



MD Two Fifty Commission meeting

November 18, 2025, at 10:00am

Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Environmental Center, Acookeek, MD

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners and Designees: Governor Parris Glendening, Chair; Katie O'Malley, Vice Chair; Elaine Bachmann; Senator Jack Bailey; Dr. Tony Campbell (representing General Janene Birkhead); Senator Benjamin Brooks; Katie Caljean; Alexandra Cenatus; Dr. Joni Floyd; Elizabeth Hughes; Deputy Secretary Michael Lore (representing Secretary Susan Lee); Assistant Secretary Jonathan Medlock; Peter Phineas Ramsey; Steven Skerritt-Davis; Robin Sproul; Dr. Antonio Ugues Jr.; Rev. Larry Walker.

Commissioners absent: *Brenda Coakley; Keith Colston; Raquel Coombs; Acting Secretary Johnny Dorsey; Judi Emmel; Secretary Rebecca Flora; Terri Lee Freeman; Mayor Takisha James; Chanel Johnson; Steve Kearney; Councilman Pete Leshar; Lt. Governor Aruna Miller; Cynthia Miller; Sandi Olek; Nick Redding; Acting Secretary Ed Rothstein.*

Staff: Director Michele W. Johnson, Erin Bode, Angela Rush, Parys Wyatt.

Public: Araf Apache; Joseph Harley; John Hartline; Patricia Maclay, MD; Michael Morthland; Brandon Rosario; Chief Mark Tayac; Naiche Tayac; Lucille Walker; Linda Zufelt.

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The meeting was called to order by Governor Parris Glendening, Commission Chair, who thanked our hosts from the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park, and acknowledged that this meeting was taking place on sacred grounds.

The Land Acknowledgement was read by Deputy Secretary Michael Lore.

The meeting host Theresa Cullen, Executive Director of the Alice Ferguson Foundation, welcomed the Commission, explained the foundation's work, and showed a drone tour of the property.

Chair Tiara Thomas of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs and Managing Deputy Director of the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park (host of the exhibit tour following the meeting), shared the Indigenous perspective on the 250th with the Commission.

Commissioner Robin Sproul presented a donation of a bicentennial-era framed portrait of Marylander and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to the State, which was accepted by Commissioner Elaine Bachmann on behalf of the Maryland State Archives.

Vote: Minutes from meetings of August 28, 2025, September 29, 2025, and October 27, 2025, were reviewed. Senator Jack Bailey moved to approve all three sets of minutes, Commissioner Joni Floyd seconded, with unanimous approval.

Director Michele W. Johnson presented the director's report.

Vote: Approval of 2025 draft annual report. Senator Brooks moved to approve, Senator Bailey seconded, with unanimous approval.

WORKING GROUP AND COMMITTEE UPDATES AND VOTES

Vice Chair O'Malley introduced Commissioner Robin Sproul who shared an update from the Communications, Fundraising & Events Committee with a recommendation of six new partnerships with the Maryland State Lottery (MD Two Fifty lottery game); Sail 250 Maryland / Airshow Baltimore; My America: From Ground 0 to Common Ground; Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage; Preakness; and international 250 partnerships.

Vote: Approval of all six proposed partnerships: Assistant Secretary Jonathan Medlock moved to approve, Dr. Antonio Ugues seconded, with unanimous approval.

In the absence of both co-chairs of the African American Heritage working group, Director Michele W. Johnson presented an update.

Dr. Antonio Ugues presented an update from the Civics working group.

Katie Caljean presented an update from the History working group, with Patricia McClay, MD, giving an update on the Maryland 400 / Battle of Brooklyn 250th events in Brooklyn, New York on August 22, 2026.

In the absence of the new chair of the Service Working Group, Chief Geri Byrd, Director Michele W. Johnson gave an update with Dr. Tony Campbell sharing an update on the US Military 250 commemoration.

A local 250 panel discussion followed with presenters Lucille Walker, Executive Director of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, and Michael Morthland speaking for Southern MD 250.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Senator Brooks shared that he has submitted a bill calling for Jayla Elise's "Heart of Maryland" song to become the new Maryland State Song, and asked for the support of Commissioners once the 2026 bill hearings are scheduled.

Executive Director Steven Skerritt-Davis announced that the Maryland State Arts Council will soon announce a new grant program for projects supporting America's 250th. He also discussed the Public Art across Maryland grant program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Hartline, Executive Director of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland welcomed the Commission to Southern Maryland.

ADJOURN

With the conclusion of Commission business, Vice Chair Katie O'Malley adjourned the meeting, noting that an exhibit tour at the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park would follow. During lunch, Chief Mary Tayac of the Piscataway Indian Nation addressed the Commission.