



The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs

Strategic Planning Session II
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 21, 2022
6:34 a.m. to 8:15 pm

I. Commissioner Attendance:

Donna Abbott	Member	N
Sherry L. Ayers	Madam Chair	Y
Claude A Bowen	Vice Chair	Y
Peter Brooks	Member	Y
Kerry Hawk-Lessard	Member	Y
Tiara Thomas	Member	Y
Stanley Thompson	Member	Y
Guy Wells	Member	Y

GOCI/MCIA Staff:

E. Keith Colston, Director Ethnic Commissions/Admin Director of MCIA
Cheryl Madigan, Project Coordinator – Ethnic Commissions

- II. Call to Order and Welcome Remarks – Madam Chair Sherry Ayers**
- III. Request of Invocation – Commissioner Peter Brooks**
- IV. Administrative Director E. Keith Colston – No Remarks**
- V. Request Motion for the Approval of the SPS Session I Minutes with Corrections**

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Approval of the SPS Session I Minutes with Corrections 02-26-22	Kerry Hawk-Lessard	Claude Bowen	5 to 0 (those in Attendance) Abstain: 0

- VI. Partnerships with MD State Archives, Land Markers, etc- E. Keith Colston**
 - 1. Maryland State Archives** continuously are providing information and follow-ups to what's taking place. They meet with tribal leaders who have their representatives speak for them and for the MCIA. There could be situations down the road that we may be asked for either MOUs or support letters to be directly or inadvertently involved. This may constitute a special working group. Some ways that MSA has worked on or are working on are, naming the website, naming aspects of the website, conversations on the historical markers, which will involve State Highway Administration, Maryland Historical Trust, Governor’s Office Community Initiatives. We need to maintain connection with

our communities and getting their involvement and input. The commission needs to ask what part we play and what voice do we have. EX: Historical Markers –What is it that the tribal people of that area or location specific spot? What is their involvement? What have they put forth? - Then we ask ourselves how MCIA can be a supportive to that. Commissioner Kerry Hawk-Lessard ask if there was a way that MCIA could create a guide on best practices for meaningful engagement with tribal communities and what our role in that would be. Director Colston replied “Yes”. You can create some type of guide or dos and don'ts, policies, and procedures. Maryland Indian Status, which is the probably the biggest aspect of a commissioner's job. and why the Commission was created. Within that, you could amend, change, delete, whatever case may be to that process, if it does not go against your legislation, nor your bylaws. We do have the legislation that should be utilized in what we decide to create or amend. They should be contacted if Director Colston isn't available.

Madam Chair Sherry Ayers – Does the tribal communities already have best practices in place? If they do, would they be willing to share with the commission, so we could put together a guidebook or best practices guide, and we would be the point of contact. Commissioner Hawk-Lessard believes if one does exist, not many know about it.

2. **Department of Natural Resources** – Director Colston has been contacted by Mr. John Turgeon about the consultation that they would like to have MCIA be involved with some of the activities they're working on. He will let the Commission know of such matters if it requires your input, recommendations, votes or support. What they are working on is that the MET's Governance Committee Chair would like to have our board of trustees approving and adding information, individuals to some of their working groups. boards advisor committees. He has invited him to provide a presentation to the commission, once he has prepared it, DNR will be one of our guest presenters.
3. **Maryland 250** – Director Colston serves on the Executive Committee for this commission, and he had a meeting concerning the celebration in 2026 of Maryland becoming Maryland. Our commissioners connecting with your tribal leaders, your tribal communities, and having as much input as possible, so that native communities are represented in this celebration. If we don't connect, people will be left behind or the amount of attention information that should be shared will not take place. This may reflect in a working group with inside MCIA, then take that information you gather and then is transcended up the ladder to the entire Maryland 250 commission, which represents a variety of people from all over the State. This included non-governmental, governmental, private sector and museums being represented. This will be something that I would advise that the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs looks to having a working group solely committed to the Maryland 250 Commission and information that should be supported and again transferred up the ladder. The United States Centennial Commission was comprised of 36 committed individuals from diverse backgrounds, who were passionate and humbled by our charge to plan and commemorate The America's 250 anniversary of our nation's foundations founding so our 250 commission is parallel to that celebration that we are having here in Maryland. This event will take place in September 2026. The guidelines that we are following is to look at it from a historical count. Examples as what role has the indigenous people of Maryland played in Maryland, providing the history of facts and what transpired and what we played in that taking place. You must reach out to the communities, our historians and verify and justify the information that is out there and add information that is missing. Find out who was involved and set the standards of the information. Madam Chair Ayers wanted to know a timeline on the planning of this event. Director Colston informed everyone that the Executive Committee was created without a budget, but they are working with the legislation to try to secure a budget of \$250,000.00 and to secure a head position to oversee this committee. They're also working on the communications aspect, and he pointed out to them was that we should be utilizing what tools we have at our disposal that

are constantly being used by, our Ethnic Commissions, the Maryland State archives, Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland States Arts Council all of these are going to be major players or at least utilizing their tools of information and resources. What our commission and our tribal leaders should be doing first and foremost, is working with whoever their historians are. Gathering information and making sure that the data that is being supplied is factual or based on again the culture or aspects of the history of the people themselves. The next thing is who will be the representatives, who will be the ones that are going to be sitting at the tables or providing the information because it could be MCIA that funnels this information. It may be someone else, like some of the tribal historians that are in some of the bar communities and getting them to do this and partake in this as well. That's something that we should be pushing as hard as possible. Being at the table more than anything and finding out who those individuals are. We need to work with those tribal leaders/communities and get those points of contacts and the information that they're going to be providing. Think about what is it that they're not presenting right now and representing their tribal communities, their websites to social media, their points of contact, and their references. Their one- or two-page summary of who they are and the history, as many of the other federally recognized tribes and state recognized tribes do throughout the country. So okay, thank you. So that leads me also to the dining hall and the ongoing information.

4. **Dining Hall of University of Maryland** - We do have some meetings that are coming up with University of Maryland. Our participation as far as MCIA is concerned, we try to take a backseat to the Piscataway and making sure that whatever they would like to see and do, we're here to support them. We like to keep them on time with things. You can stay involved with them, invite them to our meetings so they can present what is taking place, what stages, what phases. As for the dining hall that is there and not sure if it's quite open yet, what is being presented as historical information and cultural information, we can continually play a part in because from what I understand they're going to have different aspects of the dining hall, where the information and what's being presented can change from one time period to the next, and MCIA should definitely have some type of information or something that we can provide that represents who we are, you know we're part of the history of this State, and we should be represented just as much as, or just as much as possible where we can. This could be a situation for the Educational Committee or Archaeological Committee. Madam Chair Ayers asked who you provide the updates. Director Colston said that MCIA should provide those updates.
5. **Garrett College Initiative** – We have in contacted by them concerning land acknowledgments, contact information, points of contact and how we can play a role in what they decide to plan and put forth. This is also a conversation that was had concerning possible location for events and initiatives that we put together. Whether it be American Indian Heritage Day, American Indian Heritage Month, or anything else that we put together, and how they can play a role. There's also something that was discussed with madam chair concerning possible internships, and anything any other way that the connection and partnership could be more meaningful or something that could be created that's completely new. Garrett College is not the only college, but they were the one that has reach out to us.
6. **Leola College Higher Learning** – Madam Chair Ayers spoke on this topic. She informed everyone that Leola would like to meet with the Commission, so dates are needed from everyone on your available. During the meeting with them earlier they were asked if they have been in contact with any tribal communities and to get them to enroll with some of our kids from our communities. So that was where they left off in the meeting. This would be a virtual meeting with them. Director Colston provided the possible dates of March 28th, April 18th or April 25th. Everyone is to keep in mind, as a commission, is how we can create more opportunities for tribal communities working with these high-level officials at these areas of higher learning. One of the things that

some other States are doing is having something in place where it's not done as a courtesy. For instance, like American Indian Heritage Month, was at one time done as a courtesy, but now it's nationally. As a State Commission we can start working on some policies, procedures and MOUs that will allow these or have these universities participate or do something on an annual or quarterly basis. Inviting Native American students to tour the campus and not be lost in the crowd, but to be here to show off the campus to potential Native American Indigenous Students of any university. Director Colston will email Loyola to let them know that the Commission chose to meet in the evening on April 25th.

- 7. Reimagine Middle Branch Baltimore** – Director Colston received a letter from them stating: “They are a community-led initiative to reconnect South Baltimore to the 11 plus miles of shoreline along the Patapsco River, known as the Middle Branch. They are imagining a network of world-class parks and trails, with programming that connects people, neighborhoods, and nature, and creates new economic opportunities.” They have contacted MCIA as a source for resources of reaching the indigenous communities and representatives who may have an interest in and input on their project. Commission Hawk-Lessard said they might have reached out to Native American Lifelines and Director Colston confirmed that the person from NAL was representing herself as the Financial Director of NAL. Director Colston wanted to remind everyone the difference of speaking or representing themselves as a commissioner vs. an individual.
- 8. NASPA Conference** – Director Colston’s report detailed that MCIA was asked to participate in this national conference in the very early stages and how the tribal communities had the opportunity to participate. He thanked the commissioners that were able to attend and the great job that our Madam Chair Ayers did in representing the Commission during her opening remarks. He was there representing Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives and Mr. Rico Newman was there to provide a land acknowledgement. Unfortunately, there was no participation from people to bring their tribal flags and represent themselves. Commission Brooks asked if the Commission could request copies of the tribal flags for the Commission to hold that we could use them at events. Director Colston advised against carrying or representing others’ tribal flags. We don’t want to make a false representation of those tribes. There will be a meeting between MCIA’s points of contact, Dr. Tiffany Smith, Madam Chair Sherry Ayers, Director Keith Colston and other individuals from that entity that will take place March 22, 2022 at 12:30 at the Conference. This is a National Conference and Madam Chair Ayers and Director Colston want to continue this relationship to be ongoing with them. Since this is an educational conference, Madam Chair Ayers wants the Educational Committee to be involved as much as possible and encourages Commissioner Thomas to reach out to Dr. Tiffany Smith.
- 9. Maryland Park Ranger and Development Land and People’s Acknowledgments** - This is an opportunity for us to work directly with those involved with the parks or State parks here in Maryland, and just as they've done with the Harriet Tilman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, and Blackwater. MCIA has an opportunity to engage in conversation on how we can play more of a role historically and in current times in the parks that are spread throughout the State of Maryland. Virginia Busby, who was a past commissioner, has connected Director Colston with Angela Crenshaw, who is the Area Manager for Gunpowder Fall, State Park, which is connected to the Department of Natural Resources. He would like to one or two committees can take lead. He will initiate the next meeting and see what commissioners might be able to participate. He informed that these meetings don’t need to be a commission meeting. He recommended the Advisory Committee take the lead on this and maybe create a working group.
- 10. Maryland Department of Health** – At a previous meeting with Brittany Howe, there was a presentation a while back in reference to Opioid funding. There are funds still there. Many of the tribal communities didn’t apply due to them not receiving any applications. There has been discussions on how MCIA can play a role in this and as an end result, an

MOU can be created between the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs as two state entities. The AG's Office, MDH and MCIA would need to review it for any add-ons or subtractions that would work for all parties involved. This would allow for not only this particular grant, but future grants. There would be a direct line of communication for MCIA, and these opportunities that come would be seen as a competing entity. There has been discussions with Commissioner Thompson, which is the chair of the Budget Committee. This is where the committee would play an active role within MCIA. The committee is about gaining funding and opportunities for MCIA to utilized for initiatives in the future. Commissioner Hawk-Lessard stated that there is very high burden of reporting and meeting, therefore, it would be difficult for some tribes to handle. Director Colston agreed from past experience with the grantee (Holy Cross Hospital). He had an idea or perspective if someone was awarded a grant and it all worked out, this would become another arm of MCIA, or another entity, or eve GOCI to handle such reporting by hiring its own director to handle it. He stated that as far as tribal entities, tribal people in the state, they are missing out with every grant opportunity that comes their way and that it isn't utilized to the best of our abilities.

VI. Discussion of List of outstanding items from previous meetings (if time permits)?

i. Synopsis/responsibilities – N/A

ii. Membership

This will be voted on at the next public meeting on April 5, 2022.

iii. New Initiatives and on-going initiatives

Nototweega Nation Petition - Five individuals have been voted on - Three reviews have occurred – A draft letter has been sent to the AG's office to request a waiver so we can obtain two new replacements for the RAC, since David Hooper and Carol Ebright has not contacted us. Vice Chair Bowen will reach out to Carol Ebright to see if she wants to be a part of this committee. This waiver will need Madam Chair Ayers's signature. – We are at the Record Recognition of the Advisory phase. As soon as we get the final two reviews, the RAC will come together for a meeting to draft a letter, whether they are making a recommendation for or not and it will be forwarded to the Governor.

VII. GOCI initiatives and events

i. COVID-19 – N/A

ii. Mass Vaccination – N/A

VIII. Open discussion

i. Review

- ❖ Madam Chair Ayers brought up the status of this year's theme, creating the image of the footprints. Director Colston and Ethnic Project Coordinator Cheryl Madigan informed the commission of the status of our Communications Director situation. Madam Chair suggested maybe one of the Commissioners might be able to submit something or know of someone that can, without a fee. The commission doesn't have the funding to outsource it.

- ❖ Suggestions on locations of AIHM 2022 Kickoff.
 Vice Chair Claude Bowen – Washington College – Julie Pardo and St. Mary’s College – Dr. Julia King – Smithsonian Environmental Research Group (Edgewater) contact Jim Gibb (Archaeology Comm.)
 Towson University – Bob Wall
 Director Colston – Loyola College
 Madam Chair Ayers – St. Mary’s College – Kelsey Bush(Diversity) – Commission Thomas – St. Mary’s College – Travis Parno
It was decided that Director Colston will contact St. Mary’s College, Loyola University and Towson University.

- ❖ Madam Chair Ayers recommended for the commissioners to go over the minutes from the SPS I that included the changes on the awards. Also, at our next public meeting on April 5, 2022, we will need to place a Motion to approve the changes in the by-laws.
- ❖ Commission Brooks – Informed everyone of a paid internship through the National Park Service for Ancestral and Preservation for the good.

IX. Madam Chair asked Director Colston the process on nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Director Colston advised that you would need to speak to that individual about the nomination and if they are willing to accept it. If so, you would email it to Director Colston and then he will provide the nominations to everyone. They will be placed on ballot sheets for those that are not able to attend, as well as the information for those of you who will be able to attend a Special Call Meeting for elections. This will need to take place before April 1, 2022. Ballots are only to be used if you are not able to participate in the actual vote that occurs. The Special Call Meeting is to be held on March 31, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Nominations are due to Director Colston by March 24, 2022, by noon.

X. Request Motion for Adjournment:

Motion:	1st	2nd	Adjourn: 8:15 p.m.	
Adjourn	Vice Chair Claude Bowen	Guy Wells	5 to 0 (those in Attendance) Abstain: 0	