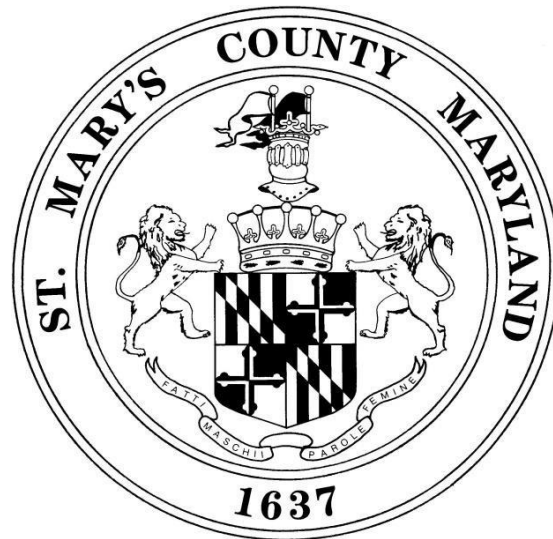


St. Mary's County Museum Division Board of Trustees



2023 Annual Report

Laura Friess, President
Michael Brown, Vice President
Michael Blackwell, Secretary
Catherine Bowes
Lynn Fitrell
Robin Finnacom
Karla Langhus
Lilyanne Ohanesian
Conner Wolfe

Karen Stone, Director
Arthur Shepherd, Director, Parks & Recreation

January 9, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The St. Mary's County Museum Division Board of Trustees (MDT) Board is an eleven (11) member group appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) to "promote through the establishment and maintenance of a Museum and allied projects, programs which will bring about a better understanding and appreciation by the community of history, art, and the sciences indigenous to its area." The Trustees serve in an advisory and not a governing role. We ask questions and provide a public voice on Museum Activities. Museum Board of Trustees meetings are normally held on the second Monday of every other month, beginning in January, in Room 14 inside the Potomac Building, 23115 Leonard Hall Drive, Leonardtown, MD.

In 2023, the Museum Division consisted of four sites: St. Clements Island Museum; Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park; the Drayden African American Schoolhouse; the Old Jail Museum in Leonardtown.

Board Membership

2023 saw changes in membership. John Deatrack, Jeanette Pettit, and Regina Faden resigned; we thank them for their work. Lilyanne Ohanesian and Conner Wolfe joined. Kate Ross and Kathy Bailey were appointed in December and will join in 2024.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MUSEUM DIVISION FOR 2023 ON WHICH THE BOARD ADVISED AND BOARD OPERATIONS

- Boards, Commissions, and Committees Compliance Report: the County periodically sends a compliance report with areas that boards must meet. The Museum Board complies in all areas.
- One important project the Board is excited to continue assisting with is replacing the current St. Clements building with a new two-story building. The Board has seen the plans as they develop and provided thoughts. The project is progressing well. Currently, March of 2024 may see demolition on the old building begin, with plans to open by 2025.
- Robin Finnacom and Michael Brown worked on a Memo to the County Commissioners, supporting the Board's recommendations for the Museum Division's FY25 budget. The budget will be considered in Spring of 2024 and put in place in July of 2024. The Board has approved this Memo, which makes recommendations for salary increases, some additional staff, touch screen kiosks, Piney Point pier repair, funds for portable toilets, additional insurance funds, and exhibit a curator position.

- The Board advised on plans to upgrade the boats that ferry passengers to St. Clements Island.
- Updated the Board Bylaws.
- Helped promote the museum activities in the community and volunteered for service at 2023 events.
- Michael Brown suggested that African American and Native American history does not have the same amount of coverage, nor do these community members have their story told as fully and positively as European history, with too much emphasis on enslavement or injustice. There is not much that is inspiring. The Board agrees that programming can and should be done with a mission focus. The Interpretive Center is owned by the County, and the Unified Committee on African-American Contributions has an MOU to meet there; however, to begin telling the story fully the Center must be open regularly in a way it is currently not. Could the Museum partner on a cultural event, hosting at one of its sites? How do we make it an open public museum, since it is more central and already has more in it that can tell the story well? We will add this goal to the Strategic Plan; bring the idea forward and listen at January Community Conversation to see if potential suggestions for action come forward; a letter to the Commissioners asking for greater attention to diversity on the budget will be drafted

Activities for 2023/Plans for the Future

- As possible, attend budget hearings to indicate support for the division in the process.
- Support Museum activities as appropriate.
- Follow and advise on building plans for the St. Clements Island Museum.
- Work for greater diversity in programs with an aim to celebrating the contributions of all to the county.
- Review strategic plan for possible action items.