

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority  
Executive Committee  
March 6, 2020

The March 6, 2020 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 Gregory Slater)

**MHAA Executive Committee Members Absent:** None

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by MHAA Chair and Secretary of the MD Department of Planning, Robert McCord.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. McCord reviewed the proposals put forth in the January 6, 2020 memo from MHAA staff and the Coalition of Maryland Heritage Areas, and summarized the comments received from MHAA members, heritage area staff and boards, and MHAA staff.

The group discussed and confirmed that the statute stipulates that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority can only cover half of the expenses of any given project, creating the one-to-one matching requirement. The new version of the regulations (14.29.03.06), adopted by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority in October 2019, allows for possible changes to MHAA's standing match policy, which – as specified in the Grant Guidelines for each grant round – has been to require that 75% of the required one-to-one match for any given project must be cash match.

Mr. Campbell noted that even if the committee were to recommend that MHAA accept any combination of cash and in-kind match, MHAA will still require more match than many of the programs in the chart in the January 6, 2020 staff memo because of the limitation imposed by the statute that at least half of each grant project be funded by another source.

Dr. Baker reiterated that the main question to be addressed in the call today is whether or not the committee would like to confirm the recommendation from the January 6, 2020 memo to allow grant requests under \$10,000 to provide any combination of cash and in-kind match to meet the

dollar-for-dollar match requirement and to require that grant requests over \$10,000 to provide 20% cash match as part of their dollar-for-dollar match; or identify an alternative proposal.

The group agreed that there was consensus that a lower cash match should be required. They discussed that the regulations now provide the latitude to allow any combination of cash and in-kind match to fulfill the one-to-one match requirement, and that all grant applications are reviewed by committees for their viability, including a review of the proposed budget and match. The group also discussed the potential that incentivization of cash match could put smaller organizations with fewer resources at a disadvantage.

There was discussion of a stepped process, rather than eliminating any specific cash match percentage requirement all together, and that perhaps limiting that requirement to projects of \$20,000 or higher would help reduce the burden on smaller projects and organizations. The group also discussed that it would be more difficult to reestablish a cash match percentage requirement if it was eliminated entirely and then was not successful.

Following further discussion, the group confirmed that a reduction of specific cash match requirements and simplification of the process should be the goal, and the committee was in agreement that removing the distinction between cash and in-kind match and evaluating projects based on their specific needs and merits was a good way to do that. They determined, however, that because there was not consensus among everyone who provided comments, that an interim measure should also be provided as an option for discussion with MHAA.

To that end, the Executive Committee agreed to propose the following alternative policy resolutions for discussion at the next MHAA meeting:

- A. Allowing any combination of cash and in-kind match to satisfy the one-to-one match requirement for all MHAA grants, regardless of the request amount;

OR

- B. Allowing any combination of cash and in-kind match to satisfy the one-to-one match requirement for all MHAA grant requests for \$20,000 or less, while requiring that grant requests for over \$20,000 provide a minimum of 20% cash match as part of the one-to-one match requirement.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. McCord adjourned the meeting at 12:05 pm.