

HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

A MUSEUM OF HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY AT
MARYLAND'S FIRST CAPITAL

HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY COMMISSION COMMISSION MEETING

October 18, 2025

Campus Center 205

St. Mary's College of Maryland

St. Mary's City, MD 20686

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Tim Heely, Cindy Kramer, Heidi Fleming, Judy Fillius, Francis Gray, Kyle Harmon, Rosemary Hinkle, Linda Kohler, Bill Drew, Bonnie Green, Lucille Walker

Members Virtual: Adrienne Mathis, Dan Kerns

Staff Present: Travis Parno, Pete Carroccio, Joe Kangas, Victoria Hanson, Porzia Purves

10:00 Welcome and call to order

I. Approval of Minutes

Rear Admiral Tim Heely, Chair

Rosemary Hinkle made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Bill Drew.

Minutes approved

II. Chair's Report

Rear Admiral Tim Heely, Chair

25 applicants for the ED were processed down to eight. Met with President Phillips, she's excited to team up with HSMC and SMCM. We will have an opportunity to meet with her.

- a. Budget Overview – We are facing a tight budget. We met with Senator Bailey in September, and he's supportive.
- b. MOUs – We have spent a significant amount of time between the foundation and the commission working on the MOU. Dr. Parno indicated that the document is an overarching policy. We would like to empower the executive committee to move forward with an MOU between the Foundation and Commission. Chairman Heely explained that this is based on the separation between the two organizations.
- c. Move to accept Bonnie Green, seconded by Bill Drew. Ms. Kohler indicated this is industry standard. Motion approved

III. Commission Committee Updates

a. Administration

Ms. Kramer

Ms. Kramer reported on the Statement of Activity she touched base on the Actuals vs. Budget. Donations we received, leases, and rental income were down due to mold remediation and the loss of the kitchen lease. We have received funds from DGS; however, DGS will not fund rental income properties. Farthing's Kitchen will have a new lease as of November 1, 2025.

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Brown House has been leased for Farming for Hunger. The Hogaboom House was offered for rent to an SMCM professor, but no response was given from SMCM.

Expenditures under budget for contractual due to unfilled positions.

Equipment over budget for copiers and MHIC storyteller equipment.

There was a \$268K budget cut from the Governor's office.

We received \$724K for the MHIC exhibit fabrication through the State's Construction Contingency Fund (CCF).

Mr. Carroccio and Ms. Fillius indicated that the MOU between both SMCM and HSMC is moving forward.

b. Education

Mr. Harmon

Increase from 9 months to 12 months, compensation of COLA for contractual staff over a three-year period. Senator Bailey offered to sponsor a Legislative Reception in January. We discussed the possibility of a mobile museum, and we were updated on the MHIC construction, second quarter 2026 for the opening. A number of biweekly meetings with the Piscataway Conoy, and we are moving in the direction that both stories can be told. *Maryland Dove* had a small leak in the fuel tank; it has been found, repaired, and inspected by the Coast Guard and has been approved. Working on deck caulking repair, we are looking at grant opportunities for the repair. Both Chairman Heely and Ms. Fillius indicated that Kristen Greenaway was on the SMCM board. Ms. Walker added that she would like to work with the staff regarding the maritime grant for the caulking repair.

Mr. Harmon continued that *Maryland Dove* will be making two trips in 2026 to Virginia and Baltimore.

The Baker *Dove*: the Education Committee recommends saying final goodbye to the Baker *Dove*. We may be able to adaptively reuse portions of the 1976 *Dove*, based on the report we recommend. Ms. Kohler added that there are a number of ways to dispose of the old ship. There is an idea to work with the Arts Council to use some of the wood, Ms. Walker added give Senator Bailey a nice remembrance of the ship.

Motion to accept the independent report of the Baker *Dove*, seconded by Linda Kohler. Mr. Gray asked if the timber could be used and auctioned off to save some of the pieces salvaging the wood is included. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Harmon added that the Indigenous Heritage Day was a success, and having the Tribal community members involved is so important. The film about the museum HSMC was shown to the staff on September 19, 2025.

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There is a Baltimore premiere on Thursday, October 23; it will appear on MPT on November 14, 2025. The Ceremony of Return was a success. The palisade has begun, Calvert House moves forward

c. Grounds

No Meeting was held. Van Sweringen's is moving swiftly,

d. Planning

Ms. Kohler

Met and had a vibrant discussion, spoke about the Fort to 400 commission, and they are not very proactive. There were a lot of ideas to move forward and reactivate. Activities are active, but there is no money. We are looking at the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding. We discussed the big things: know us, find us, visit us. There is a program with the Maryland State Highway Administration, which we meet a number of the criteria. The next big thing is a marketing plan ready for November; the committee will work with Mike Bellis. Ms. Green reported that the city embarked on a branding plan. The planning committee will meet with the Foundation board to coordinate efforts. There was a discussion to partner with other organizations.

IV. **Foundation Report**

Mr. Dan Kerns

Mr. Kerns remains committed to supporting the commission and its leadership. The MOU will help solidify that. We were pleased to be the finance backstop for the *Dove* trip to Washington DC. The *Dove* is a great ambassador. We are looking to increase the openings on the board with people of capacity, to help open doors and support our efforts. We are reviewing the relationship with Cornerstone and may sign the contract following our meeting with their representative. We are aware of the financial constraints HSMC is experiencing. Mr. Kerns added that, in addition to supporting the work, we would like to be involved in the discussions and engaged as much as possible with things such as the *Dove* trips, etc.

V. **Executive Report**

Dr. Travis Parno

Dr. Parno gave his presentation, reviewing the budget cut. The General Assembly presented the cuts across the board. In order to deal with the cut, we left positions unfilled and reduced a number of supplies, contractual services, and contingency funds. We still need to find \$50K to cut; this is a perpetual cut over a number of years. As we move to FY27, we made a number of Over the Target Requests. We are trying to move the museum to a 12-month modified schedule; this is a relatively modest increase in our budget. Senator Bailey indicated it's easier to lobby for a museum that is open for 12 months. The next is the conversion of

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contractual positions. We put in for 18 conversions. All these people have been in their positions for more than 2 years. The next initiative is to infill the contractual COLA gap, which would be phased in over the next few years.

Mr. Bellis was able to secure the contract for Blackbaud and move the organization to the 21st century. There was a hold-up in the state concerning merchant services. MHIC will be turned over to us on December 19, 2025, and the exhibit opening will hopefully be in the 2nd quarter of 2026.

Dr. Parno gave a brief report on the sense of the MHIC exhibit fabrication.

The Calvert House project continues; the old visitor center will be converted to an education center. It's moving forward very well and will be a new opportunity to engage visitors.

Farthing's Ordinary and kitchen is a work in progress. Angelika's will be in the kitchen, and small craft beer will be served in the Ordinary. The expectation is that they will have soft openings in December 2025.

The mold remediation continues. Once these are complete, the timeline should be completed by May 2026.

Mr. Drew asked what the long-term use of the Brome Howard is. Dr. Parno indicated it may be used for offices, or we may be able to use it as an exhibit in conjunction, since the Struggle for Freedom is there as well.

Ms. Hinkle asked if we had spoken to a member of the Howard family.

Dr. Parno reported that we signed an MOU with Kiplin Hall and the Colony of Avalon. We are looking at a staff exchange with the Colony of Avalon.

Regarding our partnerships with SMCM, there is much engagement with SMCM. There are many ways that are not seen by the general public. We meet regularly with their capital planning group. We have the annual field school, our staff teaches collections management, analysis, and curation, and museum education.

We stress upon the student body the history that exists here. We have regular meetings with SMCM's community engagement, communications, CSD, and career and professional development teams. We are talking about the revival of the JAG. We are hosting a joint legislative reception in Annapolis on 1/28/2026.

With regard to the Chancellor's Point Project, we had a meeting with Raquel Fleskes, who is an expert in ancient DNA research. We are looking forward to working with Dr. Fleskes.

The St. Mary's Fort team has worked in partnership with the Maintenance staff of HSMC to put the reconstructed palisade up. The braces are temporary. The palisade is set to last 10 – 15 years. The second part is the installation of the firing platform and access ramp.

Dr. Parno reported the *Dove* trip to Washington DC yielded a number of new media clips and news coverage.

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Dr. Parno asked the members of the board if they would be willing to consider joining HSMC at HSMC all-staff meetings. The next three meeting dates are October 29, November 25, and December 17.

Ms. Kohler asked if we raise money, how do you funnel the money back into the state? Ms. Hanson stated the Foundation is the fundraising arm. Ms. Green stated that many specific projects had been funded through the foundation. Ms. Hinkle asked could the Foundation send a list of small wish list items to the Commission members.

Mr. Bellis indicated that we state this as "our areas of greatest needs."

Ms. Fillius: What is the classification of HSMC? Specific changes are coming to the retirement system at St. Mary's College. Ms. Langrill added that HSMC are not considered an educational institution and thus staff cannot participate in the 403 program.

New Business

Ms. Walker reported about the Maryland Liberty Tree that existed at the St. John's Campus, which was felled in 1999. Each county should have a celebration commemorating the planting of the Liberty Tree. Would we need to raise funds, or are there funds available? The Commission is happy to be a part of this.

There are a number of county events in 2026 for the 250th; there is an entire southern Maryland initiative.

A roundtable in January with SMCM and Dr. Julie King, fleshing out and involving HSMC.

National Historic Trades and Preservation Maryland – event covered by a grant.

There is a new travel guide from the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area. HSMC is included in the map.

Launching a national passport program 15 sites with HSMC being one. Lucille's organization provides the stamp and booklets.

Ms. Fleming: Has anyone heard of Harvest Hosts? A great opportunity for the museum.

Next meeting is January 24, 2026

VIII. Adjourn - Motion to adjourn, seconded Francis Gray.