfolio growth of 11.4% over the past 12 months. The total value of the Fund is \$1.5 million. A disbursement of \$162,000 has been requested to cover costs associated with expenditures previously approved by the MHT Board.

Mr. Charlton commented that Brown Advisory's investment strategy has been exceptional.

R302 Equity Working Group Report

Jessica French, who serves on the Equity Working Group, reported that the first of a series of virtual education sessions with practitioners in the field had taken place on December 19th. MHT staff and Board members serving on the Equity Working Group participated in a virtual

conversation with Jeremy Brown, Executive Director of the LGBTQIA+ Commission for the State of Maryland and discussed issues facing the community that the Commission serves as well as potential partnership opportunities. Plans for a speaker for a February meeting are underway.

Ms. French also reported that MHT would be hosting a virtual event on February 6th from 9-11:30 AM entitled *Documenting Underrepresented Communities: Part II, Presentations and Roundtable Discussion*.

Chair Mears thanked Ms. French for her report and noted that, with Mr. Parker's resignation from the Board, a new Chair of the Equity Working Group would be needed. Board members who have an interest in serving in this capacity should contact Ms. Mears directly.

R303 Budget & Legislation

Ms. Hughes reported that the Governor's allowance for the MDP fiscal year 2026 budget is now available. MDP was very fortunate in sustaining no reductions during this very difficult budget year and maintaining level, if not in some cases increased, funding for its tax credit and grant programs.

The Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program is level funded, with \$20 million available for competitive commercial projects and \$2 million for small commercial projects. Funding for the African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program is level at \$5 million as is funding for the Maryland Heritage Areas Program at \$6 million. The Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program will increase this year to \$1 million from the prior year funding level of only \$600,000. The MHT Loan Program is funded at \$150,000, using prior year loan repayments.

The Maryland General Assembly now has the opportunity to make reductions to the agency's budget or, to some extent, increase the agency's budget. Budget hearings in the House and Senate begin on January 31.

Ms. Mears inquired if these hearings were public and if the Board should be prepared to submit testimony. Ms. Hughes indicated that all hearings are public and are live-streamed and recorded on the Maryland General Assembly website. MHT will not know if advocacy on behalf of the agency's budget is needed until the legislative budget analyst's comments and recommendations are received.

New bills are being introduced in the Maryland General Assembly every day and MHT and MDP staff will continue to monitor them. To date, legislation of greatest interest include the following:

- SB4 – Economic Development – West North Avenue Development Authority - Alterations Exempts projects undertaken by this Authority from review under the MHT Act. This is not a favorable precedent.
- SB16 – Natural Resources – Maryland Heritage Areas Authority – Funding and Grants

Increases funding for the program by \$9 million, decreases the percentage of funding that MDP may use to support program operations from 10 to 7 percent, and makes changes to grant caps and matching requirements. This bill is going to be withdrawn and replaced with a new bill which will likely retain many of the same provisions but could also eliminate the ability for MDP to fund Non Capital Historic Preservation Grants with this funding source.

- SB354 –Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup - Establishment Creates a Workgroup staffed by MHT and the Office of Cemetery Oversight that will work over the summer and fall to make recommendations regarding the creation of a statewide cemetery inventory and cemetery grant program with a report due to the General Assembly by December 1, 2025.

R304 Litigation & Legal Issues

Mr. Snyder indicated that there are no litigation or legal issues to report at this time.

Announcements

- Chair Mears noted that the May 18 and October 16 meetings of the Board will be off-site with the October meeting expected to be at a location on the Lower Eastern Shore. The March meeting will take place at 100 Community Place in Crownsville now that the mold remediation work on the 3rd floor is complete and staff will be returning to the office on the regular 3 day in the office schedule as of January 27th.
- Tom Vitanza reported that the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission met last night and voted in favor of local historic landmark designation for the National Register-eligible COMSAT Laboratories Building which is under threat by a unsympathetic owner.
- Upcoming public hearings being hosted by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

January 25 - Bowie State University

February 1 – St. Paul’s United Church of Christ, 17 Bond Street, Westminster, MD

- Maryland Heritage Areas Grant Program intent to apply deadline of January 27, 2025
- 2025 Preservation Awards – nominations due February 7, 2025
- Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program application deadline of March 17, 2025
- MD Two Fifty Commission Funding Opportunities

<https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/grants-applications/>

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 AM.