

Maryland Military Monuments Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday October 9, 2019
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place, Crownsville Maryland 21032

Present:

Deputy Secretary and Chair Schrader, Commissioners Carson, Fischer, Hammond, Martel, McKown, Rude, Schiszik, Schnell, Soderberg, Villanueva, Wisniewski;

Staff: Steve Allan

Absent: Commissioners Jewitt, Kurtz, Mendelsohn, Morrill

Chair Schrader called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

- Opened the meeting by introducing herself and asked to go around the room with introductions.
- Asked for an approval of the minutes from the July meeting. A typographical error was noted in the spelling of "Governor" on page 4. Commissioner Wisniewski moved to accept the minutes with the amendment; Commissioner Martel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

- Steve Allan presented the financial report.
- FY19
 - \$14,453 encumbered for regular maintenance of 16 monuments in western Maryland. The contract was let to Wellman Conservation for this work to be undertaken in the spring of 2020.
 - \$1,200 reserved in the special fund for Baltimore City paving repair at the Hammann-Costin Monument.
- FY20
 - \$17,000 budget
- \$3,438 balance in monuments special fund.

Chair Schrader asked for a motion to approve the financial report. Commissioner McKown moved, Commissioner Hammond seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ongoing Business

- Steve Allan noted the rare absence of commissioner Kurtz due to illness, and he took the opportunity to thank her in her absence for all the help and assistance she has provided to him and the Commission in her retirement from state service. It is greatly appreciated.
- Steve Allan updated the Hammann-Costin Monument trench mortar paving project with photographs from the spring and late summer of 2019. Considerable darkening (blending in) of the mortar joints has occurred. Chair Schrader

remarked that this has been an agenda item since her first meeting, and asked Commissioner Rude if he could just fix it. Commissioner Schiszik reported that the Parks department had \$6 to \$8 million taken from their budget to pay for the ransomware attack. She visited the park recently, and noted that the overall condition of the park paving is uneven, having undergone many cycles of mortar repair. The park really needs a larger capital project in the near future. As a result of a conversation with her boss, a suggestion was made that the Commission should draft a letter to Parks and Recreation director Reginald Moore to raise concerns about the condition of the park (officially known as the Congressional Medal of Honor Park.) The park needs repair as a whole; paving is heaving in places and cars regularly crash into the brick wall which requires constant repair. Commissioner Schiszik reiterated that it is not our purview to make repairs to property we don't own without permission. Chair Schrader expressed desire for the Commission to fix something, and Commissioner Soderberg added that a letter to the director could be important to remind the Department of Parks and Recreation that the Commission cares about the monument. Commissioner Wisniewski offered to draft a letter that informs the Director of our intent to perform corrective work on a discrete area of the park, to which Commissioner Carson offered that permission would be appropriate. Commissioner Rude said that his company manufactures a product to stain the Portland cement without affecting the paving, as well as a biodegradable product that removes efflorescence. Chair Schrader said that we can't fix the whole thing, but we can fix this. We can make it look nice. It was resolved that Commissioner Wisniewski will draft the letter with help from staff informing them of our intent barring objection.

- Battle of Brooklyn. Commissioner Carson and Steve Allan reported on the presentation of the Medallia and Governor's Citations at the Maryland 400 Remembrance at the Old Stone House in Brooklyn, New York on August 18, the 243rd anniversary of the Battle of Brooklyn. The event was well attended by nearly 40 Marylanders. Kim Maier, Executive Director of the Old Stone House, and Martin Maher, Commissioner of Parks for the Borough of Brooklyn, received the Medallia. After a lunch provided by the Old Stone House, the bus took us to the Maryland 400 monument in Prospect Park. A suggestion was made to write up details of the trip and what happened, to build interest for folks to go up there next year.
- Challenge Medallions. Steve showed photographs of what the engraving actually looks like, noting that the area for engraving is very limited. There just isn't much room for engraving long names of organizations, such as in the case of the New York City Department of Recreation and Parks. Three quotes from vendors have been solicited, and the lowest quote was from a local vendor in Annapolis has agreed to do the work for \$4 each, plus \$1 extra for oxidizing. The other issue about presenting the Medallia concerns packaging. For the Brooklyn presentation, rather than using plastic baggies, we purchased paper bags

adorned with the Maryland flag, but they cost about \$1.50 each. The Medallia vendor was supposed to provide PVC coin envelopes with the order, but they did not accompany the order when it was shipped. Plastic stands could have been ordered for 25 cents each, but the vendor will not honor that a year after the order. They have agreed to send the PVC envelopes, and we are awaiting delivery of them. Chair Schrader suggested that she would ask her assistant to secure quotes for plastic stands or other options for presentation. Commissioner Schiszik suggested that Gaylord might be a good vendor to consider.

- Rewaxing of certain monuments and tablets. Steve reported on the request he made to the MHT Board to consider funding for the first round of monuments that would be the first to become the baseline for the waxing program. The amount requested was \$27,000 for the first batch (about 16) of 43 of the 59 monuments that have been identified as candidates for rewaxing.

New Business

- Mount Washington All Wars monument. A local resident reported an issue with maintenance of the property around the monument, which is suffering from intense overgrowth of vegetation. The land is owned by American Legion Mahool-Potts Post #2. Commissioner Kurtz had tried for some time to engage the Legion into taking responsibility for maintaining the property. Steve had difficulty contacting the Legion as well, but was successful in visiting the Legion Post, apprising them of the problem. He also met with a local Boy Scout Troop who have expressed interest in cleaning up the monument property as part of a Scout project. Many members of the Legion post are elderly, and the distance of the monument from the Post (located on Hickory Avenue in Hampden) are barriers to effectively looking after the property. Commissioner Schiszik pointed out that as property owners, they have the responsibility for maintaining it, otherwise they could be cited and fined by the Department of Housing. A 3-1-1 complaint would result in the Department of Housing going out to make an assessment, but the fine might be \$500. Discussion ensued about whether or not fining the American Legion is the right thing to. Chair Schrader suggested drafting a letter to the Legion expressing our concern about this property and our desire to have them clean it up. Steve will draft the letter, and we will confirm that current conditions remain before we send the letter.
- Wayside Cross WWI Memorial in Towson. This monument was maintained in March by Messrs. Wellman and Harvey. Commissioner Kurtz and Steve learned about this construction project in April, leaving the monument unprotected while heavy equipment was utilized, and without consultation with Baltimore County, according to their historic preservation planner. Commissioner Fischer, immediate past president of the Towson Communities Alliance, asserted that the

monument was moved to its current location by the developer, where it is part of the public plaza and may not be subject to county oversight. (This is incorrect: The Towson Wayside Cross monument has never 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 a private entity). A new wall was erected around the base of the monument and plantings were installed. If there were permitting issues, the county should have been apprised.

- Events Committee. Steve asked if there was any new thinking about what we might do for an annual event. He suggested that the annual trip to Brooklyn might suffice, but it may be better to do something in Maryland, such as a field trip. Several ideas emerged: Antietam Battlefield would be good on a nice day. Monocacy Battlefield and Museum have a nice facility. NPS might be able to offer a behind the scenes tour. Commissioner Schiszik asked whether our commission maintained or funded any monuments in those battlefields. Commissioner Soderberg responded that the tempietto (Maryland) Monument was rededicated in 2000 for which she prepared a speech. Commissioner Rude suggested Fort Frederick, just bid for restoration to begin in March.

Announcements

- The next meeting date was rescheduled to January 15, 2020, which is a week later than normal because that would have conflicted with the start of the Legislative Session.

Chair Schrader asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Rude moved, Commissioner Soderberg seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:39 pm.