

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority  
Executive Committee  
September 7, 2018

The September 7, 2018 meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Executive Committee was convened via conference call.

**MHAA Executive Committee Members Present:**

Robert McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning, and Chair, Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Area Authority); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Pete K. Rahn)

**MHAA Executive Committee Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Ruffner and Ennis Barberly Smith (Maryland Historical Trust)

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by MHAA Chair and Secretary of the MD Department of Planning, Robert McCord.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Jen Ruffner summarized the contents of a briefing memo sent to MHAA Executive Committee members via email on August 21, 2018:

On July 29, 2018, J.O.K. Walsh, President of the Caroline County Historical Society submitted a letter requesting an extension of the FY 2016 MHAA grant for the project "Creation of a Heritage Center in Caroline County." The 24-month grant period for this project ended on July 31, 2017 and the 24-month contract period for the project ended on April 26, 2018. Per MHAA regulations, because the request falls outside of the contract period, a determination to extend the grant cannot be made at the staff level, but instead must be determined by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. In order to expedite the request, MHAA staff is asking the Executive Committee to make a determination, which can then be ratified at the October 11, 2018 MHAA meeting.

The Caroline County Historical Society (CCHS) was awarded a FY 2016 MHAA grant of \$50,000 to support the Creation of a Heritage Center in Denton. The Project Commencement date was July 9, 2015; the grant agreement was fully executed on April 26, 2016. A mid-project report was due on November 30, 2016 but was never submitted. The Project Completion date (listed in the grant agreement) was May 31, 2017, and the final report was due on July 31, 2017. Throughout the course of the grant period, before and after each reporting deadline passed,

reminder emails were sent to the project contact, a volunteer with CCHS. Having not received responses to most of the correspondences that were sent over the course of two years, a certified letter was sent on July 10, 2018 giving CCHS 30 days to remedy the default, as is required by the grant agreement. Mr. Walsh's letter was in response to that notice.

On August 10, 2018, a final report was submitted (with a note that CCHS does not consider it to be a final report, pending the request for an extension). The report includes the results of the pre-development work that was completed on the project, including architectural drawings and a structural report. It also includes a breakdown of how the \$12,500 of grant funds were expended (although it does not include any documentation for those funds). No matching funds have been expended, to date. It should also be noted that CCHS has received a 2017 USDA grant award of \$50,000 to support the Denton Heritage Center.

Senator Addie Eckardt has also reached out in support of this project, asking that MHAA staff share with the Executive Committee the importance of the project for Caroline County and her strong support for helping to ensure that the Heritage Center project is completed.

There was discussion.

Mr. McCord noted that one recommendation he had previously discussed with Ms. Ruffner—as a way to ensure future timely reporting and the completion of the project, if the grant is extended—is to ask the Town of Denton to serve as a co-grantee along with CCHS.

Ms. Ruffner shared that she has contacted the Town of Denton about this possible scenario and has not heard back to-date.

There was further discussion of the implications of either denying or approving CCHS's request.

Mr. McCord made the following motion:

**RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee recommends that the Authority approve the Caroline County Historical Society's request to extend their FY 2016 grant project, "Creation of a Heritage Center in Caroline County," with the conditions that the grant agreement be modified to (i) extend the project completion date until August 31, 2020 to allow the grantee additional time to complete the project; and (ii) add the Town of Denton as a co-grantee to ensure the successful completion of the project.**

Robert Campbell seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Ruffner introduced the second request that the Executive Committee was asked to consider: The Coalition of Maryland Heritage Areas asked that MHAA consider establishing policies relating to the membership of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), including makeup of the membership and term limits. Usually requests for policy changes, like this one, would go to the TAC for initial discussion and recommendations to the Authority. However, since this

request involves the TAC, MHAA staff are bringing the request to the Executive Committee for a recommendation.

Ms. Ruffner suggested that one way of moving forward might be to create a working group, made up of Authority members, Coalition members, TAC members, and MHAA staff. This group could begin work on a draft policy governing the TAC.

There was discussion.

The Executive Committee all agreed upon this working group approach, adding the following details for how the working group should be structured and implemented:

- There should be at least two representatives from each groups of stakeholders (Authority members, Coalition members, TAC members, and MHAA staff).
- Prior to the working group's first meeting, a brief survey should be circulated by MHAA staff to all stakeholders soliciting anonymous input on how the TAC is functioning and what policies should be established.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. McCord adjourned the meeting.