

# ST MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

January – December 2020

### A Certified Local Government



Prepared by Ben Cohen Planner III, Department of Land Use and Growth Management and the Historic Preservation Commission, January 29, 2021

Reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on January 28, 2021:

Members:

Teresa Wilson, Chair

Eve Love, Vice Chair

Anibal Delgado

Kent Randell

Ginger Newman-Askew

Robert Hurry

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## **Glossary**

CLG	Certified Local Government
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HTE	St. Mary's County Government Database
MAHDC	Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Preserving and interpreting the  
legacy of St. Mary's County's past.

## **Overview**

The St. Mary's County Historic District Commission, later renamed the St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission, was created on June 4, 1975, and was granted the authority to preserve historic resources and increase public awareness through education. HPC identifies and oversees the St. Mary's County's historic landmarks, districts, and sites. This annual report has been prepared in fulfillment of the annual reporting requirement under the Bylaws of Historic Preservation Commission of St. Mary's County and under the Maryland Historic Trust's and the National Park Service's Certified Local Government Program (CLG) established under the National Historic Preservation Act. The CLG Program is an initiative providing technical assistance and small grants to local governments seeking to preserve the important and significant aspects of their heritage. St. Mary's County has been a "Certified Local Government" since 2015 and the Certification was renewed in 2019. The Historic Preservation Commission enhances the quality of life in St. Mary's County by ensuring that the County's many historic resources are recognized, appreciated, and preserved. The Department of Land Use and Growth Management administers the HPC program.

The St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission takes pride in its endeavors in 2020, however, the public health crisis (COVID-19) had significant impacts on the HPC's ability to engage the Community with our programs.

## **Background**

A historic district proposal by the Commission for the St. Mary's City area was met with public opposition and, as a result, the Historic District Commission was disbanded in 1986. As part of a requirement for a matching grant to St. Mary's County by the Maryland Historical Trust, the Commission was reestablished in 1993. The grant was a program designed in eight phases to develop an active historic preservation program and to add to the number of documented historic properties in St. Mary's County. The first phase of this project began in 1994 and resulted in the documentation of sites and structures in all election districts. Phases one through four covered the Chaptico, Mechanicsville, Valley Lee, St. George Island, Bay, Patuxent, Leonardtown, St. Inigoes and Milestown districts. The Commission has succeeded in establishing many historic properties on the local, State, and National Historic Register, and continues to work with the State, Maryland Historical Trust, and several other agencies. The HPC maintains a continuous Certified Local Government (CLG) from the Maryland Historical Trust.

## **Membership of HPC**

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County appoints seven county residents to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Their role is crucial in protecting and enhancing the county's historic resources and cultural heritage. Their advocacy helps to develop and implement effective preservation

programs relying on the support of the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County and the strength of the St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan, federal, state, and regional protective regulations. Title 8 of the Maryland Code, Land Use Article contains the enabling legislation for historic preservation commissions and allows the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County to appoint seven volunteers to the Historic Preservation Commission for three-year terms, renewable for another three years. Those interested in serving for additional term(s) thereafter must wait a full year before they may re-apply. To qualify a candidate must (a) have special interest and knowledge or training in such fields as history, architecture, law, archaeology preservation, education, or urban design; (b) be a county resident; (c) fulfill the statutory rules and educational functions in a responsible and sensitive manner; and (d) have the ability to continue to provide leadership for the historic preservation movement. While the HPC had one member resign due to a relocation, the six remaining members meet the Professional Qualification Standards contained in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines. In addition, the HPC has accepted two highly qualified applications for new members and look forward to their future contributions.

### **1.0 Elections and Meetings of HPC Members**

The St. Mary’s County Historic Preservation Commission members elects the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary annually, during its January meetings. The HPC meets regularly at 4:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of every month, except in November and December, when the meetings are advanced to the third Thursday. The Chair may call other meetings when necessary. In accordance with COVID-19 public meeting protocols, meetings were either held at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, the St. Mary’s County Regional Airport, or by teleconference. "The meetings are conducted in compliance with the St. Mary's County Open Meetings Act located in §§9-501 through 9-516 of the *Local Government Article* of the Annotated Code of Maryland."

The Commission members in 2020 were as follows:

Name	Position	Date of Appointment	Expiration Date
Teresa Wilson*	Chair	January 2018	December 2020
Eve Love	Vice -Chair	July 2018	June 2021
Anibal Delgado	Member	July 2017	June 2023
Ginger Newman-Askew	Member	July 2018	June 2021
JoshuaHughes(resigned)*	Member	January 2019	June 2020
Kent Randell	Member	July 2018	June 2021
Robert Hurry	Member	January 2019	December 2021

\*The Chairperson’s term expired December 2020. St. Mary’s County Committee, Boards, and Commission office will appoint two (2) new members in January 2021.

The Historic Preservation Commission members are supported by a Historic Preservation Planner of the St. Mary's County Department of Land Use and Growth Management with a working knowledge of state and federal regulations pertaining to historic preservation, architectural history, and the cultural and landscape resources of historic preservation planning in St. Mary's County.

## **2.0 Planned Goals and Work in 2020**

- Continued monitoring and collation of historic properties identified for demolition
- Identified potential CLG grant opportunities
- Coordinated and attended regional conferences and lectures
- Coordinated with GIS on local cemetery database updates and the Civil War Trails program
- Explored the creation of a Southern Maryland Heritage Area
- Reviewed the purpose and use of urban conservation districts
- Sponsored a public Historic Preservation Commission lecture
- Updated the rules of the St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission

## **3.0 Significant Work and Activities in 2020**

### **3.1 Historic Preservation Awards**

Unfortunately, the HPC Service Awards were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the HPC had several worthy nominees that will be properly acknowledged when authorization to proceed is given.

### **3.2 Historic Preservation Public Lecture January 23, 2020**

The Historic Preservation Speaker was Ruth Mitchell, Senior Staff Archaeologist for Historic St. Mary's City. Citizens were invited to her presentation regarding the excavations in St. Mary's City conducted in 1971–1972, which uncovered evidence of a dwelling-built ca. 1750 by Roger Tolle. This was a framed building measuring 16' × 28' feet, and one story high. Archaeologists found footings for two chimneys at each end of the building. After the property was purchased by Reverend Moses Tabbs in 1764, a large addition was constructed on the east side of the main dwelling. The site was occupied until the 1860s, and the historical record demonstrates that over 80 years of residents were tenant farmers. Excavations of the site, including the cellar, resulted in a large collection of ceramics that were analyzed in the 1970s. This became the framework for a significant study of tenant farmer table wares. A recent archaeology project on the site provides new data on the landscape, and additional evidence for Native American occupation at the site.

### **3.3 Certified Local Government (CLG) Program Orientation**

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program recognizes counties and municipalities that have made a special commitment to preservation. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, establishing a qualified historic preservation commission to designate and review historic properties. Maryland's CLG program is administered by the National Park Service and the Maryland Historical Trust. The HPC

virtually met with Nell Ziehl, Chief, Office of Planning, Education and Outreach, Maryland Historical Trust on August 11, to discuss the process and evaluation of the CLG program. The meeting covered CLG program requirements, benefits, and future grant opportunities.

### **3.4 Maryland Association of Historic Districts Member Survey for Washington County**

Historic Planner completed a survey for the Maryland Association of Historic Districts on July 7, 2020. The survey collected data regarding local historic property tax credit programs from various historic districts in Maryland. The data from the survey will be reviewed by the HPC for possible incorporation into our local program.

### **3.6 Cemetery Responsibility**

Previous member, Mr. Robert Gibbs, had researched and compiled a database for documenting cemeteries located in St. Mary's County. The database is accessible to the public on the St. Mary's County Library website. This database is being updated and modified for use to populate a database of the Maryland State Highway Association to annotate cemeteries adjacent to highways for construction purposes. Mr. Anibal Delgado was nominated and accepted the responsibility to continue updating the cemetery database. In addition, the HPC is working with GIS to have all burial sites located to aid development review and to encourage additional research.

### **3.7 Demolitions in 2020**

There were 12 demolitions this year.

### **3.8 Section 106/Historic Reviews**

41170 Oakville Rd – Telecommunications tower

Lexington Manor Passive Park

St. Jerome Creek Project

19644 Three Notch Road – Collocate antennas on an existing telecommunications tower

48392 Shaw Dr. – Telecommunications tower

MD RT 6 Bridge repair over Persimmon Creek

22599 Macarthur Blvd. – Two sign permits

### **3.9 Surveys**

No properties were surveyed from January 2020 – December 2020

### **3.10 National Register Nominations**

There were no National Register Nominations.



### **3.11 New Entries to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties**

(SM-29-2) - Old MD 5 over Broom Creek Concrete Slab Structure and (SM-29-3) – Leroy House are both located at 16161 Point Lookout Road.

### **3.12 Public Lectures, Trainings and Conferences Attended by HPC Members**

- January 23, 2020 – Recent Archaeological Explorations in St. Mary’s City by Ruth Mitchell
- August 11, 2020 - CLG training with Maryland Historic Trust
- September 17, 2020 - Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Community Conversation virtual meeting

## **4.0 Challenges**

- The Commission has not yet adopted Design Guidelines/Design Zoning Ordinance Review
- The Commission does not issue Certificates of Appropriateness for local landmark properties that seek alterations due to Zoning Ordinance reviews and interpretations.
- The Commission has not yet considered any Historic District designations but plans to discuss local historic districts in 2021
- COVID-19 made it difficult for the commission to engage in outreach and educational activities in the community to promote awareness of historic preservation and the historic preservation commission.
- Problems with technology, equipment, and experience created delays and technical glitches in virtual meetings.
- The HPC desires a larger financial commitment for historic preservation. This increased commitment has the potential to significantly increase tourism, historic education, and economic development in the county.

## **5.0 2021 Outlook and Future Plans**

The following are work programs planned for the Historic Preservation Commission in 2020 and beyond:

- Continuing public education programs to raise awareness of historic preservation issues
- Continue to review items on the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) Agenda by the historic preservation planner to determine if proposed projects will have an adverse effect on historic resources and provide the opportunity for staff to suggest alternatives that may avoid these effects.
- Protect small family cemeteries by creating a database and entering the locations into HTE. The integration of the database and HTE will identify when proposed projects are submitted on lands containing cemeteries.
- The HPC is interested in cooperating with MDOT to populate a cemetery database that is linked to GIS. The cemeteries can also be shown on the County GIS maps to allow convenient access for development review. This will help prevent inadvertent site desecration and may generate additional historic interest and research.
- Ensure that every HPC member receives training related to his/her duties every year. We encourage the HPC to apply for the non-competitive funds available for annual education and recommend that HPC members and staff consider attending the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions’ biennial Forums.
- HPC members to utilize opportunities for qualified training available through the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Maryland, and others.
- Apply for competitive CLG grants. A grant could support a local plan update and would give the Commission and planners an opportunity to revisit questions of potential new landmark

designations, as well as integrate hazard mitigation planning and newer efforts into the overall local strategy.

- Continue work to find the locations of all the small cemeteries listed in Janet Tice's 1991 book, *Burials from Tombstones, Grave Markers and Church Registers of St. Mary's County, Maryland (1634 – 1994)* and other sources, so they may be protected.
- Work with developers in early project application stages to craft preservation-friendly development plans.
- Follow up the work in IT as the Maryland Historic Site Files are being scanned so that they will be put on the County GIS for a quick reference with respect to floodplain.
- HPC members to start work on "Maryland Rediscovery 400."
- Members to work with the Historical Society with further research and information on the Old Stone Jail Certificate of Acceptance. Chris Haley, director of the study of legacy of slavery at the Maryland State Archives has a copy of the entire packet on the underground railroad project in St Mary's County.
- The Maryland Department of Planning recommended an update to LUGM's webpage referencing the Historic Preservation Commission. Efforts are underway to update the Historic Preservation Commission section to include direct links to its preservation code, preservation plan, ordinance, and property tax information. In addition, updates will include information for historic property owners who may wish to nominate a property for local landmark status.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

There is a determination to give the St. Mary's County historic preservation program the recognition it deserves, as one of the four sites of the original English Colonies in the New World and the "Mother County" of Maryland. From its current work, the HPC will move on to goals that will require the vision of elected officials, planners, and volunteers. The Historic Preservation Commission looks forward to strengthening relationships with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, County Departments of Economic Development, Recreation and Parks, Land Use and Growth Management, Public Works and Transportation, Preservation Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust, County Administrator's office, archaeology groups, and local museums, to continue the comprehensive and successful programs that promote education about the historic and archaeological resources in Maryland's Birthplace, St. Mary's County.

## 7.0 Attachments

### 7.1 Names of Historic Preservation Commission members and attendance record

Attachment 1: Historic Preservation Commission Member Attendance Record -January 2020 - December 2020

Commissioner	Position	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
		23 Jan.	27 Feb.	26 March	23 April	28 May	23 June	23 July	27 Aug.	24 Sept.	22 Oct.	19 Nov.	17 Dec.
Quorum	Y/N	Y	Y	Cancelled	Cancelled	Cancelled	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Teresa Wilson	Chair		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Eve Love	Vice-Chair	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Anibal Delgado	Member	Y	Y				Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
Kent Randell	Member		Y						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ginger Newman-Askew	Member	Y	Y				Y		Y	Y		Y	Y
Robert Hurry	Member	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joshua Hughes	Member (Resigned)	Y	Y										
<b>LUGM Staff</b>													
Ben Cohen	Historic Planner	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sheila Smith	Admin, Manager												
Kwasi Bosompem	Senior Planner	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y