

Minutes of the
Ninety-Third Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
January 13, 2022

The ninety-third meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened on January 13, 2022 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); Burton Kummerow (President of the Senate representative); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary James F. Ports); 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); 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) Janice Hayes-Williams (Speaker of the House representative)

Authority Members/Designees Absent:

Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder); Lee Towers (representing MD Higher Education Commission Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr.); John A. Kinnaird (MD Municipal League representative); Pete Leshner (MD Association of Counties representative)

Staff Present: Andrew Arvizu (Maryland Historical Trust); Paul Cucuzzella, Rieyn DeLony (Office of the Attorney General), Nell Ziehl (Maryland Historical Trust)

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

Vice Chair Robert Campbell called the meeting to order at 10:03. He greeted the attendees and explained that MHAA's Chair, Robert McCord was in an overlapping meeting and should be joining the call later on.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

Mr. Andrew Arvizu called the roll to confirm MHAA members' attendance. With 14 members in attendance and 5 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 Fitzsimmons offered the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the October 14, 2021 meeting minutes.

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

MANAGEMENT REPORT (Elizabeth Hughes, State Historic Preservation Officer, and Andrew Arvizu, MHAA Assistant Administrator)

MHAA Financing Fund Report:

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes noted that the balance of the MHAA Financing Fund is currently showing as \$30,536. She explained that the balance was a result of the recapture from funds that were not completed or completed under budget. This balance is average compared to other fiscal years.

MHAA Staff Vacancies and Workload Management

Ms. Hughes explained that MHAA had seen two vacancies open up in December of 2021. Jen Ruffner, the program's administrator for nine years, left in mid-December for a position with The Summit Foundation in Washington, DC. Ennis Barbary Smith, one of the program's assistant administrators, returned to her home state of West Virginia with a position with the department of tourism. The authority wished the departing staff members well.

Ms. Hughes encouraged the authority to share the recruitment of these vacancies with their respective networks. She explained that, since the state is in such good financial shape, it is unlikely that MHAA would have those positions recalled.

Mr. Campbell asked about how Mr. Arvizu would handle the added workload.

Ms. Hughes explained that the Maryland Historical Trust would be providing as much assistance as possible to smooth the transition. In particular, grants staff from other programs will be recruited to help with the upcoming grant round.

Mr. Campbell warned that there may be challenges with operating the program with only one staff member. He asked about the logistics of keeping emergency grants open while also trying to process the new project grant round.

Mr. Arvizu explained that there were already two requests for emergency grants and that there are enough funds to address both requests.

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto explained that an additional emergency grant might be in the works and there is precedent for funding outside the fiscal year if the funds are needed earlier.

Mr. Dennis Doster asked about the status of the two open positions.

Ms. Hughes explained that the positions were in the process of being filled and were moving forward steadily.

There was a brief discussion of the potential for emergency grants at this time. Ultimately, the authority decided to move forward with emergency grants, keeping open the application for interested parties. The group also discussed the potential for creating a more meaningful definition of "emergency" when considering the emergency grant program as a whole.

Sec. Robert McCord joined the call and thanked Mr. Campbell for managing the meeting up to this point.

Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Round

Mr. Arvizu updated the authority on the status of the fiscal year 2023 grant round. He explained that at this stage in the grant round, there had been a great sense of engagement. Although there were fewer ITAs at this stage than normal, turnout to educational webinars and Q&A sessions had been very high. Across 5 events, nearly 100 organizations had signed up to learn about MHAA's capital and non-capital grant opportunities.

Mr. Arvizu then discussed the grants review panel, explaining that almost everyone had continued to serve this year. He also explained that the panel is being grown from 20 members to 30 members to allow more eyes to read each of the applications. The recruitment process is ongoing and based on a short-list developed by the entire MHAA staff back in December.

Racial Equity Working Group

Mr. Arvizu explained that, after one year of attempting to hire a racial equity facilitator, MHAA has finally signed a contract with Symphonic Strategies. Symphonic was one of the best firms that applied and performed exceptionally well in both interviews and written proposals.

Symphonic's original work plan had to be adjusted to adapt to the staffing challenges facing the organization. Their plan now involves moving all of the quantitative research to the front of the project and performing the qualitative research, such as interviews and surveys, once the new administrator has been hired. They are planning on providing a presentation of their findings at either the July or October MHAA meeting.

Finally, Mr. Arvizu explained that this is phase 1 of a two-phase project. In the second phase, MHAA would move forward with recommendations from Symphonic and hire another consultant.

Program Metrics

Mr. Arvizu recommended that the program metrics, proposed by Parker Phillips to be implemented in FY24, be delayed by one fiscal year. He listed a variety of reasons, including staffing capacity, the impact of Covid on tourism, and the work required by local heritage area directors to implement this data collection. The authority agreed to delay the collection of these metrics until FY25.

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

Ms. Brigitte Carty shared that the Coalition had canceled its legislative reception due to concerns over Covid. She mentioned that she was looking into alternatives for the program, including individual meetings with legislators.

Ms. Lucille Walker shared that the Coalition had submitted a one-time \$4 million appropriations request to be split evenly between all thirteen heritage areas. This was in response to the budget surplus facing the State of Maryland. Mr. Nick Redding endorsed the idea and asked that the Coalition work with him in promoting this appropriation.

Individual Heritage Area Reports

Ms. Carol Benson shared her heritage area's new name: Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area. She explained that this shift in branding was part of a multi-year process and reflected both the inclusion of new sites into the heritage area and a new focus on interpretation of broader stories across Anne Arundel County.

Mx. Megan Baco explained that Anacostia Trails Heritage Area is going through a boundary amendment study that will bring in significant portions of southern Prince George's county, including Accokeek, Upper Marlboro, and other areas that have not been covered by the program. After the completion of the study, ATHA will be submitting a management plan update that will include both the new boundaries and a revised look at interpretive themes.

Ms. Walker updated the authority on the Southern Maryland Heritage Area's progress towards achieving national heritage area status. She shared that bills had been introduced in both the House and the Senate and would be heard during this legislative session. Currently, SMHA's feasibility study is undergoing review by the National Parks Service before being passed on to committee for deliberation.

Ms. Carty shared news from the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway on the status of two proposed river crossings. These crossings would help to unite the region's already extensive trail networks that are currently bisected by the Susquehanna River. Increasing attention at the national level has made the possibility of funding these projects much more reasonable. Amtrak, in particular, identified the need to redesign the Northeast corridor to relieve congestion. It was determined that a new bridge is the best alternative costing around \$50 million. Additionally, the

September 11 National Memorial Trail proposed a crossing over the Susquehanna river. This proposal has garnered the President's attention and is making progress as well.

New Business and Announcements

Ms. Baker shared that Mr. Jim Ports is the new secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation. Additionally, new grant workshops on bikeways and transit would be coming soon.

Ms. Seitz explained that the Department of Housing and Community Development launched a new program called Community Safety Works to address community safety needs and planning. The program will offer grants to help improve and secure facilities and for business improvements.

Ms. Nita Settina shared that the Department of Natural Resources will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's birthday in March from the 11th through the 13th at the visitor center. Ms. Amanda Fenstermaker added that the Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area would be holding a great deal of events in conjunction with this anniversary.

Mr. Dan Spedden shared a link to a presentation on the history of the Hagerstown Aviation Museum.

Adjournment

Mr. McCord again thanked Mr. Campbell for chairing the meeting until he arrived and thanked the staff of MHT for their hard work during this period of transition. He called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Spedden motioned to adjourn. Mr. Leshner seconded the motion, and the motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at 11:34 am, with no abstentions.