

Minutes of the
One Hundredth Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
July 13, 2023

The one hundredth meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened on July 13, 2023 via web conference call and live-streaming. The public had the opportunity to listen/watch via live-streaming.

Authority Members/Designees Present

Rebecca Flora (MD Department of Planning Secretary and Chairperson for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); Natalie Chabot (Representative for MD Greenways); Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Robert D. Campbell (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as the Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); Dennis Doster (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Nicholas Redding (President of the Senate representative); Geoff Newman (representing Maryland Department of Higher Education Acting Secretary Dr. Sanjay Rai); Melissa Archer (representing MD Department of Housing & Community Development Secretary Jake Day); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson); Marianne Harms (Speaker of the House representative); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld); Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson); Leah Renzi (representing MD State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury); Jonathan Hughes (Speaker of the House representative); Josh Kurtz (Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary); and Hilary Bell (representing MD Department of Natural Resources)

Authority Members/Designees Absent

Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks); Pete Leshner (MD Association of Counties representative); John A. Kinnaird (MD Municipal League representative)

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); Elizabeth Shatto (Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area); Carol Benson (Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area);

Meagan Baco (Anacostia Trails Heritage Area); Kim Folk (Mountain Gateway to the West Heritage Area); Aaron Shapiro (Patapsco Valley Heritage Area); Holly Gilpin (Heart of Chesapeake Country); Gail Owings (Stories of the Chesapeake); Deidra Ritchie (Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area/Canal Place); Shauntee Daniels (Baltimore National Heritage Area); Lisa Challenger (Beach to Bay Heritage Area)

Staff Present

Ariane M. Hofstedt (Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Martha Waldron (Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Andrew Arvizu (Maryland Heritage Areas Program); Nell Ziehl (Maryland Historical Trust); Rieyn DeLony (Office of the Attorney General); Emily Huebner (Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area)

CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Rebecca Flora called the meeting to order at 10:00.

MHAA CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATE

Secretary Flora introduced the new members of the Authority, starting with Geoff Newman. Mr. Newman introduced himself and explained that he will be representing the Department of Higher Education.

Next Secretary Flora introduced Jonathan Hughes. He introduced himself as the principal of Deer Park Middle Magnet School and will be acting as the representative from the Speaker of the House.

Secretary Flora noted that there are still two vacant positions, and that MDP is working to fill those positions shortly.

Resolution R-100 to Approve the Appointment of a Vice Chair

Secretary Flora explained that Mr. Bob Campbell has been serving as the Vice Chair and shared that he is willing to serve again, but she wanted to hear if there were any new nominations for the position.

Ms. Marty Baker nominated Bob Campbell. Ms. Mary Anne Harms concurred, adding that Mr. Campbell has done a great job.

Secretary Flora encouraged the Authority to think about new nominations for next year. She added that she was happy to have Mr. Campbell continue to serve. Secretary Flora called for a vote. Ms. Baker made the following motion, Ms. Harms seconded,

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves a call for nominations and a motion to elect a Member to serve as Vice Chair of the Authority, pursuant to MHAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 2.

The motion passed unanimously. Secretary Flora thanked Bob for his willingness to serve and was happy to have him as vice chair.

Resolution R-200 to Approve Minutes from April 13, 2023 meeting

Secretary Flora called for a motion for the approval of the April 13 meeting minutes. Mr. Pete Leshner made the following motion, which Ms. Natalie Chabot seconded,

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the April 13, 2023 Minutes as presented.

Passed unanimously. Mr. Campbell Abstained.

MANAGEMENT REPORT (Ms. Hofstedt Hofstedt, MHAA Administrator; Martha Waldron, MHAA Assistant Administrator)

MHAA Financing Fund Report and FY24 Funding

Ariane Hofstedt shared a new format of the financing fund report. She noted that the previous report was a long spreadsheet covering the entire history of the program. This revised version is a summary of the income and expenses for both the current year and the aggregate of the program. The amount remaining in the fund is highlighted in yellow at the bottom of the document. Currently there is \$243,717 in the fund however MHT Finance staff is still closing out Fiscal Year 23. While the final number is still being confirmed, there were unspent operating funds from when the program was down to just one employee. The revised numbers for FY24 should be ready at the next meeting. In the meantime, a detailed spreadsheet can be provided upon request.

Ms. Hofstedt noted that, as per the last Authority meeting, \$100,000 will be set aside for emergency grants for FY24.

FY24 Operating Funds

Ms. Hofstedt explained that the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition successfully lobbied for additional operating funds for FY24. Since the funds are in MDP's budget, it should be possible to distribute the funds without the MHAA matching requirements in an equal sum to every Heritage Area. She added that Secretary Flora is in the final stages of confirming this process with DBM.

Secretary Flora explained that getting these funds out is number one priority, but the statute makes disbursing the funds very difficult. She is currently working with DBM to make sure that funds can simply go out as one grant payment, but she is confident that MPD will be able to move money forward without any red tape.

Mr. Nick Redding asked if this would be a grant or an appropriation.

Secretary Flora explained that she is waiting on DBM to confirm.

Mr. Redding asked that the authority receive an update.

FY22 Annual Report

Ms. Hofstedt shared that the FY22 annual report came out two months ago. She encouraged Authority members to read through the report. She noted that the report was later than expected, but MHAA staff are planning to have the FY23 report out earlier next year.

FY23 Grant Agreements

Mr. Arvizu noted that all FY23 grant agreements had been processed. They explained that the process had taken longer than expected, due to staffing shortages. They thanked MHT Grant Staff and MHT's representatives with the Office of the Attorney General for their exceptional support. Finally, they explained several steps that would be implemented to ensure next year's process was smoother.

FY24 Grant Approvals

Ms. Hofstedt explained the process of how grants are reviewed and recommended to the Authority, including the five types of grants (Management, Marketing, Block, Capital and Non Capital). She explained the criteria and review process for all grant types. She shared the composition and history of the state Grants Review Panel.

Resolution R-300 to Approve Funding Requests: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Management, Marketing and Block Grants (collectively referred to as the “Resolution R-300 Grants”)

Secretary Flora called for a motion to approve the resolution to fund Management, Marketing and Block grants. Ms. Archer made the following motion which Mr. Redding seconded.

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves funding for Resolution R-300 Grants consisting of thirteen management grants, six marketing grants, and twelve block grants, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the chart titled “Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Awards: Fiscal Year 2024” (the “**Chart**”), attached to these resolutions, and made part of Resolution R-300, for the management and marketing of certified heritage areas, including Anacostia Trails (Maryland Milestones), Annapolis, London Town and South County (Chesapeake Crossroads), Baltimore National, Beach to Bay, Canal Place (Passages of the Western Potomac), Heart of Chesapeake Country, Heart of the Civil War, Lower Susquehanna, Montgomery County, Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West, Patapsco Valley, Southern Maryland National and Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Areas.

The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation of Project Grants by the Chair of the Grants Review Panel

Secretary Flora introduced Mr. Kevin McDonald, the chair of MHT’s Grants Review Panel.

Mr. McDonald greeted the Authority. He shared that this was his fourth year serving on the panel. He explained 69 projects were put forward for funding, totaling around \$3 million. The projects were $\frac{2}{3}$ Capital and $\frac{1}{3}$ Non Capital. Every Heritage Area saw at least 30% of their ask funded, and all Heritage Areas had their top two projects funded. Additionally, most Heritage Areas had top 3 projects funded. He noted that funding had been distributed as equitably as possible, thanks to the efforts of the panel. He thanked MHAA staff for keeping things moving smoothly during the meetings. He noted that the panel had voted to lower the cap for Capital and Non-Capital amounts down to \$90,000 and \$47,500 to spread the available funding further. In part, this was done because the average ask this year was nearly \$10,000 higher than last year. He then highlighted 5 projects that were selected for funding, noting both Capital and Non-Capital projects representative of the entire program.

Resolution R-400 to Approve Funding Requests: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Capital and Non-Capital Grants and Reserve List Grants (collectively referred to as the “Resolution R-400 Grants”)

Secretary Flora thanked the Grants Review Panel for putting in the time to thoroughly read all of this year’s grants. Sec. Flora called for a motion to approve R-400. Mr. Leshar thanked the entire Grants Review Panel for their work. He asked why lower project grants were funded seemingly out of order.

Mr. McDonald explained that the order of some grants were adjusted to reflect local priorities and to ensure that funding was distributed equitably.

Mr. Redding asked why there was such a difference between state and local scores. He called for all highly ranked local projects to be fully funded.

Ms. Hofstedt noted that partial funding was awarded to some projects so that more money could get to more grantees including some heritage area’s 2nd and 3rd choices, since the request amounts this year were higher than usual. She assured the Authority that MHAA staff had reached out to grantees to make sure that the projects could still proceed with reduced funding. She added that the Grants Review Panel had already looked carefully at budgets before making the decision to reduce Capital awards by \$10,000 (10%).

Mr. Redding asked to reverse the \$10,000 cut on Capital Grants.

Secretary Flora noted that amending the process after the fact might be problematic.

Mr Leshar noted several situations where the panel had given more weight to the local rank.

Mr. Arvizu added that local and state ranks are already averaged at a ratio of 65:35 in favor of the local ranks.

Ms. Archer shared Mr. Redding’s concerns about cutting funding from projects. She added that it can be very hard for folks to move ahead with reduced awards.

Ms. Chabot asked for feedback from the Heritage Area directors regarding the grant review process.

Secretary Flora called for a follow up discussion regarding the process at a later date.

Ms. Hofstedt explained the role that the Heritage Area directors play in the grant review process, including the ranking letter and the role they play in the two decision making meetings. They had been a part of the process and, in some cases, helped to confirm that projects could move forward at a reduced amount.

Mr. Campbell reminded the Authority that the Grants Review Panel has already looked at the budgets themselves. He argued that this decision is within their purview.

Secretary Flora thanked the Authority for their comments. She noted that she would like to build on this process for next year, but encouraged the Authority to move forward with the resolution.

Mr. Redding clarified that motion for consideration is not regarding a change to the process, but rather the grants to be funded. He suggested that the Authority use the Financing Fund balance to fully fund every Heritage Area's number one priority.

Mr. moved that the Authority amend the motion as presented to fully fund the number one priorities using the MHAA financing fund. The motion did not receive a second.

Secretary Flora called for a vote on the original motion. Mr. Leshner made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Campbell seconded:

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Area Authority approves funding of Resolution R-400 Grants consisting of (i) 28 capital projects; (ii) 37 noncapital project grants for projects and activities within the CHAs (not including the Separately Approved Grants approved pursuant to Resolutions R-500, R-600, R-700, and R-800 below), as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart made part of Resolution R-400 as "Full Funding" or "Partial Funding"; and (iii) contingent upon additional funding becoming available through an additional spending authorization of funds in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund, the 93 grants designated as the "Reserve List Grants" on the Chart, in the order in which they appear in the ranking set out in "FY24 Grants Review Panel Chart – Final Recommendations."

The motion was approved unanimously.

Secretary Flora called for new slides on how the grant review process works, to be reviewed at the next meeting. Sec. Flora called for recommendations on how to improve the grant review process.

Mr. Campbell Bob noted that his affirmative vote is predicated on confidence that the review committee made budget reductions on justifiable reasons. Doesn't lack confidence in the process but wants the committee to pay full attention to reductions and ensure that reductions are actually necessary.

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes called for this to be addressed at the next meeting. She encouraged specific parameters that the Grants Review Panel may rely on when reducing awards for project grants.

Secretary Flora thanked Mr. McDonald and the Grants Review Panel for their work.

FY 2024 MHAA grants approved by separate resolutions R-500 through R-800 (collectively, the "Separately Approved Grants") are approved by separate resolutions in order to recuse Authority Members with conflicts of interest.

Resolution R-500 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to Historic Sotterley Inc. for the "**Historic Sotterley Manor House Restoration**" Project

Secretary Flora called for a motion to approve. Ms. Baker made the following Motion which Ms. Chabot seconded:

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves a grant to Historic Sotterley Inc. for the Historic Sotterley Manor House Restoration project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart made part of Resolution R-500.

The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Harms recused herself from the motion.

Resolution R-600 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the "**Stories from the Shoreline**" Project

Secretary Flora called for a motion to approve. Mr. Campbell made the following motion, which Ms. Hughes seconded.

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves a grant to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the Stories from the Shoreline project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart made part of Resolution R-600.

The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lesher recused himself from the motion.

Resolution R-700 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism for the “Frederick Douglass in Talbot County Audio Driving Tour” Project

Secretary Flora called for a motion to approve. Ms. Chabot made the following motion, which Ms. Archer Seconded

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves a grant to Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism for the Frederick Douglass in Talbot County Audio Driving Tour project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart made part of Resolution R-700.

The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lesher recused himself from the motion.

Resolution R-800 to Approve Funding Request: FY 2024 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum for the “Patterson Gardens and Grounds Restoration” Project

Sec. Flora called for a motion to approve. Mr. Campbell made the following motion, which was seconded by Ms. Harms

RESOLVED, that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority approves a grant to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum for the Patterson Gardens and Grounds Restoration project under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant Program, as detailed and in accordance with the amounts and terms set forth in the Chart made part of Resolution R-800.

The motion passes unanimously. Ms. Hughes recused herself from the motion.

Action Items

Resolution R-900 to Approve a Request by B'nai Israel Congregation of Baltimore, Inc. to Revise the Scope of Work of the FY 2023 Grant for the “B'nai Israel Facility Improvement Project”

Ms. Martha Waldron an amendment to B’nai Israel’s FY 2023 grant amendment. The grant had been approved last year to install new HVAC and storm windows. Based on the grantee’s need, the amended grant agreement would support HVAC and electrical repairs. Ms. Waldron introduced Mr. Rick Gwynallen from B’nai to discuss the amendment.

Mr. Gwynallen noted that recent grants from other organizations have helped support the storm windows, meaning that the electrical repairs are far more needed.

Mr. Campbell noted that the full restoration of the structure will still be addressed.

Secretary Flora called for a motion to approve. Ms. Chabot made the following motion, which Ms. Harms seconded

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves Grantee’s request to revise the Scope of Work of the FY 2023 Grant for the B'nai Israel Facility Improvement Project to remove storm windows from the Scope of Work and add electrical repairs throughout the Property, along with the originally approved replacement of the HVAC system.

The motion passes unanimously.

Resolution R-1000 Authorization to MHAA Staff

Secretary Flora discussed the resolution authorizing the staff to carry out the work necessary to support the grants that were just approved. She called for a vote. Ms. Archer made the following motion, which Ms. Hughes seconded.

RESOLVED, that the MHAA staff is authorized to prepare any documents necessary or useful in order to carry out the above-described grants approved by the Authority, in conformance with the terms set forth in the Chart. Staff is further authorized to make minor adjustments to the scopes of work, timetables, and budgets set forth in the Chart and the grant applications, including the allocation of Authority grant funds to specific line items in the project budgets, and the required amounts of matching funds. Such adjustments shall be made in compliance with MHAA statutes and regulations, and shall not materially alter the work, activities or products of the grant projects as approved by the Authority.

The motion passed unanimously.

Secretary Flora congratulated all grantees, as well as everyone who worked to get these applications reviewed and approved.

Discussion of the Strategic Plan

Ms. Hofstedt introduced the MHAA strategic plan. She explained that the most recent Strategic Plan expired in 2020 and that an updated plan had been put on hold pending the completion of MHAA's racial equity work. The new plan will help to measure success and provide guidance to heritage areas and grantees. The new plan will also support racial equity work and follow the Racial Equity Working Group's recommendations.

The new plan will be overseen by staff and a working group. Ms. Hofstedt recommended that a consultant be brought on to help with data collection and analysis. The process is likely to take between 12-18 months. If the plan starts now, it should be completed by early 2025 with a proposed implementation for FY26. The plan will support the goals of the Moore/Miller Administration, the MDP Strategic Plan, and the Statewide Preservation Plan.

Secretary Flora called for discussion and feedback and consensus on having MHAA staff begin the process.

No members had comments at this time.

Ms. Fitzsimmons and Ms. Chabot volunteered to join the strategic planning working group.

Racial Equity Working Group Update

Secretary Flora provided a brief history of the racial equity working group to date.

Ms. Hofstedt reminded the panel that at the April meeting, the contract with Symphonic Strategies had been terminated. She explained that 10 final recommendations had come out of the facilitation. Some can be acted upon now and others will be incorporated into the strategic plan.

Secretary Flora explained that this phase of facilitation was only the beginning of the process. She then walked through all ten recommendations as laid out by the Racial Equity Working group.

Recommendation #1: Conclude the Phase I Work of Racial Equity Working Group
Recommendation #2: Data Collection and Metrics
Recommendation #3: More Accessible Grant Application and Agreement Process
Recommendation #4: Commitment in Statewide Preservation Plan
Recommendation #5: New Outreach and Promotional Efforts
Recommendation #6: Evaluate Foundational Documents, Structure, and Representation
Recommendation #7: Define Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Context of Heritage Tourism
Recommendation #8: Assess and Revise the Matching Requirement
Recommendation #9: Create Diverse Mentoring Opportunities
Recommendation #10: Evaluate Themes and Boundaries

Sec Flora noted that there is a lot to consider and encouraged the authority to consider how these recommendations may be included in the strategic plan and the future work of the program. Asked for comments or questions.

Ms. Liz Shatto asked if the priority of the Working Group is still on supporting African American communities.

Sec. Flora confirmed that this was the focus of the Working Group, but the intent is to address equity among other groups as well in the future.

MHAA Meetings

Ms. Hofstedt explained that the October meeting will be in person and will follow the same format as previous in-person meetings. She shared that the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway had offered to host the Authority.

Secretary Flora asked that future virtual meetings be moved to the afternoon, due to a persistent conflict.

Closing items

Secretary Flora asked for member announcements and new business. The Authority did not raise anything.

Ms. Hofstedt noted that a press release from the Governor's Office regarding FY24 grant awards will be going out shortly and reminded everyone that the information was considered confidential until the release is issued.

Report from the Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas

Ms. Brigitte Carty, co-chair of the Coalition, provided a report. She asked Ms. Shauntee Daniels and Mx. Meg Baco to discuss their time at the Maryland Municipal League. Ms. Daniels shared that the conference was well attended and was a great opportunity to engage with lots of towns and legislators. She added that it was great to meet constituents that appreciate the work of the heritage area.

Ms. Carty discussed the upcoming Maryland Association of Counties meeting to meet with elected officials.

Ms. Carty noted that the MEGA Grants Council had been terminated.

Ms. Walker added that the Coalition had met in person in Annapolis. This year, they are planning on pursuing additional funding to help fund more amazing projects. She reminded the Authority that the program is funded through Program Open Space. She thanked the Authority and Grants Review Panel for their work and looked forward to being able to provide comments on the process.

Ms. Walker noted that the Southern Maryland Heritage Area had just been designated as a National Heritage Area last month. She discussed the historical importance of the heritage area and shared new branding as well as a summary of the commemorative opening of the National Heritage Area.

Ms. Benson shared recent key projects from the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage area, with a focus on important African American stories in Anne Arundel County.

Ms. Challenger shared that the first phase of African American heritage product development had just finished. She highlighted new materials to interpret African American History on the Eastern Shore including a new self-guided driving tour, marketing materials, and a radio series on African American History.

Secretary Flora concluded the meeting with an update on the executive order for the MD 250th Commission and confirmed that she will be at MACo. She called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Baker made the motion, which Natalie seconded.