

Minutes of the
Ninety-Second Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
October 14, 2021

The ninety-second meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened on October 14, 2021 via web conference call and live-streaming. The public was notified about the meeting and had the opportunity to listen/watch via live-streaming.

Authority Members/Designees Present:

Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for 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); Nita Settina (representing MD Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio); Daniel Spedden (MD Tourism Development Board representative); Amy Seitz (representing MD Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt); Mary Anne Harms (Speaker of the House representative); Nicholas Redding (President of the Senate representative); Lee Towers (representing MD Higher Education Commission Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr.); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz); Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Bruce Lesh (representing MD State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury); Dennis Doster (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Natalie Chabot (Representative for MD Greenways)

Authority Members/Designees Absent:

Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder); Janice Hayes-Williams (Speaker of the House representative); John A. Kinnaird (MD Municipal League representative)

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

Heritage Area Directors/Staff Present: Lucille Walker (Southern Maryland Heritage Area and Co-Chair, Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition); Brigitte Carty (Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway and Co-Chair, Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition); Sarah Rogers (Montgomery County Heritage Area); Deidra Ritchie (Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area); Elizabeth Shatto (Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area); Amanda Fenstermaker (Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area); Carol Benson (Four Rivers / Annapolis, London Town and South County Heritage Area); Meagan Baco (Maryland Milestones / Anacostia Trails Heritage Area); Lisa Challenger (Beach to Bay Heritage Area); Kim Folk (Mountain Gateway to the West Heritage Area); Aaron Shapiro (Patapsco Valley Heritage Area)

Others Present: Tom Clemens, Elizabeth Comer

CALL TO ORDER AND MHAA CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCEMENTS

Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority) called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. Mr. Campbell welcomed everyone, thanked them for being there, and asked Ms. Jennifer Ruffner to proceed with the roll call.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

Ms. Jennifer Ruffner called the roll to confirm MHAA members' attendance. With 15 members in attendance and 4 members absent, there was a quorum present, and a two-thirds majority.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 8, 2021 MEETING

Resolution R-100 to Approve Minutes from July 8, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Campbell asked for any discussion of the minutes from the July 8, 2021 MHAA meeting. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Mr. Daniel Spedden offered the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the July 8, 2021 meeting minutes.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Amy Seitz and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

MANAGEMENT REPORT (Jennifer Ruffner, MHAA Administrator)

MHAA Financing Fund Report:

Ms. Ruffner noted that the balance of the MHAA Financing Fund is currently showing as \$65,386.98. She said she believed the working balance may actually be higher because a returned grant from Western Maryland Scenic railroad was not yet showing up in the tabulation.

Marketing Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that the Marketing Working Group has met several times, has developed a list of working definitions that were shared at the last MHAA meeting, and that the group has now distributed a survey to MHAA members and other stakeholder. The survey asks respondents

about the purpose and impact of MHAA and the broader program. Ms. Ruffner asked MHAA members and heritage area directors to please complete the survey over the next week.

Racial Equity Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that the group has been working through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to hire a facilitator and evaluator. She noted that the group completed the interview process for all qualified firms, and they are now awaiting determinations about the eligibility of two of the offerors from the Maryland State Ethic Commission. These determinations must be received before moving forward with the procurement.

Ms. Ruffner extended a special thank you to Steven Lee, Commissioner on the Maryland Commission for African American History and Culture, Chanel Compton, staff for the Commission and Executive Director of the Banneker-Douglass Museum, and Meagan Baco of the Maryland Milestones Heritage Area. Each of these individuals have served on the technical review committee for this process, along with MHAA staff, and have devoted many hours to reading proposals, group meetings, and participating in interviews.

Ms. Ruffner said that the group has already learned by going through a portion of the RFP process and reading the many detailed proposals that this will be only Phase 1 of a much larger process.

Five-Year Plan Process Update

Ms. Ruffner noted that MHAA had delayed the requirement that the heritage areas create new five-year plans recently while we waited for the program impact study to be completed. Now that the program impact study is complete, as noted at the April and July 2021 meetings, the heritage areas should plan to create five-year plans that would be completed and approved in FY 2023 and implemented in FY 2024. The plans will run from FY 2024 through FY 2028. MHAA staff have circulated a new – more user-friendly – template for these reports.

Ms. Ruffner noted that heritage area directors should anticipate having their 5-year plans approved by the April 2023 MHAA meeting.

Upcoming Boundary Amendments

Ms. Ruffner shared that MHAA members should anticipate reviewing four boundary amendment requests in the coming months, including a request for an administrative amendment from the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area and requests for programmatic boundary amendments from the Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area, and the

Maryland Milestones (Anacostia Trails) Heritage Area. Maryland Milestones has undergone a boundary amendment study funded by an MHAA grant and will likely be proposing a more extensive amendment request. Passages of the Western Potomac is working on a grant-funded management plan update that would include expansion into Allegany County.

Mr. Campbell encouraged boundary amendment tours in favorable weather.

Update on Grants Review Panel – Recruitment of New Members

Ms. Ruffner reported that 23 grant reviewers participated as part of the review panel in the FY 2022 round. She said that MHAA staff have determined that the panel should be expanded to about 30 members to ensure that each application received can be reviewed by 4 reviewers. This will allow for a greater degree of review consistency and for an expansion to include reviewers from different geographic areas of the state.

Ms. Ruffner noted that MHAA staff are particularly interested in recruiting panelists from outside of central Maryland, where the panel already has sufficient representation.

There was discussion. Ms. Ruffner noted that she would send out an email with this information and a link to the nomination form.

Mr. Campbell raised Mx. Meagan Baco's question from the chat about whether heritage area board members are allowed to serve on the panel.

Ms. Ruffner answered that heritage area board members are prohibited from serving on the panel.

MARYLAND HERITAGE AREAS COALITION (MHAC) REPORT (Lucille Walker and Brigitte Carty, Co-Chairs)

Ms. Lucille Walker thanked Ms. Sarah Rogers for her service as Co-Chair, announcing that Ms. Rogers will be stepping down and Ms. Brigitte Carty will be stepping up to fill her role.

Ms. Rogers thanked the Coalition and said she was sure that Ms. Carty will do a fabulous job.

Ms. Carty thanked Ms. Rogers and thanked her colleagues for allowing her to serve in the Co-Chair role

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Ms. Carty reported that four heritage area directors attended the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Annual Meeting in August. The group has been attending since 2011, and –

again this year – she said it was time well spent and a great chance to interact with legislators on behalf of the program. She said the group gave out hats, bags, and other swag. She also shared that the heritage areas got a special shout out from Senator Eckhart.

Ms. Carty reported on the items that the Marketing Working Group had asked the Coalition to consider: the group's name and definition. She shared that consensus has been reached on the name which is now the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition. She said that the group is still fine tuning the definition of the Coalition's function.

Ms. Carty reported that the Coalition is also planning for a legislative reception in January, but they have encountered some challenges.

Ms. Walker explained that many of the conference rooms are currently being used by the Department of Legislative Services, and they have not been able to reserve a space for the reception. They are working out the logistics and will report back with updates.

Ms. Walker also reported on the actions of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application (MEGA) Council, of which Gail Owings, director of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, is a member. She said that the heritage area directors continue to advocate for an exception for MHAA, so that any required software and processes mandated by the MEGA Council will not apply to the MHAA grant program, which already has its own set of well-defined processes.

Mr. Campbell thanked the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition for their report and turned the meeting over to Secretary McCord, Chair of MHAA, who arrived late due to a prior commitment.

Mr. McCord thanked Mr. Campbell for running the first part of the meeting in his absence.

Individual Heritage Area Reports

Ms. Lucille Walker of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area reported on a speaker series in her region that the heritage area and Patuxent Partnership are collaborating to provide. The three-part series is entitled "Where Time and Tide Meet." One of the programs focused on Piscataway perspectives, and each of them promotes the concept of heritage areas across Maryland.

Ms. Walker shared that her heritage area has now produced a second brochure in collaboration with all three counties. The brochure has a focus on African American heritage in Southern Maryland and contains an interactive map when viewed online.

Ms. Walker said that the process to gain designation as a national heritage area is also moving forward and has passed through sub-committee review in both chambers.

Ms. Carol Benson of the Four Rivers Heritage Area reported on the rebranding project that her heritage area is currently undertaking as part of a marketing grant. The rebrand comes after the heritage area has amended its boundaries, including new areas, nearly doubling its size, and expanding upon related themes. The process with the Anne Arundel County based firm has included a productive brainstorming session with over 30 stakeholders. The next step is a creative brief, to be generated from ideas and feedback raised in the session.

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area reported that mini-grant applications in her heritage area are due October 29 and that she is currently preparing for her virtual annual meeting to be streamed on November 16 at 6 pm. She reported that the heritage area is currently working on their strategic plan and have been holding a series of listening sessions and focus groups. The plan is funded in part by the Rural Maryland Council. The plan will start in FY 23, and it will be a 6-year plan, so that it stays in alignment with the other heritage areas' plans going forward. The same consultant who worked on the heritage area's management plan is also working on this strategic plan.

Ms. Shatto also reported on the work of a recent intern, John Echeverria, who developed a set of guidelines for engaging Spanish-speaking communities, as well as working on communications and media for the heritage area. Ms. Shatto said that this resource will be a tremendous help for partners as they look to reach out to the Spanish-speaking market. It will also be released just in time for Hispanic Heritage Month.

Mr. McCord thanked the heritage area directors for their reports.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution R-200 to Approve the Amendment to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Bylaws

Ms. Ruffner reported that, at the July MHAA meeting, MHAA voted to approve changes to the bylaws, but one change was tabled so that MHAA staff could consult with the Office of Attorney General (OAG) staff on a question raised by MHAA members. The question was about the ethics clause proposed and whether MHAA members would be permitted to continue serving in advisory roles for the local heritage areas.

OAG has reviewed and created a revised version of Article 3, Section 8, which clarifies that this is permitted.

There was discussion.

Mr. Campbell made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the amendment to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Bylaws as set forth in the document “MHAA Bylaws with Ethics-Advisory Role Section” included with the meeting materials.

Ms. Amy Seitz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with no abstentions, and with the required two-thirds majority necessary to amend the bylaws.

Resolution R-300 to Approve a Request by Save Historic Antietam Foundation, Inc. to Revise the Scope of Work of the FY 2019 grant for the Poffenberger Tract Restoration project.

Ms. Ruffner reported that the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, Inc, had submitted a request to amend their FY 2019 grant. The grant was awarded for work proposed at 5835 Dunker Church Road in Sharpsburg to restore the site to its appearance at the time of the Battle of Antietam by demolishing structures. They are having difficulty moving this project forward and are proposing shifting the funds to complete similar demolition and restoration work at 4824 and 4826 Harpers Ferry Road in Sharpsburg. MHT’s Compliance staff have reviewed and determined that no historic properties would be adversely affected by the proposed work. Ms. Ruffner invited Dr. Thomas Clemens to add any details.

Dr. Clemens explained how the demolition work will restore the viewshed for the lower part of the battlefield and how his organization intends to seek funds to create an interpretive plaque and a small parking area.

There was discussion.

Mr. Nicholas Redding made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the request by Save Historic Antietam Foundation, Inc. to revise the scope of work for the FY 2019 grant project titled “Poffenberger Tract Restoration” to change the scope of work from restoration of the property located at 5835 Dunker Church Road, Sharpsburg, to the acquisition and restoration of the properties located 4824 and 4826 Harpers Ferry Road, Sharpsburg.

Mr. Burt Kummerow seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Resolution R-400 to Approve a FY 2022 Emergency Grant Request from the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. for the “Saving a worker house in historic Catoctin Furnace” project

Ms. Ruffner summarized the emergency grant application from the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, explaining that the purchase of the property at 12606 Catoctin Furnace Road will help to preserve the viewshed that exists in Catoctin Furnace, an area where MHAA has already made significant investments in heritage tourism. The historical society plans to use the house to accommodate fellows who would be furthering the society’s mission.

Ms. Ruffner also noted that the amount of emergency funding available is uncertain. She asked MHAA to consider awarding the emergency grant contingent upon funding becoming available. Ms. Ruffner invited Ms. Elizabeth Comer of the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society to add any details.

Ms. Elizabeth Comer discussed the historic outbuildings and the potential for a new buyer to build a larger house on the site, altering the village’s cultural landscape. She said that this house is a log house that is preserved under the siding and may have been constructed before 1820. It likely would have been built by enslaved workers and may even have housed enslaved workers at the Furnace. She also described the fellowship program that would benefit from this housing resource. She also touched on the increase in visitor numbers that the site has been seeing and likely will continue to see as a result of a new Smithsonian Institution documentary about the village.

There was discussion.

Ms. Amy Seitz made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that subject to the availability of funds in the Maryland Heritage Areas Financing Fund, the Authority approves a FY 2022 emergency grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund to the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. for the acquisition of the property at 12606 Catoctin Furnace Road, Thurmont (the “Property”) in an amount not to exceed the lesser of (i) \$100,000 or (ii) half of the average of two appraisals of the Property to be completed prior to disbursement of the grant.

Mr. Redding seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Ms. Comer thanked MHAA for their support.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Proposal to Allow State Staff Time as Match

Ms. Ruffner reported that there was a briefing memo in MHAA members' packets describing the request to allow state employees' staff time as match for MHAA grants. She provided examples of situations in which this match would have allowed important projects to move forward, particularly in cases where universities in the State of Maryland system and State Parks' employees time were key parts of the proposed projects.

There was discussion.

Mr. Redding made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that MHAA allow state employee staff time on grant project work to be eligible for inclusion as part of the Grantee's Contribution, required by the MHAA grant guidelines.

Mr. Daniel Spedden seconded the motion, and it was approved by a majority vote. There was one vote against the motion from Natalie Chabot.

Ms. Ruffner said that staff would follow up at a later date, after the next grant round, with more information about the possibility of other state funds being allowed as match for MHAA grants.

State Agency Program Statements

Ms. Ruffner reminded MHAA members that program statements from each agency represented on MHAA are a statutory requirement for MHAA, but we have not yet been able to collect these statements from each agency.

There was discussion.

Ms. Ruffner and Mr. McCord said they would follow up with an email with further instructions and a template for state agency program statements.

New Business and Announcements

Mr. Campbell reported that he attended the retirement celebration for Bernadette Pulley Pruitt and thanked her MHT colleagues for putting on the event. He reported that Ms. Pruitt seems to be enjoying retirement and encouraged MHAA members to visit London Town and Gardens when they get a chance.

Adjournment

Mr. McCord called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kummerow motioned to adjourn. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion, and the motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at 11:57 am, with no abstentions.