

Minutes of the  
Eighty-Fourth Meeting of the  
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority  
July 11, 2019

The eighty-fourth meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was held on July 11, 2019 at 100 Community Place in Crownsville, Maryland.

**Authority Members/Designees Present:**

Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Pete Leshar (MD Association of Counties representative); Amy Seitz (representing MD Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt); Burton Kummerow (President of the Senate representative); Lisa Challenger (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Pete K. Rahn); Lee Towers (representing MD Higher Education Commission Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr.); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz); Peter Morrill (representing MD Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio); Janice Hayes-Williams (representing Speaker of the House); Wayne E. Clark (President of the Senate representative); Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Area Authority); Daniel Spedden (MD Tourism Development Board representative)

**Authority Members/Designees Absent:**

Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Natalie Chabot (Representative for MD Greenways); Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder); Vacant (representing MD State Department of Education Secretary Karen Salmon); Vacant (MD Municipal League representative); Vacant (representing Speaker of the House)

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Ruffner, Ennis Barbery Smith, Bernadette Pruitt (Maryland Historical Trust); Paul Cucuzzella (Office of the Attorney General); Heather Ersts (Maryland Office of Tourism Development)

**Heritage Area Directors/Staff Present:** Lucille Walker (Southern Maryland Heritage Area & Co-Chair, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas); Sarah Rogers (Montgomery County Heritage Area & Co-Chair, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas); Deidra Ritchie (Canal Place Heritage Area); Elizabeth Shatto, Rachel Nichols, and Emily Huebner (Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area); Julie Gilberto-Brady (Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area); Carol Benson (Four Rivers / Annapolis, London Town and South County Heritage Area); Gail Owings (Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area); Aaron Marcavitch, Kirstin Falk, and Kira Facey (Maryland Milestones / Anacostia Trails Heritage Area); Brigitte Carty (Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway); Lindsey Baker (Patapsco Valley Heritage Area); Lisa Ludwig (Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area); Shauntee Daniels (Baltimore National Heritage Area); Kim Folk (Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area)

**Others Present:** John Muller

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. McCord welcomed Mr. Daniel Spedden to the Authority, noting that this was Mr. Spedden's first Authority meeting. He is serving as the MD Tourism Development Board representative. Mr. Spedden is currently the president of Visit Hagerstown, the Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Everyone in attendance took turns introducing themselves.

**MHAA CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCEMENTS /UPDATES** (Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority)

Mr. Pete Leshar announced that he has been confirmed as the new Maryland Association of Counties representative to MHAA.

### **NOMINATIONS & APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. McCord shared that--per the MHAA bylaws--the Vice Chair must be appointed every July, that he had asked Mr. Campbell to continue to serve as Vice Chair, and that Mr. Campbell had indicated his willingness to serve another term.

Ms. Amy Seitz made a motion to nominate Robert Campbell to serve as Vice Chair of the Authority. Mr. Campbell accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. Dr. Marty Baker seconded the motion.

While Mr. Campbell abstained, all other members present voted to reappoint Mr. Campbell to the position of MHAA Vice Chair.

Mr. McCord noted that he appreciates Mr. Campbell's continued service.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 11, 2019 MEETING**

Mr. McCord called for a motion to approve the April 11, 2019 MHAA meeting minutes.

Ms. Challenger offered the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes as presented (R-100).**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Leshner and approved unanimously.

### **MANAGEMENT REPORT** (Jennifer Ruffner, MHAA Administrator)

Ms. Jennifer Ruffner announced that Ms. Brigitte Carty had been promoted and will now serve as the Executive Director of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area.

She also welcomed Ms. Kim Folk, the new Heritage Area Director for the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area.

### **MHAA Financing Fund Report**

Ms. Ruffner reported that, as of June 29, 2019, the current available balance of the MHAA Financing Fund was \$703,607.81. She explained that this balance is lower than the balance reported at the April 11, 2019 MHAA meeting because the April report listed a grant as closed that has not yet been closed.

### **Regulation Changes – Update**

Ms. Ruffner shared that the proposed regulation changes are now undergoing administrative, executive, and legal review by the Department of Legislative Services. This department will then initiate a 30-day public comment period. After the public comment period, the updated version of the regulations will be introduced at MHAA's next meeting, and—at that point—MHAA will have the opportunity to vote to adopt the new regulations.

### **Grants Management – Financial Reporting and Indirect Costs**

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA, Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), and MD Office of the Attorney General (OAG) staff have now processed all FY 2019 grants. She thanked the MHT administrative staff and OAG staff for all their help with this process.

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA staff will notify FY 2020 grantees of the new indirect costs policy adopted by MHAA and will work with them to incorporate indirect costs in their grant budgets if desired. For the FY 2021 grant round and going forward, applicants will be made aware of the policy at the application stage and invited to include indirect costs in their application budgets, in accordance with the policy.

Ms. Ruffner shared that MHT has been consulting with its sister state agencies about their financial documentation requirements for grantees and has initiated some changes to their own policies in order to provide better customer service to grantees. These changes will reduce the burden of paperwork on grantees significantly. Grantees will no longer be required to retain and submit proof of payment as part of their financial reporting and grant disbursement requests. Instead, MHT is moving to spot-checking system in which a percentage of grantees in any given

grant round will be selected to submit proof of expenditure for all grant and match expenses, and will be notified at the time of their Project Completion Date.

Mr. Wayne Clark asked when grantees awarded in the FY 2020 round should reasonably expect to receive their first grant disbursement.

Ms. Ruffner answered that the heritage areas should expect to receive their grant agreements for management grants and initiate their requests for first payments in August and September and that grantees receiving project grants should expect to receive their grant agreements in the fall of 2019 and early in 2020.

**MARYLAND COALITION OF HERITAGE AREAS (MCoHA) REPORT  
(Lucille Walker and Sarah Rogers, Co-Chairs, MCoHA)**

Ms. Sarah Rogers reported that the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas held a retreat on May 30, 2019 in Annapolis. One of the main topics of discussion was the proposed grants panel model. The group also discussed opportunities for shared marketing and appointing representatives to working groups going forward.

Ms. Lucille Walker reported that the Coalition is reaching out to legislators and communities about the important work they do. She said this is especially important because they are anticipating a challenging budget year in FY 2021.

Mr. Clark asked for more detail about the potential budget challenges.

There was discussion.

Ms. Walker reported that a number of directors have questions about the reserve list policy.

Ms. Ruffner explained that MHAA does not have spending authorization for the funds that are intended for the recommended FY 2020 reserve list grantees. She said the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is recommending that MHAA conditionally approve the reserve list grants at the meeting today, and then funding will be awarded when and if the spending authorization is approved, hopefully in fall of 2019. She also said that the same process will happen every year under the reserve list policy that was approved by MHAA at the January 2019 MHAA meeting.

There was discussion.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Resolution R-200 to Approve Funding Requests: FY 2020 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants**

Ms. Ruffner explained the organization of the various versions of the grant recommendation charts provided to Authority members and heritage area directors. One is sorted by heritage area,

another by final rank. She suggested referencing the chart sorted by final rank for group discussion purposes.

Ms. Ruffner reported that in FY 2020 MHAA received \$5.9 million in grant requests and had \$5.1 million in funds available to award. As has been the case in years past, the TAC recommends reserving \$100,000 for MHAA emergency grants that may be requested in FY 2020. Having this \$100,000 for which the Authority already has spending authorization on hand will allow the program to award emergency grants quickly, if needed.

Ms. Ruffner reported that removing the emergency grant funding, as recommended, would leave \$5 million available to award in FY2020 grants at today's meeting, and TAC has made recommendations to award exactly \$5 million total to 109 grantees.

Ms. Ruffner explained that there is one grant application that TAC felt was outside of their purview. They have asked that the Authority review this application from Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance and make a determination directly about whether this grant should be placed on the reserve list or not funded.

Ms. Ruffner detailed how the scoring process works, reporting that local review committees in each heritage area review the applications from within their heritage areas first. The TAC then reviews applications. The local rankings and TAC ranking are combined using a weighted algorithm: 55% local rank combined with 45% TAC rank.

Ms. Ruffner reported that this year MHT has changed its policy and will now be requiring term easements—typically of 15 years, as determined by —rather than perpetual easements for all grantees who are required to convey a preservation easement as a condition of their grant. All special conditions, including easement conveyance, are listed in the grant charts and will be communicated to grantees upon notification of award.

Ms. Ruffner reported that the MHAA staff read 139 applications in the FY 2020 grant round, give or take a few that were withdrawn during the review process, Each TAC member read between 50 and 60 applications. She thanked TAC and the local review committees for their thoughtful deliberations and rankings.

Mr. Campbell asked about the deliberation process, specifically about how a grant with a lower final ranking was recommended for immediate funding, while grants with higher rankings were recommended for the reserve list.

Ms. Ruffner explained that, in this case, the level of urgency was discussed, and the TAC decided to make a recommendation based on the time sensitive nature of a specific project.

There was discussion.

Ms. Walker asked about the Winstead Company Packing Plant Feasibility Study grant application.

There was discussion.

Ms. Elizabeth Fitzsimmons asked about the Chesapeake Bay Storytellers Video grant application.

There was discussion.

Ms. Ruffner explained that the grant approval resolutions are broken down into several separate resolutions in order to allow MHAA members to recuse themselves from voting on applications with which they have direct ties. Resolution R-200 will approve funding for all project grants recommended for funding that are not called out in R-300, R-400, and R-500.

Mr. Clark made the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Area Authority approves funding of the following FY20 grants designated as “Full Funding” or “Partial Funding” as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the chart titled “Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Requests: Fiscal Year 2020” (the “Chart”), attached hereto and made part of Resolution R-200: 13 management grants; 2 marketing grants for the management and marketing of certified heritage areas (CHAs); 9 block grants; and 83 project grants for projects and activities within the CHAs. If additional funding becomes available through an additional spending authorization of funds in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund, the Authority approves funding of the additional 14 grants designated as the “Reserve List”, in the order in which they appear in the final ranking. The Grants Recommended for Funding and the Reserve List Grants are collectively referred to as the “Resolution R-200 Grants”).**

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this approval is contingent upon sufficient funding being made available in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund.**

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this approval is contingent upon grant recipients (the “Grantee(s)”) providing written documentation to Authority staff of the availability of cash matching funds dedicated to the project, as required by the Authority’s statute and regulations, no later than October 31, 2019 and prior to the disbursement of grant funds. Documentation may consist of financial statements, commitment letters, or other proof acceptable to Authority staff. Disbursements of grant funds may not exceed the total amount of the grant award, or the amount of documented available cash matching funds and in-kind contributions as required by law and regulations and detailed in the grant agreement, whichever is less.**

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the staff to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority is authorized to prepare any documents necessary or useful in order to carry out the grants approved by the Authority in conformance with the terms set forth in the Chart.**

**Staff is further authorized to make minor adjustments to the scope of work, timetable, and budget set forth in the Chart and grant applications, including the specific allocation of Authority grant funds 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 project as approved by the Authority.**

Mr. Leshar seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Resolution R-300 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2020 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to Anne Arundel County for the “Boundary Amendment Study for ALTSCHA” project

Mr. Leshar made the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that, in addition to the Resolution R-200 Grants and also subject to the Further Resolved clauses contained in Resolution R-200, the Maryland Heritage Area Authority approves as a Grant Recommended for Funding, a grant to the Maryland Historical Society for the “Boundary Amendment Study for ALTSCHA” project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart.**

Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Ms. Hayes-Williams recused herself. With the exception of Ms. Hayes-Williams, the motion was approved unanimously

Resolution R-400 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2020 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Inc. for the “CBMM Exhibition Building” project

Mr. Leshar excused himself from the room, abstaining from the vote for R-400.

Mr. Campbell made the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that, in addition to the Resolution R-200 Grants and also subject to the Further Resolved clauses contained in Resolution R-200, the Maryland Heritage Area Authority approves as a Grant Recommended for Funding, a grant to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the “CBMM Exhibition Building” project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart.**

Ms. Lisa Challenger seconded the motion. With the exception of Mr. Leshar, it was approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION R-500 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2020 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance for the “Place, Past & Present: Documentary about Kent County’s Storied Landscape” Project

Ms. Ruffner reported that the TAC did not make a recommendation on the application from Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance for a \$50,000 MHAA grant to do create a documentary titled “Place, Past and Present” in the Stories of the Chesapeake CHA. The TAC felt this request was beyond their scope because the project could be thought of as advocacy. The applicant organization has positioned itself as an advocacy organization against renewable energy projects that may be seen as threatening the cultural landscape of the Kent County.

Ms. Gail Owings shared that the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area’s local review committee had similar concerns when reviewing the application. They had a lengthy discussion at the local level and ended up coming to consensus that the application should indeed be recommended for funding.

Ms. Owings explained that education about the concept and importance of cultural landscapes is needed and that this video would help to provide that to a wider audience. Ms. Owings said that she has had conversations with the Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance, and the Alliance representatives have assured her that this film would be educational, rather than an advocacy piece.

There was discussion.

Mr. McCord directed MHAA staff to place special conditions upon the grant award for the “Place, Past & Present: Documentary about Kent County’s Storied Landscape” project, specifying that the documentary must be educational in content and that the script must be reviewed and approved by MHAA staff—as is the requirement for all public products of MHAA grants—prior to finalization and production of the film.

Mr. Clark made the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that, in addition to the Resolution R-200 Grants and also subject to the Further Resolved clauses contained in Resolution R-200, if additional funding becomes available through an additional spending authorization of funds in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund, the Authority approves a “Reserve List” grant to the Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance for the “Place, Past & Present: Documentary about Kent County’s Storied Landscape” project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, in the order in the final ranking, and as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart, as well as the requirements that the film be educational in nature, and that MHAA staff review the script prior to production.**

Ms. Challenger seconded the motion.

Mr. McCord and Dr. Baker abstained from the vote.

All others present voted to approve the motion, and the motion carried.

Ms. Ruffner thanked the Authority members for approving the grant recommendations. She said that a press release announcing the awards will be circulated today or tomorrow, pending approval from the Maryland Department of Planning. She also reported that she and Ms. Smith will be sending the award notification emails to all applicants later that afternoon, after the meeting concludes.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Presentation from Parker Philips, Inc. – Program Impact Study**

Nichole Parker of Parker Phillips, Inc. gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Program and Economic Impact Study that her firm will be conducting for MHAA. She said that she anticipates concluding the research in February of 2020.

She said she was happy to see how engaged everyone was in the meeting discussion and anticipates that the group will be just as engaged in the research process. She said that in addition to the economic impact and program impact pieces, the third part of the process will be creating the communications pieces. Each heritage area can expect an individualized report for their stakeholders.

Ms. Parker said that her business partner Ms. Kate Phillips is skilled in the communications realm, and she will help to tell the story of the MHAA program in a way that is accessible to a variety of audiences. The goal is to create a study that everyone will understand, not just economists.

Ms. Parker said that another goal of the study is to develop program impact metrics that will be used into the future. Compared to the program impact metrics developed for MHAA previously, she anticipates creating a shorter list of metrics and working to find out what the heritage areas will feasibly be able to collect and use.

Ms. Parker said that another important goal will be developing a defensible report. She plans to roll out the report to the Authority and directors first to make sure they are comfortable with it before final publication. Ms. Parker mentioned that another member of the project team is Kristi Del Grande, who will serve as the graphic designer for the report.

Ms. Parker summarized that she anticipates a 9-month time frame, with staggered start dates for the heritage areas in August, September, and October. Intercept surveys will be conducted at sites and events in each of heritage areas. The IMPLAN model will be used for data analysis. Ms. Parker said she will show the group how IMPLAN works, so everyone is comfortable with it. She also shared that IMPLAN has recently improved their capabilities for including special taxing districts in the economic analysis.

In addition to surveys, Ms. Parker shared that her team also plans to conduct 3-5 interviews in each heritage area. The interview guide is fairly open-ended, allowing interviewees to tell the researchers what is important to them about the MHAA program and their local heritage area. The interviews will be used in the narrative parts of the reports.

Ms. Parker said that the reports will also have well-designed visual impact with lots of photos and infographics. Draft press releases and a media strategy will be developed as part of the project.

Mr. Campbell clarified that both surveys and interviews will be done in each of the heritage areas.

Ms. Hayes-Williams asked about how the surveyors would strive to include perspectives from visitors with different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

There was discussion.

Ms. Parker brought up the idea of using focus groups to capture diverse perspectives.

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto asked about the challenges of interviewing at National Park Service sites.

There was discussion.

Mr. Clark asked about using data that has already been collected by other state agencies, especially the Office of Tourism Development.

Ms. Fitzsimmons agreed that her office would be working closely with Ms. Parker on the study.

Ms. Seitz brought up the overlapping impacts of various state designations within heritage areas.

There was discussion. The group agreed to continue the discussion more informally after lunch when Ms. Parker planned to meet with the heritage area directors.

#### TAC Working Group Recommendations

Ms. Ruffner reported that the Coalition shared feedback on the grants panel model discussed at the last MHAA meeting. Their written feedback has been distributed to MHAA members. The updated document describing the model also has comments inserted based on feedback that was previously received from MHAA and TAC members.

Ms. Ruffner reported that, based on conversations with the Coalition, we would like to break the discussion and decision-making into two pieces: 1.) moving forward with the grants panel model for grants review in FY 2021, which is time sensitive; 2.) MHAA policy decision processes, which will be discussed at the October 2019 MHAA meeting.

As an update to the proposal, Ms. Ruffner shared that MHAA staff met with a representative from the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) regarding the proposal to include representatives from Commissions. GOCI's suggestion was that MHAA staff invite all Commissions to put forward representatives and MHAA staff would select from those put forward.

She also shared that consensus at the last MHAA meeting seemed to be that MHAA should not provide honorariums to panelists but should cover travel expenses.

Ms. Ruffner pointed out that one of the Coalition's suggestions was to have the state agency representatives still serve in terms, but not be term-limited. In this way, the terms would function as a check-in point for state agency panelists to share observations and feedback about the review process.

Ms. Ruffner pointed out another change to the original proposed model based on feedback at the last MHAA meeting and TAC meeting: the Authority members would directly review management, block, and emergency grants, while marketing grant applications would be reviewed by the panel along with the project grant applications.

Ms. Walker and Ms. Rogers went over the Coalition's feedback document. As they explained, the Coalition would like to play the role of primary partner in the grants review process.

Ms. Shauntee Daniels emphasized the importance of including more people of color in the panel and in MHAA decision-making.

There was discussion.

Mr. McCord directed MHAA staff to incorporate the input received in today's meeting into the grants panel model and to begin implementing the grants panel for FY 2021.

### **MHAA MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Hayes-Williams announced that the human remains thought to be Smith Price, founder of Asbury United Methodist Church in Annapolis, and an adolescent set of remains discovered in the same area will be returned to Annapolis. The remains were disturbed during an urban renewal project in Annapolis in the 1980s and have since been housed at the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory in St. Leonard. She thanked Mr. Clark for letting her know where the remains had been taken.

Ms. Hayes-Williams said that the remains will be handed off to the State Highway Administration for DNA testing before being reburied at Asbury United Methodist Church in Annapolis. She anticipates that the reburial will take place on Maryland Emancipation Day in November. She also shared that the Church is seeking funding for the reburial, and she would like for this funding request to be on the agenda at the next MHAA meeting.

Mr. McCord commended Ms. Hayes-Williams, the staff of MHT, and the Church for working to get these remains returned with professionalism and perseverance.

**ADJOURN**

Ms. Fitzsimmons motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Leshner seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. McCord adjourned the meeting at 12:35 pm.