

MD TWO FIFTY

MD Two Fifty Commission

Minutes/ August 28, 2024, 1pm

Maryland Judicial Center, 187 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis

Attendance

- Commissioners: Chair Gov. Parris Glendening, Vice Chair Catherine (Katie) Curran O'Malley, Dir. Elaine Rice Bachmann, Sen. Jack Bailey, Katie Caljean, Judi Emmel, Liz Fitzsimmons, Sec. Rebecca Flora, Terri Lee Freeman, Dir. Elizabeth Hughes, Exec. Dir. Chanel C. Johnson, Steve Kearney, Councilman Pete Leshner, Dep. Sec. Michael Lore (for Sec. Susan Lee), Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, Sec. D. Paul Monteiro, Dir. Peter Phin Ramsey, Nick Redding, Kim Shiloh (for Sen. Benjamin Brooks), Exec. Dir. Steven Skerritt-Davis, Robin Sproul, Dr. Antonio Ugues Jr., Exec. Dir. Rev. Lawrence E. Walker Sr., Sec. Anthony Woods
- Staff: Assistant Administrator Erin Bode, Director Michele W. Johnson
- Guests: Geri Byrd, Charles Dean, Andrew Libraty, Angela Stewart, Robert Stewart, Cherie Warehime, Bob Zimberoff

Vice Chair O'Malley opened the meeting at 1:00 pm and welcomed the Commissioners and guests. Commissioner Leshner read the Land Acknowledgement.

Commissioner Lt. Gov. Miller gave remarks about Maryland's role in America's history and using the 250th as an opportunity to learn from and embrace our past. She also spoke of exploring possibilities for additional Commission funding, for example having state agencies allocate funding for 250th initiatives, and suggested a conversation with Matt Verghese, Federal Relations Director in the Governor's office. Funding suggestions from Commissioners included researching state funding of the 250th in other states (page 11 of this packet), and a hosted reception for Maryland Two Fifty with a big-name potential donor inviting their friends. Commissioner and guest introductions followed.

Guest speakers from the National Park Service spoke about the national parks in Maryland and the 250th. Speakers were Robert Stewart, Assistant Superintendent at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine and Hampton National Historic Site, and Angela Stewart, Community Engagement Specialist, Office of Commemorations, Anniversaries, and Community Engagement. The NPS has been supportive of Maryland Two Fifty and has expressed interest in partnering. Nationally, NPS is a partner of America250, with a representative serving on the America250 Commission, and they manage a national Semiquincentennial grant program. It was agreed that the Commission would track plans for the 250th at the 27 NPS statewide.

Administrative matters followed.

- Motion by Sec. Monteiro to approve minutes of April 16, 2024 meeting, seconded by Dir. Bachmann, all in favor, no opposed.

- Vice Chair O'Malley welcomed Commissioners attending their first meeting – Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller and Dir. Liz Fitzsimmons, and announced that Commissioner Luis Luna, formerly Assistant Sec. at the Department of General Services, has left state service and that David Loughlin will succeed him on the Commission. She also announced the appointment of Steve Kearney as co-chair of the Communications, Fundraising, and Events Committee, and Chanel Johnson as chair of a new African American Heritage working group.
- Dir. Johnson presented the Director's report (included in meeting packet) on activities since the December meeting and gave a budget update.

Working group and committee chairs presented updates.

Civics Working Group, Chair Dr. Ugues:

- The Commission is now officially a member of the Maryland Civic Education Coalition. Dir. Johnson attends monthly virtual meetings and invites any interested Commissioners to join her.
- A grant application and materials for the Citizen Academy small grant program has been approved by the working group and is ready for mid-September launch. The Maryland Municipal League and Maryland Association of Counties have agreed to promote to their members. There is funding for 50 grants of \$500 to help counties and municipalities launch citizen academies to inform and engage residents.
- Initial discussions have begun with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives for MDTwoFifty regional festivals throughout the state in 2026.

History Working Group, Chair Katie Caljean:

- The Maryland Mosaic Project will be incorporated whenever possible into Commission programs, events, and online presence. Additional staffing to support this initiative is anticipated from the Department of Service and Civic Innovation's Maryland Corps and Service Year Option programs.
- The Guidelines and Guidance for MD Two Fifty Programming and form for event recognition have been posted on the Commission website.
- The MD Two Fifty Inclusive History Grant program application and materials have been approved by the working group and will be ready for September launch.

Service Working Group, Chair Sec. Monteiro and Sec. Woods:

- Re the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States Military in 2025, there are 14 military installations in Maryland and it is anticipated that many will plan events through their chain of commands and retiree councils. The Maryland Military Installation Council is another resource of this anniversary. It is anticipated that the Commission will participate on partner initiatives.
- The Working Group has approved an application and materials for the MD Two Fifty Fellows grant program starting with a paid internship for undergraduate and graduate students with mentor stipend. The hope is that this program could be a legacy of the 250th.

Communications, Fundraising, and Events Committee, Co-chairs Robin Sproul and Steve Kearney:

- Any discussion of additional state support of the 250th will wait until after the election. It is encouraged that state grant funders be directed to prioritize funding 250th projects, when appropriate.
- The Commission has partnered on two events commemorating anniversaries of historical significance—co-sponsoring an opening reception for the Chestertown Tea Party 250th festival where MD Two Fifty tabled and two Commissioners, Sec. Flora and Sec. Monteiro, were keynote speakers, and a June Commission kickoff event commemorating the 150th anniversary of Frederick Douglass' 1874 visit to Annapolis, in partnership with the State House Trust and Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. Other potential partnerships to explore with the Service Working Group are related to military anniversaries including the 175th anniversary of the Maryland National Guard in 2024, the 250th anniversary of the US Military in 2025, and the 250th anniversary of the Maryland 400 serving in the Battle of Brooklyn in 2026. These military opportunities will be explored with the Service Working Group. Additionally, there is interest in an educational event commemorating Maryland's Indigenous history.
- An unsolicited proposal was received for a MD Two Fifty branded podcast series. The Committee voted in support of the concept, and staff will go through the official state procurement process with a goal of launching the series by early 2025.
- A fiscal sponsor has been identified, and the Executive Committee will review and vote on an MOU in September.
- Staff has had preliminary conversations with a vendor regarding MD Two Fifty branded merchandise.
- A facilitated messaging and planning retreat was held in June at the Maryland Center for History and Culture with Sandy Hillman of KO Public Affairs. A draft vision was developed and recommended to the full Commission for a vote: "MD Two Fifty envisions an inclusive and nonpartisan statewide reflection on our past that honors the contribution of all Marylanders, that unites us in purpose to serve, to engage civically, and to shape the future of our state and nation for the next generation."

Vice Chair O'Malley called for a motion to approve the draft vision statement. Motion to approve by Commissioner Kearney, seconded by Commissioner Sec. Monteiro, with all in favor.

Chair Gov. Glendening invited Commissioner announcements:

- Commissioner Dir. Bachmann gave an update on the planned Monument to Black Revolutionary War Patriots.
- Commissioner Redding gave an update on a workshop series on the 250th.
- Commissioner Freeman shared that a new exhibit will open in October at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture.

Chair Gov. Glendening opened the public comment period. There was no public comment.

Chair Gov. Glendening announced that all Commissioners are invited to a recognition ceremony at the Maryland State Fair on Sunday, September 1 at 10am, in honor of the nine Maryland winners of the first round of America's Field Trip; that the next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, November 12, at 1pm, same location, and that between now and then, the working groups and committees will continue the work of the Commission.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Gov. Glendening at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele W. Johnson
Director, MD Two Fifty Commission