

MD TWO FIFTY

DRAFT MINUTES

MD Two Fifty Commission
Thursday, August 28th, 2025, 10:30 a.m.
University System of Maryland Hagerstown (USMH)

Commissioners and Designees Present:	Governor Parris Glendening, Chair, Katie O'Malley, Vice-Chair, Elaine Bachmann, Senator Benjamin Brooks, Chief Geri Royale Byrd, representing Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Katie Caljean, Dr. Tony Campbell, representing General Janene Birckhead, Dr. Joni Floyd, Elizabeth Hughes, Mayor Takisha James, Chanel Johnson, Councilman Pete Leshner, Deputy Secretary Michael Lore, representing Secretary Susan Lee, Cynthia Miller, Secretary Paul Monteiro Assistant Secretary Sandi Olek, representing Secretary Josh Kurtz, Nick Redding, Emily Ross, representing Alexandra Cenatus, Steven Skerritt-Davis, Reggie Turner, Larry Walker	
Commissioners Absent:	Assistant Secretary Muhammed Abdullateef, Senator Jack Bailey, Brenda Coakley, E. Keith Colston, Raquel Coombs, Judi Emmel, Secretary Rebecca Flora, Terri Freeman, Steve Kearney, Peter Phin Ramsey, Acting Secretary Ed Rothstein, Robin Sproul Dr. Antonio Ugues, Jr.	
Staff Present:	Michele W. Johnson, Erin Bode, Mary Zell Galen	
Guests Present:	Brittany Arizmendi Scott Buhrman Leah Carroll Kim Folk Holly Gilpin Genie Massey Jena Repp Dan Spedden Derrick Taylor	Ysela Bravo Shuan Butcher Jayla Elise Diggs Marcus Garcia Emily Huebner Peter Perini Amy Riley Andy Stout Danielle Weaver

Call to Order and Administrative Matters

The meeting was called to order by Governor Parris Glendening, Chair, with a quorum established.

A Land Acknowledgement was read by Commissioner Pete Leshner.

The new MD Two Fifty promotional video was shown.

Dr. Jacob Ashby, Executive Director of USMH, welcomed the Commission and thanked Governor Parris Glendening for his commitment to USMH and shared information about its educational offerings.

Dan Spedden, President/CEO of Visit Hagerstown & Washington County, welcomed the Commission.

Vote: Approval of minutes from April 24, 2025 Commission meeting in Cambridge and virtual Commission meetings on June 26, 2025 and July 31, 2025.

- Councilman Pete Leshner moved to approve the minutes, motion seconded by Larry Walker, and the motion carried.

Governor Parris Glendening, Chair, informed the Commission that the Executive Committee has not met since the last MD Two Fifty commission meeting.

Director Michele W. Johnson presented the Director's Report:

- A daylong Statewide Symposium of more than 100 stakeholders was held in Crownsville on May 5. The Commissioners who attended and participated were thanked.
- MD Two Fifty launched the Revolutionary Baseball series in August at all six minor league and semi-professional stadiums in Maryland. The series will resume in June 2026.
- The Commission will be represented at community outreach events at festivals monthly, including the Maryland Folk Festival in September and the Waterfowl Festival in November.
- Mary Zell Galen joined the staff on July 1, and two Service Year Option Members will join the team on September 10. Appreciation was expressed to Secretary Monteiro for his assistance in navigating the Service Year process once again.
- The Commission has now awarded at least one grant in every county, with more than 100 grants awarded totaling more than \$400,000. Inclusive History grants are now closed, the Citizen Academy grant program will remain open through October, and the MD Two Fifty Fellows program will award several more grants in September.
- New Local 250 Commissions have launched in Allegany, Harford, and Kent Counties. Baltimore County and Baltimore City will launch in October, still awaiting news from Caroline, Cecil, Garrett, and Montgomery Counties.
- Provided metrics and updates on advertisements run on Meta, Reddit, and YouTube. The ad will be featured in broadcast updates on MASN, MPT, MiLB, state and county fairs

Working Group and Committee Updates and Votes

Katie O'Malley, Vice Chair, introduced the Working Group and Committee updates.

Deputy Secretary Michael Lore gave an update on behalf of the Civics Working Group and Communications, Fundraising & Events Committee:

- The Commission has awarded ten Citizen Academy grants to date.
 - The Working Group is recommending two new Citizen Academy grants from the municipalities of Bel Air and Hagerstown to the Commission.
- Provided an overview of the Civics Moonshot initiative and introduced a video with Max Schlossman, who interned in the Maryland Secretary of State's office, describing the program.
- Gave an overview of the Freedom of the Press initiative.

Vote: Recommendation to approve two new Citizen Academy grants for Bel Air and Hagerstown.

- Nick Redding moved to recommend the grants, motion seconded by Steven Skerritt-Davis, and the motion carried.

Vote: Recommendation of Civics Moonshot initiative.

- Mayor Takisha James moved to recommend the initiative, motion seconded by Elaine Bachmann, and the motion carried.

Vote: Recommendation of Freedom of the Press initiative.

- Nick Redding moved to recommend the initiative, motion seconded by Reggie Turner, and the motion carried with two abstentions from Emily Ross and Elizabeth Hughes.

Katie Caljean, Chair of the History working group, shared:

- The Commission has reached its goal for Inclusive History grants.
 - The deadline for Round Three was July 25, 2025, and 60 new applications were received. Following a vibrant discussion, the review committee recommended 29 grants to the Commission for funding, with a list in the meeting materials.
- Introduced the August 2026 Battle of Brooklyn Remembrance Ceremony. While the Commission is awaiting details, a discussion was held about inviting Governor Wes Moore to participate.
- A Maryland Mosaic exhibit was displayed this summer at the Enoch Pratt Free Library.
- America's Tapestry, a project embroidering a tapestry with panels from each of the 13 original colonies, will be stitched on weekends at the Maryland Center for History and Culture. In 2026, the 13 panels will travel through the states as an exhibit.

Vote: Recommendation to approve 29 new Inclusive History grants.

- Elizabeth Hughes moved to recommend the grants and the motion was seconded by Dr. Tony Campbell. The motion carried with abstentions from Councilman Pete Leshar on grants pertaining to organizations within Talbot County, Katie Caljean on a grant for the Maryland Center for History and Culture, and Dr. Tony Campbell on a grant for the Maryland Military Department.

Secretary Paul Monteiro, Chair, Service Working Group, shared:

- Eleven new MD Two Fifty Fellows are recommended, including one from Smith Island.
- 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marines. Dr. Tony Campbell shared that events occurred at military installations across Maryland in honor of the U.S. Army's anniversary.
- Introduced the Maryland Service Year Option program and is excited to have members serving at the MD Two Fifty Commission in the second and third cohorts.

Vote: Recommendation to approve eleven new MD Two Fifty Fellows grants

- Katie Caljean moved to recommend the grants and the motion was seconded by Reggie Turner. The motion carried with abstentions from Nick Redding on a grant pertaining to Preservation Maryland, and Reggie Turner and Chanel Johnson on a grant for the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum.

Chanel Johnson, Co-chair of the African American Heritage Working Group, shared:

- The working group is small and includes just herself and Terri Freeman, so she encouraged Commissioners interested in joining to email Director Michele W. Johnson.
- The co-chairs and staff met in August, discussing how to center African American and Africa diasporic history. Next steps include hosting a virtual stakeholder event this fall.
- Highlighted several African American history exhibitions, an afterschool program on Black youth revolutionaries starting this fall, and a planned trip to Senegal.

Local 250 Updates

Emily Huebner, Director of Operations and Programs at the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA), shared that HCWHA:

- Is releasing a MD Two Fifty-themed Geotour on September 19th, taking geocachers across historic sites in the heritage area. This tour will last for five years.
- Hosts two 250th planning convenings each year; the last one was an in-person event in July.
- Mini-grant program application, which can be used for 250th initiatives, closes October 31st.
- Shared additional background on the Maryland 400 and Battle of Brooklyn commemoration.

Danielle Weaver, Director, Public Relations and Marketing, Washington County, shared:

- 2026 is also Washington County's 250th anniversary.
- Highlighted several historical initiatives for the 250th, including markers, a commemorative history book, and a countywide time capsule.
- Other initiatives include:
 - Digital engagement, including then and now photo series and museum spotlights.
 - Commemorative coins for all towns within the county.
 - Ceremonies including the dedication of a George Washington statue.
 - Hometown Heroes showcase, featuring local residents who served in the military.
 - July 4th celebration.
 - Washington County Birthday Bash event.
 - Nationwide county collaboration with all Washington counties across the nation.

Brittany Arizmendi, Director, Office of Community Engagement, City of Hagerstown, shared:

- Initiatives planned for the 250th and other anniversaries including:
 - Jonathan Hager Week, as a kickoff to all 250 events. It will be a collaboration between churches, museums, and other organizations. It will wrap up with a celebration on Main Street.
 - 250th and Jonathan Hager-themed float in the annual Mummers Parade. The parade will be held on Halloween weekend and will be the 99th year of the parade
 - Development of several themes for the 250th.
 - Living History event on June 6, 2026.
 - Independence Day fireworks on July 5, 2026.
 - Stars and Stripes Streetfest and digging up time capsule on July 9, 2026. Additional events will occur in August 2026.
 - Will be launching a Citizen Academy program with support from Md Two Fifty.
 - Will partner with the historical society and Maryland Theater for larger events.
 - Will release at least one Call for Artists to create different merchandise for the event.
- Deputy Secretary Michael Lore encouraged Downtown Hagerstown to invite the German Embassy to planned events.

Ysela Bravo and Shuan Butcher, co-chairs of the Frederick County 250 Commission, shared:

- Commission includes representation from county government, tourism, history organizations, and a youth member.

- Several events and activities, including a 250th banner, screening event of the Ken Burns American Revolution documentary, historical music planned for April 12, 2026.
- Partnering with history organizations, including Revolutionary War sites, Catoctin Furnace, Rose Hill Manor, and Frederick Barracks.

Kim Folk, Director, Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area, and Allegany 250, shared:

- Commission launched in July, plans to bring the 250th into existing events.
- Website landing page is expected to launch shortly.
- Activities planned include a history trail, an arts and photo competition in partnership with the Board of Education, Museum week in June 2026 which will include voting for the arts contest during the event on June 13, Storytelling sessions throughout the year, and a baseball game at Canal Place in 2026, a site significant in baseball history.

Commissioner Updates and Announcements

Emily Ross, of Maryland Humanities brought copies of *Kin*, the One Maryland One Book selection, for the Commission.

Public Comment

Genie Massey, of the Maryland Civic Education Coalition highlighted the mission of the Maryland Civic Education Coalition, shared its connection to the 250th, and noted that the MD Two Fifty Commission is an active member.

Jayla Elise Diggs sang “The Heart of Maryland” and “America’s Calling.”

Adjournment

Governor Parris Glendening thanked everyone for their participation in today’s meeting.

Director Michele W. Johnson reminded the Commission about the next in person meeting, which will be in Accokeek (Prince George’s County) on November 18, 2025.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Vice Chair Katie O’Malley adjourned the meeting, noting that a downtown walking tour would begin at 12:45 p.m.

MD TWO FIFTY

The meeting of the Maryland Two Fifty Commission was held virtually at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2025.

Commissioners and Designees Present: Governor Parris Glendening, Chair, Elaine Rice Bachmann, Senator Jack Bailey, Senator Benjamin Brooks and Kimberly Shiloh, Katie Caljean, Dr. Tony Campbell, representing General Janene Birckhead, Alexandra Cenatus, Raquel Coombs, Judith Emmel, Secretary Rebecca Flora, Dr. Joni Floyd, Terri Freeman, Steve Kearney, Deputy Secretary Michael Lore representing Secretary Susan Lee, Cynthia Miller, Secretary Paul Monteiro, Assistant Secretary Sandi Olek representing Secretary Josh Kurtz, Nick Redding, Steven Skerritt-Davis, Robin Sproul, Dr. Antonio Ugues, Jr., Larry Walker

Commissioners Absent: Katie O'Malley, Vice-Chair
Brenda Coakley
E. Keith Colston
Elizabeth Hughes
Mayor Takisha James
Chanel Johnson
Steve Kearney
Councilman Pete Leshner
Lt. Governor Aruna Miller
Peter Phin Ramsey
Acting Secretary Ed Rothstein

Staff Present: Michele W. Johnson Erin Bode
Mary Zell Galen Angela Rush
Parys Wyatt

Call to Order and Administrative Matters

The meeting was called to order by Governor Parris Glendening, Chair:

- Welcomed new Commissioners and guests, and introduced Parys Wyatt and Angela Rush, new Service Year Option Members on the MD Two Fifty staff.

A Land Acknowledgement was read by Deputy Secretary Michael Lore:

Working Group and Committee Updates and Votes

Terri Freeman, co-chair of the African American Heritage Working Group gave a brief update and encouraged Commissioners to join the working group. The next meeting will be October 10, 2025.

Dr. Antonio Ugues, Jr., Chair, Civics Working Group, introduced two new Citizen Academy grant applications and gave an update on the Freedom of the Press initiative, and the Civics Moonshot program.

Vote: Motion to approve new Citizen Academy grants for City of Takoma Park and Queen Anne's County. Senator Benjamin Brooks moved to recommend both grants, motion seconded by Elaine Bachmann, and motion carried.

Katie Caljean, Chair, History working group:

- America's Tapestry: Embroidery of the Maryland panel is underway. Thirteen panels will be featured in a traveling exhibit in 2026.
- Maryland 400 and the Battle of Brooklyn event planning is moving forward, exploring participation of Governor Wes Moore on Saturday, August 22, 2026.
- Black Revolutionary War Patriot monument: To be unveiled August 29, 2026 at State House.

Secretary Paul Monteiro, Chair, Service Working Group:

- Nine new applications were received for the MD Two Fifty Fellows grant with funding available for four grants. The grant program is now closed, with a legacy goal to secure funding so that this grant program can exist in perpetuity

Vote: Motion to approve MD Two Fifty Fellows grants for Morgan State University Foundation in Baltimore City, African American Resource, Cultural, and Heritage Society (AARCH) in Frederick County, Hosanna Community House in Harford County, and Clara Barton Fund, Inc., in Montgomery County

- Senator Benjamin Brooks moved to recommend the grants, motion seconded by Terri Freeman, and the motion carried.

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

- Provided statistics on viewership rate of the social media ad campaign of the Maryland State Ad Agency.
- Shared an overview of the Sail250 Maryland and Airshow Baltimore planned for June 2026..
- Noted initiatives for consideration in October:
 - Sharing the Spirit of America (Hawaii): Simultaneous national reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, 2026 at 6 pm
 - America's Potluck (Utah): Community meal on July 5, 2026
 - Once in a Generation grant program for local 250 Commissions
 - Online merchandise store partnership

Commissioner Updates and Announcements

Michele Johnson:

- Reminded that the Commission will meet virtually on October 27, 2025 and in Accokeek (Prince George's County) on November 18, 2025.

Alexandra Cenatus encouraged Commissioners to attend a *Kin* event (One Maryland, One Book).

Deputy Secretary Michael Lore shared information about viewing the full Constitution and the Bill of Rights at the National Archives.

Governor Parris Glendening gave a reminder that the Commission's ending date is December 31, 2027, as noted in the Executive Order.

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Commission, Governor Parris Glendening adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.