

January 15, 2020

Maryland Military Monuments Commission

Approved Minutes by vote October 14, 2020

Present: Chair Schrader, Rude, Schiszik, Kurtz, Wisniewski, McKown, Mendelsohn, Soderberg, Martel, Carson, Schnell, Jewitt, Hammond Villaneuva.

Absent: Morrill, Fischer.

Guests: E Hughes, P Cuccuzella, A Gruzs

Chair Schrader opened the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

Approval of October minutes. One correction noted regarding the Towson Wayside Cross monument. It has not been moved; it has always been in the present location at York road and Shealy Avenue in the public right of way on the sidewalk. It is owned by Baltimore County, not by a private entity. The minutes were approved with this amendment in a motion by Commissioner Martel and seconded by Commissioner Hammond.

Financial Report: The January report is the same as the October report. Commissioner McKown asked why the funding allocation has remained the same at \$17,000. Need a compelling reason, which is that costs are going up, as we discovered when we reviewed the proposals last year.

This year's disbursement is \$14,453. The last RFP resulted in quotes ranging from \$14,453 to more than \$65,000. The rewaxing proposal would add to the costs. A briefing will be made to the MHT board in May. Commissioner Rude asked about how the priorities are determined. Commissioner Kurtz replied that we have taken care of the highest priorities; now we have approximately 61 bronzes in the revolving maintenance program. When we become aware of others that are in need, then they are folded into the program. The geographic groups are going to increase with the number of monuments.

The intent of the rewaxing is to establish a baseline after more than 30 years of waxing, with some of the waxes that are now obsolete. In addition to normal wax buildup over time, newer waxes may not interact well with older coatings. The rewaxing will be done over a period of four years. Once that is done, then we can return to a more normal schedule of maintenance.

A question arose about where the money comes from. MHT Director Elizabeth Hughes responded that it is a line item from the General fund. (The rewaxing need is not included in the line item.) Chair Schrader suggested that if more money is needed for the program, the summer is the best time to broach the subject with solid reasoning for the request. Commissioner Rude suggested there be a priority list for bronzes, and one for masonry (stone). Commissioner Kurtz agreed that masonry is a need that we haven't been able to address on a big scale. Commissioner Schiszik asked if condition assessments have been done by MMMC or by municipalities. Chair Schrader asked whether we have such a document, and Steve and Commissioner Kurtz replied that we do, in the form the database and a running list of all the monuments in the program, and when they were last treated. Treatment reports provide greater detail, constituting condition and needs assessments. Chair Schrader asked whether we have reached out to the counties and asked them to help with funding, and Commissioner Kurtz replied not usually. It is difficult to combine different funding streams for maintenance projects. Steve will

provide the document of the running list to Chair Schrader offline. The list will be made available to the whole Commission.

The financial report was approved in a motion by Commissioner Martel and seconded by Commissioner Hammond.

#### Ongoing Business

Hammann-Costin monument update on trench mortar paving - Congressional Medal of Honor Park. Steve showed the paving from the spring of 2019 to late 2019 to the current state. A letter that Steve was going to draft was interrupted by the realization of an agreement between the MMMC, the City Department of Recreation and Parks and the Maryland Military Department that governs the scope of work concerning the trench mortar removal project. Commissioner Schiszik said there was a neighborhood walkthrough recently with the community and the mayor that included an expressed desire to fix up the park. The mayor expressed a strong interest in overhauling the park along with the director of rec and parks and the councilperson. She spoke with a staffer in the council person's office, who confirmed the constituent led effort. The Commission should consider supporting that effort. The issue remains that rec and parks was supposed to repair the paving, but they (the Military Department) had already done the work. The fact that the brick walls at the corner of Howard St and Park Avenue are being constantly damaged by auto accidents illustrates the larger issue that the park itself is in serious need of repair, reconfiguration and maintenance. No further action was taken.

Mount Washington All Wars monument. Chair Schrader sent a letter to the American Legion of Maryland headquarters to ask that something be done about the overgrown shrubbery on the site, and somebody did. A suggestion was made to write another letter to the Legion thanking them for taking care of it – with the hope that the work would be ongoing.

Towson Wayside Cross monument. Discussion about the streetscaping construction that has been going on around the monument since spring 2019 by a private developer. Baltimore County was not notified of the work. The monument was rededicated in a ceremony on Memorial Day, and a time capsule was buried. A low perimeter wall around a planting bed was built to replace the bollards, but the shrub garden may make future maintenance difficult. No word yet on when the project will be completed.

Challenge Medallions. Chair Schrader presented her findings for medallion holders. They are plastic, but look like wood. The cost was \$5 from Amazon. The Commission was pleased with these. Commissioner Carson suggested sending two of them to our first two challenge coin recipients in Brooklyn.

Commission Reappointments. Steve reported that commission reappointments have been approved, leaving us with three vacant seats.

Confederate Monuments in Baltimore City. MHT Director and Maryland SHPO Elizabeth Hughes gave an overview and status report on the four Confederate monuments that were removed from their public locations in August of 2017. MHT has a preservation easement dating from 1984 on 3 of the 4 monuments that were removed by Baltimore City without consulting with MHT. The MHT Board decided to send a letter to the City acknowledging the breach of the easement and to chart a path forward with a timeline to identify new locations for and relocation of the monuments with a due date of April 2019.

While acknowledging that the time has passed, MHT realizes that imposing artificial timelines on the City is not effective. MHT continues to prioritize protection of the monuments and to strive to restore public access to them. The issue is discussed at every MHT Board meeting, and there are monument advocates in attendance at each meeting. Baltimore City CHAP delivers monthly reports to MHT outlining the status of relocation efforts and updates on the condition and care of the monuments. The MHT Board chair established a monument relocation workgroup as a subcommittee to help find a solution.

Commissioner Wisniewski asked about ownership of the monuments, and what recourse the state has to address the easement violation. MHT Counsel Paul Cucuzzella stated that MHT, after carefully considering all options and remedies, and with the support of the Administration, decided that the prudent course of action was to work with the City to explore new locations for the monuments. He agreed that the City violated the terms of the easement when the statuary were removed without consent of the Director of MHT. 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 Carson said that it is not just a matter of finding new locations. It is very important to the City to contextualize that. Commissioner Schiszik agreed, and said that CHAP was very adamant about contextualization and interpreting the circumstances under which the monuments were constructed in the first place. Commissioner Soderberg discussed the original funding of the creation and installation of the monuments and whether those parties should be considered, but Mr. Cucuzzella said that no other parties have authority to enforce the easement other than the City and the Trust.

#### New Business

Victory Cross. Steve showed slides of the Victory Cross, also known as the Peace Cross, located on the Grounds of the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore. A representative of the church contacted the MMMC not in an official capacity, but to inquire about how we might help with maintenance. The monument has not been maintained for a long time, if ever, and there are cracks in the granite base. The monument is not part of our maintenance program, and never has been. The Commission suggested furnishing the church a list of conservators, and provide technical assistance assuming they have the resources to maintain it. No further action at this time.

Old Methodist Meetinghouse Monument, also known as the Bread and Cheese monument, North Point. An issue came to our attention resulting from a plan by the adjacent storage facility to expand, and to possibly encroach on the monument and the grounds surrounding it. MHT determined that this was not the case, that the limit of disturbance would not constitute an adverse effect. No action required, just information.

Battery Babcock Monument was installed by the Baltimore City War of 1812 Centennial Commission in 1914. Commissioner Kurtz provided an overview of this little known monument located on the site of the Gould Street generating station (built in 1905 as a coal plant) in Port Covington. The 6-pounder cannon was retrieved after the Baltimore Fire. The NR eligible building was recently sold to GRP Powerhouse LLC, a Georgia based biofuels manufacturing concern. The actual Battery Babcock is under I-95 at the entrance to the Fort McHenry Tunnel. Scott Sheads provided information to Commissioner Kurtz via email. Perhaps we could send the owners a letter to make them aware of the monument. Steve will take a look at it and shoot some photos. The cannon should be treated along with the bronze

tablet. Commissioner Wisniewski mentioned that there is another cannon monument near the Sip and Bite in East Baltimore.

New Maintenance Round. The current round of maintenance (FY19) will begin in March of this year in Western Maryland. We are planning to scope out the next region in Northeast Maryland and the Eastern Shore to prepare for FY20.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2020. Meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m. Motion by Commissioner Wisniewski. Seconded by Commissioner Jewitt.

#### Announcement

Commissioner Kurtz announced that the paper she worked on last year will be published on the AIC website soon.

Commissioner McKown brought old newsletters for the group to peruse.