

Minutes of the
Eighty-Eighth Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
October 8, 2020

The eighty-eighth meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened on October 8, 2020 via web conference call. The public was notified about the meeting and had the opportunity to listen via phone or web.

Authority Members/Designees Present:

Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Pete Leshner (MD Association of Counties representative); Burton Kummerow (President of the Senate representative); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Gregory Slater); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz); Nita Settina (representing MD Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio); Wayne E. Clark (President of the Senate representative); Daniel Spedden (MD Tourism Development Board representative); Bruce Lesh (representing MD State Department of Education Secretary Karen Salmon); Lee Towers (representing MD Higher Education Commission Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr.); Amy Seitz (representing MD Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt); Natalie Chabot (Representative for MD Greenways); Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Janice Hayes-Williams (representing Speaker of the House)

Authority Members/Designees Absent:

Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder); Vacant (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Vacant (MD Municipal League representative); Vacant (representing Speaker of the House)

Staff Present: Jennifer Ruffner, Ennis Barbary Smith, Andrew Arvizu (Maryland Historical Trust); Rieyn DeLony (Office of the Attorney General)

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 (Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area); Elizabeth Shatto (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); Kirstin Falk and Grace Davenport (Maryland Milestones / Anacostia Trails Heritage Area); Brigitte Carty (Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway); Aaron Shapiro (Patapsco Valley Heritage Area); Lisa Challenger (Beach to Bay Heritage Area); Shauntee Daniels (Baltimore National Heritage Area); Kim Folk (Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area)

Others Present: Mary Margaret Revell Goodwin; Catherine Skeeter; Nichole Parker; Jana Friesen McCabe; Mayor John Kinnaird (incoming MML representative on MHAA); Phillip Bennett

Please note that those who called in after the introductions did not have the opportunity to introduce themselves and are not included in the list above. Not all callers stayed for the entire meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

Mr. McCord noted that 2020 has been a year of challenges and that Maryland has been rising to the occasion to meet those challenges. At the time of the meeting, he shared that Maryland was currently the 9th in the nation in terms of census response rate, with 70% of Marylanders self-reporting, 28.9% responding to follow-ups, and overall 98% of the State's population being enumerated at this point. He emphasized how important this accurate data will be in making decisions as the State faces budget shortfalls. He shared that \$1.5 trillion in federal funding is derived using census data.

INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. McCord asked Ms. Jen Ruffner to conduct an attendance roll call. Ms. Ruffner conducted the roll call, determining that – with two MHAA members absent, fourteen present, and three vacant seats – there was a quorum present.

NOMINATIONS & APPOINTMENTS

Mr. McCord shared that – per the MHAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 2 – the Vice Chair must be appointed every annually. Usually this nomination happens in July.

Mr. Leshner made a motion to nominate Robert Campbell to continue to serve as Vice Chair of the Authority.

Mr. McCord noted that while Mr. Campbell was not present today, he had spoken with him and Mr. Campbell is willing to continue to serve. There were no other nominations.

Ms. Seitz seconded the motion. All members present voted to reappoint Mr. Campbell to the position of MHAA Vice Chair. There were no abstentions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 9, 2020 MEETING

Resolution R-100 to Approve Minutes from July 9, 2020 Meeting

Mr. McCord called for a motion to approve the July 9, 2020 MHAA meeting minutes.

Mr. Pete Leshner offered the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the July 9, 2020 meeting minutes as presented (R-100).

The motion was seconded by Mr. Wayne Clark and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Ratification of Executive Committee Decision from August 2020

Resolution R-200 to Ratify the August 3, 2020 Action Taken by the Executive Committee

Ms. Ruffner reviewed the MHAA Reserve List Policy, which allows MHAA staff to award MHAA funds to Reserve List projects when funding becomes available, in the order in which projects are ranked on the Reserve List. The policy also allows MHAA staff to seek authorization from the Executive Committee to skip a project on the Reserve List and award funding to those farther down on the list.

Ms. Ruffner explained that in August 2020, an FY 2021 \$25,000 MHAA Block Grant was returned, making \$25,000 in funding available for Reserve List projects. The next project on the Reserve List according to the ranking was the “Charm City Night Market” application submitted by the Chinatown Collective Strong City Baltimore, Inc. However, since this event will be delayed until September of 2021 and will have the opportunity to apply for MHAA funds in the upcoming FY 2022 grant round, MHAA staff recommended funding the next two projects on the FY 2021 Reserve List, which were “Bostwick Use Feasibility & Market Analysis” to the Town of Bladensburg for \$20,000 and “Website Upgrade” to the Mt. Vernon Place Conservancy for \$5,000.

MHAA staff requested authorization from the Executive Committee to fund these two projects, while skipping the “Charm City Night Market” project. The Executive Committee voted unanimously via email on August 3, 2020 to approve this action.

Mr. McCord asked for a motion to approve the action taken by the Executive Committee.

Mr. Burt Kummerow made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority ratifies the action taken by the Executive Committee via email vote on August 3, 2020 to cancel a FY 2021 grant awarded to a project that has been postponed for a year due to COVID-19, and pursuant to the MHAA Reserve List Policy, to award funds from the cancelled grant to the next two projects on the reserve list: Town of Bladensburg – Bostwick Use Feasibility and Market Analysis - \$20,000 and Mount Vernon Conservancy – Website Upgrade - \$5,000.

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

MANAGEMENT REPORT (Jennifer Ruffner, MHAA Administrator)

MHAA Financing Fund Report

Ms. Ruffner reported that, as of August 31, 2020 the current available balance in the MHAA Financing Fund was \$179,435.35. A FY 2014 grant for \$90,000 that was awarded to Charles County for acquisition was recently returned and has added to the balance.

Ms. Ruffner reported that for FY 2021, \$130,000 had been set aside for MHAA Emergency Grants. \$30,000 remains currently because MHAA awarded \$100,000 to Scotland Church out of FY 2021 emergency funding.

Mr. Clark asked about how much project grant money has been converted to operating funding due to COVID-19. Ms. Ruffner said that MHAA staff would need to take a look at this data and report on this at the next meeting.

FY 2021 Grants Processing (Ennis Smith)

Ms. Ennis Smith reported that MHAA staff's grant processing of FY 2021 grants got off to a slower than usual start because of the changes with the grant agreement text, due to MHAA's policy actions regarding COVID-19. She also noted that – now that the processing of grant agreements is moving forward – the agreements are moving at a faster pace than last year because MHT grant management is now accepting digital signatures and MHAA staff now includes three people to process grants. She thanked MHT grants management staff and Office of the Attorney General (OAG) staff for their help in this process.

Ms. Smith shared the following status updates for FY 2021 grants: 37 grants for which staff is waiting on the grantee to complete their Project Summary Sheet; 25 grants currently being processed by MHAA staff; 8 grants currently being processed by MHT grants management staff; 23 grants undergoing legal review; 12 grant agreements have been sent to the grantees for signature; 7 signed grants have been returned by the grantees and they are undergoing the very last steps of approval; 2 grant agreements have been fully processed.

Ms. Elizabeth Fitzsimmons asked what software MHT is using for digital signatures and shared that Department of Commerce has been using DocuSign.

Ms. Smith answered that MHT is using Adobe Sign.

FY 2021 Grantee Orientation Update (Andrew Arvizu)

Mr. Arvizu reported that MHAA staff had scheduled and provided five virtual orientation sessions for FY 2021 grantees in August and September of 2020, helping all 114 organizations that received grants to complete this requirement. Two sessions were intended for those grantees

receiving MHAA Capital grants, and MHT Compliance and Easement staff attended to help answer questions.

Mr. Arvizu reported that the sessions prompted good questions from grantees and connected grantees with their project monitors for follow-up questions. MHAA staff sent a survey to those who attended to collect initial feedback, and the survey responses have been largely positive with some helpful suggestions for next year. This year, for the first time, staff offered a quiz option for grantees who have received MHAA funding in recent previous years, but everyone decided to attend the virtual orientation sessions instead. Staff may look into better promoting the quiz option next year, but Mr. Arvizu noted that it was good that everyone attended a session this year, since there were a number of policy changes to communicate.

Feedback from Heritage Area Directors and Grants Review Panel on the Review Process (Andrew Arvizu)

Mr. Arvizu reported that the overall feedback was positive, both from the heritage area directors and from the members of the grants panel. MHAA staff surveyed both panelists and heritage area directors about their experiences with the grants review panel process, conducted one-on-one interviews with the panel members, and held meeting with the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas to get feedback. The panelists described the grants review process as straightforward, accessible, and fulfilling. All 20 panel members expressed interested in continuing their positions on the panel next year. When MHAA staff met one-on-one with the panelists, they shared information with them about how their individual scores compared with the scores of the entire panel, identifying statistical outliers who tended to score lower or higher. Panelists suggested the following process improvements to staff: tools to help address time management challenges, more information about the local heritage areas and their priorities earlier in the process, easier to use document delivery system that allows for all application documents to be together in one place.

Mr. Arvizu reported that the Coalition appreciated the transparency of being in the virtual “room” for the review session and being able to answer questions as they arose. The Coalition was interested in seeing regional priorities further reflected in the ranking process. MHAA staff is hopeful that an in-person grants review setting – when it is safe to gather – will allow for an even more robust discussion and will allow more panelists to contribute throughout the entire length of the discussion, which should also help address some concerns raised by the Coalition. The Coalition also suggested there should be more time built in for applicants to answer panelists’ questions.

Mr. Arvizu reported that, overall, the process was seen as positive, constructive, and transparent. Both the panelists and Coalition members shared with MHAA staff that, with refinement, this process will be a net positive.

Marketing Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that, since MHAA's program impact study is wrapping up, the MHAA Marketing Working Group will start to meet in November. She said she would send an email about potential meeting dates to the group members.

Racial Equity Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA staff has developed a statement of work that will form the basis for a request for proposals from potential facilitators. This statement has been circulated to MHAA, the Racial Equity Working Group members, and the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas for input. She reported that the group is planning to meet sometime in the next month to discuss the statement of work and determine next steps that can be undertaken before a facilitator is onboard.

Ms. Seitz asked about the budget for the facilitator's work.

Ms. Ruffner said that the MHAA operating budget has some flexibility and that, at this point, MHAA staff was unsure of the typical cost of this work, especially in an environment in which many organizations are seeking facilitators with experience in organizational equity and inclusion work. She said that the range of responses to the request for proposals will help MHAA get a better idea of the expected cost.

Strategic Planning and Agency Program Statements

Ms. Ruffner reported that a strategic planning process will need to be undertaken soon because MHAA's last 10-year plan comes to an end in 2020. She noted that the Racial Equity Working Group's recommendations will inform the larger strategic planning effort.

She asked that MHAA members representing state agencies work on their agency program statements, which are a statutory requirement for MHAA, but have not been completed to-date.

Introduction of New MHAA Member

Ms. Ruffner and Mr. McCord welcomed John Kinnaird, Mayor of Thurmont, who will be joining MHAA as the Maryland Municipal League representative. Mr. Kinnaird has not yet been sworn in and will join the group as a full member at the next meeting.

Mr. Kinnaird said he is looking forward to working with everyone.

Enterprise Grants Lifecycle Management Software / MEGA Council Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that Senate Bill 630 was passed by the Maryland Legislature in May and has prompted the creation of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application (MEGA) Council. Gail Owings, Executive Director of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has been appointed

to the Council. The Governor's Grants Office is also undertaking a procurement process for a grants software system that state grant programs are expected to be required to use going forward.

Ms. Ruffner noted that MHAA staff and the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas have concerns about the Governor's Grants Office's heavy focus on the management of federal grant funds coming into the state, and the implementation of Federal Uniform Guidance, which the Senate Bill 630 seemed to prioritize over input from grant programs that serve small non-profits with limited capacity.

Ms. Ruffner invited Ms. Lucille Walker, Co-Chair of the Coalition, to speak about the Coalition's concerns regarding the MEGA Council and software procurement process.

Ms. Walker said that the MHAA program has worked hard to be accessible to applicants and that the Coalition members are concerned that the grants software and processes have the potential to create barriers. They are concerned that the software is being sourced without input from the MEGA council.

Ms. Owings added that she is pleased to be representing small non-profits on the MEGA Council and that she understands the challenges that would arise for small non-profits if a one-size-fits-all application and management system for grants were to be implemented.

Mr. Clark asked if it is now the appropriate time to work with Maryland state senators and delegates on a bill to address these concerns. He said he agreed that a one-size-fits-all grant application would be burdensome for applicants.

Ms. Ruffner noted that Senate Bill 630 passed as a study, rather than implementation bill. However, the main concern for MHAA staff and the Coalition is that the two processes – the MEGA Council's study and the procurement of a statewide grants application and management software system – seem to be moving forward independently of one another.

There was discussion.

Mr. McCord assured the MHAA members that he would be watching this process closely and would strive to maintain MHAA's autonomy to use the grants application and management system that works best for the MHAA program.

Ms. Hughes thanked Ms. Owings for her service on the Council and asked that she keep MHAA updated on the MEGA Council's activities and any concerns that should arise. She asked if other state agencies represented on MHAA have concerns.

Ms. Seitz said that the Department of Housing and Community Development has invested heavily in their own grants software system and will be pursuing an exemption, so that they will be allowed to continue to use their customized system.

Dr. Marty Baker reported that the Maryland Department of Transportation was removed from the study bill and will not be subject to the Council's recommendations. However, she also noted that the Transportation Alternatives and Recreational Trails grant programs are already using the State's One Stop Portal. She said that the Bikeways grant program will be moving to the One Stop Portal too. One Stop is an application portal, rather than a full grants lifecycle management system.

There was discussion.

Mr. McCord said that, if prompted by the recommendations of the MEGA Council, he will seek an exemption for MHAA from requirements to use a one-size-fits-all application and management system.

MARYLAND COALITION OF HERITAGE AREAS (MCoHA) REPORT (Lucille Walker, Co-Chair, MCoHA)

Ms. Walker noted that the Coalition has also put forth a recommendation for an individual who should serve on the working group that the MEGA Council is forming. She said that they have not heard back about whether this recommendation has been accepted. She said she would keep MHAA updated on this process.

Ms. Walker welcomed Mr. Kinnaird to MHAA and reviewed the Coalition's role, explaining that the Coalition acts as an advocacy organization for the MHAA program and has representation of on the Partners for Open Space board.

She reported that the Partners for Open Space have not to-date shared any concerns about program funding for FY 2022.

Ms. Walker noted that the Coalition appreciates all the hard work that MHAA staff and Parker Phillips have put into the Program Impact Study and also noted that the Coalition has concerns about the Program Impact Study process and product.

PRESENTATION – PROGRAM IMPACT STUDY (Nichole Parker, Parker Phillips)

Ms. Nichole Parker thanked MHAA for the opportunity to present some initial findings, as she continues to finalize the numbers at the local heritage area level, making sure that all relevant visitor numbers for heritage area partner sites have been counted.

Ms. Parker said that her presentation would include information about the study's results and next steps. She explained that the study had two goals at the outset: creating program impact metrics that the program can use going forward to measure outputs and conducting an economic impact analysis.

Ms. Parker explained that Parker Phillips convened a meeting with the heritage area directors, some MHAA representatives, and MHAA staff in Frederick in 2019 to discuss the program impact metrics. She noted that, following the meeting in Frederick, Parker Phillips also spoke individually with each heritage area and surveyed the heritage areas about their capacity for collecting various metrics. The feedback received from all of these processes has helped shape the program impact metrics that Parker Phillips has developed and circulated to MHAA. She said these metrics will help the program tell the story of what the heritage areas are accomplishing across Maryland going forward.

Ms. Parker said that Parker Phillips learned that a simple, low-tech spreadsheet and online form will work best for collecting the metrics and that not every heritage area will be able to report on every metric. She said that the metrics will prompt the heritage areas to collect quantitative data, stories, and vignettes going forward and that the report Parker Phillips produces will propose a strategy for sharing the data and stories as well. She added that data collection is labor intensive, and that Parker Phillips recommends hiring a consultant annually to undertake a portion of the data collection and analysis. She said that conducting this analysis annually will be beneficial for sharing the program outcomes regularly with legislators and stakeholders.

Mr. Leshar asked for more information about the recommendation to collect data annually and about the format in which the data would be shared.

Ms. Parker said that the annual accounting of impacts would help build awareness about the program, and an annual piece like a report or infographic could also be timed to line up with funding cycles, demonstrating the value of the program when legislators are discussing funding levels each year.

Ms. Parker turned to the economic impact, explaining the process that was undertaken. She said the study began in June of 2019. Parker Phillips conducted 2,600 surveys at events across the heritage areas in order to get visitor spending data. For each heritage area, Parker Phillips is calculating direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts. She defined each term and explained that these three numbers make up the total economic contribution.

Ms. Parker said that the driving force behind the economic impact is visitor numbers. She explained that gathering the visitor numbers for partner sites in each heritage area has been both the most challenging and most important part of the methodology. She explained that her team has been able to collect visitor numbers available online, has directly contacted partner sites, and has received numbers from the heritage areas who are often in close contact with partner sites. She said that her team will make sure each heritage area is comfortable with their visitor numbers before finalizing them. She noted that there are three visitor types and each of them spend differently. The visitor surveys have determined the visitor spending calculations.

Ms. Parker said that her team used a value-added approach, rather than a total output approach, and that the value-added is the more conservative approach. It avoids the potential of double-counting impacts.

Ms. Parker reported that she is continuing to work with six heritage areas on their visitor numbers, but she expects that the impact numbers will only change slightly. At this point she is calculating that the program supports 25,000 jobs in Maryland.

Ms. Parker said that rolling out the report will be the next step, and that this will be more challenging due to COVID-19. She reported that she hopes to have the report wrapped up by the end of October.

Mr. Clark asked about communicating the impacts to the State Legislature's budget committees.

Ms. Parker agreed that this will be an important part of the roll out process and said that Parker Phillips would be providing talking points and social media graphics for each heritage area and for the statewide program. She said Parker Phillips will create a press release about the study with sensitivity to the current COVID-19 economic conditions.

Mr. Spedden underscored Ms. Parker's points about collecting impact stories as well as numbers. He said that in his experience with economic impact, the stories are often more compelling than the numbers and even lend the numbers added validity.

Dr. Baker said that the Maryland Department of Transportation is interested in quantifying the health impacts of trail programs. She said that for every \$1 of trail construction, it's estimated that \$3 are generated in positive health and environmental impacts.

Ms. Walker said that she and the other heritage area directors are hoping that the visitor numbers can be validated and easily communicated to stakeholders.

Mr. Clark suggested presenting the results of the study to the chambers of commerce in each county.

Ms. Parker thanked MHAA members for their time and said she would be in touch soon with updates.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution R-300 to Approve a Request by the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation, Inc. to Revise the Scope of Work of the FY 2019 Grant for the Monocacy Landing – Launch into History project

Ms. Smith reported that the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation was awarded an FY 2019 MHAA grant for \$12,500, intended for construction of a boat launch and landing facility for kayaks and canoes on the North Bank of the Monocacy River, as well as for interpretive signage that was to be included as a part of the project.

Ms. Smith said that after the grant agreement was finalized in 2019, Monocacy National Battlefield NPS staff were contacted by MDOT about moving up the schedule for the

replacement of the Rt 355 Bridge. This bridge replacement would be about 300 feet from the site where the boat launch and signage were planned, and NPS communicated to the Foundation that the boat launch construction could be included as part of the bridge replacement project. Bundling the bridge replacement, pedestrian access, and boat launch together would reduce the disturbance to the flood plain and could all be coordinated together. While the timeline for this bridge replacement has since become less certain, the Foundation and NPS have been reluctant to move forward with independently pursuing the launch construction under the grant. Instead, the Foundation in coordination with their partners at NPS have proposed using all the grant and match funds for interpretive signage at the site of the boat launch, to be installed whenever it is constructed and the site is ready.

Ms. Smith reported that the Foundation proposes working with the Harper's Ferry sign production facility, and the Foundation has submitted an updated proposed budget outlining the new costs. This proposal is supported by the local heritage area (HCWHA) and by the Foundation's partner's at NPS as the best use of the MHAA grant funds given the circumstances.

Ms. Smith noted that Mr. Bennett, of the Foundation, as well as Jana Friesen McCabe from NPS were on the call to help answer questions about the proposed amendment.

Mr. Leshner said the request seemed straightforward and clear.

Mr. Spedden made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the request by the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation, Inc. to revise the scope of work for the FY 2019 grant project titled "Monocacy Landing – Launch Into History" to eliminate the construction of a kayak launch, which will be funded through another source, and replace it with the fabrication and installation of interpretive signage.

Dr. Baker seconded the motion.

Mr. McCord called for a vote and for any abstentions.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Resolution R-400 to Approve a Request by the Mary Edwardine Bourke Emory Foundation to Revise the Scope of Work of the FY 2020 Grant for the Bloomfield Structure project

Ms. Smith reported that the Mary Edwardine Bourke Emory Foundation received a FY 2020 MHAA grant for \$25,000 to support structural repairs and chimney repointing at a property known as Bloomfield in Queen Anne's County outside of Centerville. The property, which is owned by Queen Anne's County and was leased to the Foundation, was slated to become the physical location of the Maryland Museum of Women's History. Conveyance of a preservation easement to MHT was a condition of the grant award.

Ms. Smith said that the Foundation worked with MHT's easement committee to get conditional approval for the work and completed the bulk of the structural repairs and repointing at the Bloomfield site in 2019. However, after a series of virtual meetings and calls regarding the conveyance of the preservation easement to MHT, Queen Anne's County determined that they were not willing to enter into a preservation easement agreement. Since this was a condition of the grant, the project could no longer move forward as planned and the MHAA funds cannot be used for this work.

Ms. Smith reported that the Foundation has found an alternative property to be used for the Maryland Museum of Women's History, and they are now in the process of entering into a 10-year lease agreement with the owners' of that property called Locust Hill or the Turpin House in Centreville. As they started establishing their new location, the Foundation has identified urgent structural concerns related to the chimney at Locust Hill. To that end, they have requested to amend their grant, so that they might be able to use the grant funds and match for structural examination of Locust Hill, carrying out proposed stabilization measures, contractor fees for brick and mortar repairs, contractor fees for interior plaster repairs and painting, and costs for scaffolding, and materials (bricks, mortar, and paint). MHT has confirmed that they would require a preservation easement for this property as well, if this amendment request is successful, and therefore the proposed work would be reviewed by the MHT easement committee before it is carried out.

Ms. Smith said that the property owner of Locust Hill has provided a signed letter indicating that they would be willing to convey a preservation easement to MHT. Another important note is that the Foundation is proposing a reduced grant award as part of their request. The reduced award would be for \$16,100 (down from \$25,000) and they have secured private funds for the match. She noted that the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area supports this request for an amendment.

Mr. Leshar asked if the preservation easement required of Locust Hill would be a term preservation easement or a perpetual preservation easement.

Ms. Smith clarified that it would be a term preservation easement.

Mr. Leshar asked about whether it would be better for the grantee to come in for an emergency grant and return the existing grant for Bloomfield and asked if there were any legal restrictions against transferring the grant funds to a new location.

Ms. Rieyn DeLony said that nothing in the grant agreement would prevent an amendment of this kind.

Ms. Smith said that the grantee would potentially be able to access the funds for this urgent work more quickly by pursuing this amendment, rather than applying for an MHAA emergency grant.

Ms. Ruffner added that if the grantee were to return the funds, MHAA would no longer have spending authorization for them, since they were from a previous fiscal year, and would have to seek that authorization in order to repurpose them for another project.

Mr. Clark made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the request by the Mary Edwardine Bourke Emory Foundation to revise the Scope of Work for the FY 2020 grant project titled “Bloomfield Structure” to allow the funds to be utilized at the new project location, Locust Hill in Centreville, because the property owner of Bloomfield refused the easement requirement of the grant.

Ms. Hughes seconded the motion.

Mr. McCord called for a vote and for any abstentions.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Revision of Standing Practice Prohibiting Grants with Passthrough Benefits to Private Individuals and Businesses

Ms. Ruffner reported that it has been the longstanding practice of MHAA to deem grant applications ineligible for MHAA funding when those applications seem to have passthrough benefits for private businesses and individuals. For example, a non-profit applying to put an interpretive sign inside a private restaurant or a government entity proposing to provide educational resources to private farmers about agrotourism have been deemed ineligible in the past.

Ms. Ruffner said that the Office of Attorney General staff have advised that it is allowable under the MHAA statute and regulations to fund these types of projects, and MHAA staff is recommending that MHAA allow these types of projects to be considered by the grants review panel in the future.

Ms. Ruffner said that, while MHAA does not have to take any action in order to allow these projects to be considered, she did not feel this was an action that staff should take without discussing with MHAA, since the informal policy is longstanding.

There was discussion.

MHAA members concurred that projects with potential passthrough benefits for private businesses and individuals could be considered by the grants review panel going forward.

Mr. McCord asked that MHAA staff come back to MHAA for further discussion if this change resulted in any questions or concerns.

Review of Management and Marketing Grants Directly by MHAA – Process Review

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA staff had planned to discuss with MHAA at the April meeting how they would like to set up the process for reviewing MHAA Management Grant applications. When the April meeting was canceled, staff did not have the chance to have this conversation and – instead – sent MHAA members applications and scoring sheets in the same format that they used for the Technical Advisory Committee’s review. MHAA staff is now seeking input from MHAA on how this process went and how it can be improved.

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA staff would also like to recommend that MHAA review the MHAA Marketing Grant applications directly next year because it did not seem like an apples-to-apples comparison for the Grants Review Panel to review and rank these applications in the same list with all the project grants, as they did in the FY 2020 grant round.

Ms. Ruffner added that MHAA can finalize this process at the January meeting, and this discussion is intended to get MHAA members thinking about how to structure the review process.

There was discussion.

Grants Review Panelist Stipends – Review of Decision Based on Workload and Sister Agency Practice

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA staff raised the issue of providing stipends to grants review panelists when the panel was being formed last year and that MHAA staff would now like to revisit this discussion of stipends. She said that the MHAA staff recommends that MHAA provide a \$100 honorarium to each member of the Grants Review Panel, in addition to the travel benefits they are already entitled to under the existing model.

Ms. Ruffner said that the panelists were surveyed and reported that they spent an average of 30-40 hours on grants review. Now knowing the significant time commitment and understanding that the Maryland State Arts Council – whose grants panels have served as models for MHAA – also provides compensation for their grants review panelists beyond travel costs, MHAA staff would like to ask MHAA to revisit the decision.

There was discussion.

Ms. Seitz raised the point that state employees representing their agencies on the panel would not be allowed to accept honorariums.

Ms. DeLony agreed this exclusion should be made.

Several MHAA members raised the point that \$100 would not offset lost income for the time spent reviewing grants if indeed panelists or potential panelists would have been earning income in some other way during those 30 to 40 hours spent on MHAA grants review.

There was discussion.

Ms. Nita Settina said that – from an equity perspective – the time commitment required is a barrier and will limit the pool of potential grants review panelists.

There was discussion about ways to reduce the time commitment required of panelists.

There was not consensus.

Mr. McCord asked that MHAA staff provide additional examples of how other grants panels have handled this matter at the January 2020 meeting.

Ms. Ruffner asked that if MHAA members had additional questions or comments on the matter, they reach out to her in advance of the of the January meeting so that she might be able to provide data relevant to the MHAA members’ questions and concerns.

Ms. Shatto asked whether a policy to provide honorariums, if implemented, would have implications for local review panels. Ms. Ruffner stated that she did not anticipate that would be the case.

MHAA MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HERITAGE AREA DIRECTORS’ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Nita Settina announced that Maryland State Parks have had record visitation in 2020 with 17.1 million visitors to-date this year. She said that the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center is working on a reopening plan with the Dorchester County Health Department.

Ms. Elizabeth Fitzsimmons announced that the Office of Tourism has launched an “Open Roads” campaign to encourage visitor traffic on Scenic Byways and outdoor experiences. She said they are also working on an “Open for the Holidays” campaign and creating a deals page that will be promoted.

Mr. McCord reported that Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM) has enjoyed high visitor numbers on their outdoor campus and that they are launching a micro-weddings offering and working on a general reopening plan, working with the Calvert County Health Department on guidance. He said that JPPM Director Greg Pierce had been skillfully leading these efforts.

Mr. Dan Spedden updated the group on the ongoing historic preservation project at 417 Jonathan Street in Hagerstown. The log cabin that has been uncovered with the help of Preservation Maryland and archaeologists from the State Highway Administration is believed to have ties to

African American history and possibly dates to the late 1700s. He also shared that the hotel lodging market is now 75% of what it was last year, but it is up from 20% in April. He said that a portion of funding from the federal CARES Act that was received by the Washington County has been used for tourism marketing.

Dr. Marty Baker announced in the chat the following: "...check out MDOT's recently announced bikeways awards: \$3.8 Million for 19 projects announced on Sept 16th. Also: Thanks for inputs for Walktober. We have 3 more webinars on the upcoming Thursdays and other events. Check it out and get on board! It's going great - and we're happy to have had strong support from MDP, DNR, and Commerce. Moving forward - I think will be another great opportunity for us to work together and cross leverage resources and marketing. Thanks all and take care."

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto added a link to her heritage area's Walktober promotion piece in the chat: <https://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/blog/celebrate-walktober-in-the-heart-of-the-civil-war>

Mr. Aaron Shapiro, new Executive Director for the Patapsco Heritage Greenway, introduced himself and said he's already learned a lot from this meeting.

Ms. Brigitte Carty of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway emphasized that State Parks are seeing record-breaking visitation, noting that there have been 3,400 visitors per month on one small trail section that has been tracked. She reported that her heritage area is working toward 40,000 miles of trails, they are currently actively pursuing 10 new trail projects, and they are working with Cecil and Harford Counties to update trail maps.

Ms. Lucille Walker of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area reported that her heritage area is moving forward with the national heritage area recognition process and that the legislation has been introduced.

Ms. Gail Owings, of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, reported that the new Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe has unveiled interpretive signage.

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto reported that the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area is holding their annual meeting in November and will be highlighting the forthcoming Parker Phillips program impact study as part of the meeting. She said Ms. Ruffner will serve as a guest speaker in a Q and A about the report's initial numbers. She reported that the event held by the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas on Sept 22nd to discuss racial unrest and heritage areas, drew 170 viewers to the live event and 120 viewers have also watched the recording. She is still gathering post-event surveys. She also reported on successful advertising campaigns in Baltimore Magazine and Philadelphia Magazine's digital outlets for the heritage area.

Julie Gilberto-Brady reported on the strategic shifts that her heritage area has made regarding their heritage awards program and their brochures and promotional materials. She reported that the artist who painted the Black Lives Matter mural on a street in Cambridge, highlighting Cambridge's civil rights history and getting the community involved in the art project, will be receiving an award. She also recognized the community radio station, which has provided

important health and visitor updates during the pandemic. The station also streamed the Day of Resilience event, held when the temporary Harriet Tubman statue was unveiled, funded in part by the heritage area.

ADJOURN

Mr. McCord thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting and for their active discussion. He reported that he will be thinking of Thursdays as “Thankful Thursdays” over the next few months into November, and he invites everyone to use this same practice to pause for gratitude in their lives over the next few months, which may also bring stressful times.

Mr. McCord thanked MHAA members, staff, and heritage area directors for their work and called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Spedden motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Clark seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. McCord adjourned the meeting at approximately 1 pm.