

## February 2023 Presentation to Poolesville Town Commissioners

Dear Commissioners, on behalf of Historic Medley District, I want to thank the Poolesville Town Commissioners for this opportunity to present a Town Renewal request for your FY24 Budget. As background information, allow me to recap HMD's history and look to the future and our renewed partnership with the town, its citizens, and the surrounding communities.

HMD was founded in 1974 by up-county residents Mary Ann Kephart and Winsome Brown. They were concerned about the neglect and disappearance of historic buildings and landmarks in area formerly known as the voting district, "Medley District" of Montgomery County, MD. Its mission was the preservation of buildings, structures, objects, and spaces that contribute to the historic character of the area; the development and implementation of plans for preserving and using these resources; promotion of research and education in area history and its contribution to Montgomery County, Md., and the encouragement of citizens' participation in these activities.

Looking back over HMD's 49 years of existence, we have faced many challenges to fulfill this goal. We are a small non-profit organization with Knight Kiplinger as

Board Chairman, Maureen O'Connell as President, Jean Findlay as Secretary/Treasurer and a 6-person Board of Directors: Amy Baker, Abby Clouse, Tom Kettler, John Pentecost, Kenny Sholes, and Jeff Welsh. We own and maintain the Old Town Hall Bank Museum, and the John Poole House. We lease from Seneca State Parks the Seneca Schoolhouse (SSH) Museum. It was built in 1865 to educate the children of families who worked on the C&O Canal and the Seneca Quarry. Today, HMD offers as a field trip experience the chance to "step back in time" to visit and attend classes in a one room schoolhouse. Every year HMD hosts several thousand children from Maryland, Virginia and Washington at the school.

HMD depends entirely on members' dues, donations, community program fees, building rental fees, SSH bookings and sales, and grants from the State of MD., Montgomery Co., Heritage Montgomery, program and property tours, and the town of Poolesville for revenue. Over the years, HMD has received grant funds from all these organizations. With the arrival of COVID and its restrictions in 2020, HMD has had to cancel all in-person events and programs. In their place, HMD kept our name alive in the community with Zoom meetings, Monocacy Monocle articles, and contact with local business and other civic organizations. In these difficult financial times, HMD is greatly appreciative of the town's \$25,000 grant

allocation in the town FY 23 Budget. With these funds, we were able to complete much needed repairs at the OTH and the JPH: roof and gutter repairs, interior and exterior repairs and painting at the OTH and the JPH, including replacing rotten log siding and the chinking at the JPH. We also updated our security system and our website. We could not have done this without the town's generous funding.

As COVID restrictions loosened in the latter part of 2022, HMD returned to indoor, in-person activities and programs at our 3 locations, with careful attention to health safety guidelines. We participated in Heritage Montgomery 2-day Heritage Days, Poolesville Day, our sold-out Historic Home Tours and the ever-popular Ghosts Tours, the town Christmas Lights Festival in December with Gingerbread Cookie Decorating at the OTH. Several hundred children and their parents decorated, ate, and took home over 500 decorated cookies. Great success! HMD entered into a Contractual Agreement with Local's to work together to offer programs and events to the community. We attended the Save White's Ferry Rally in December and a tour of the wonderful new Crossvines at the Poolesville Golf Course. Overall, last year was good year for HMD. Memberships increased and donations were better than in the past. We received COVID Relief Grants from

Heritage Montgomery, the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council and the town of Poolesville. They were our lifelines during these past three years.

As we look ahead to the Town FY24 Budget, HMD looks forward to working with the town as a partner in promoting the historic character of the town and a redefinition of the western end of the town as an historical center with its many historic properties. We humbly ask the Town Commissioners to consider adding to the budget a line-item allowance for HMD. With these funds, we will continue to improve the OTH and the JPH. Specifically, we would undertake interior and exterior repairs and overall painting at the OTH. We will also work on the leaks in the roof. In the JPH we will do exterior and interior painting. In the JPH backyard, we shall do a major clean-up and upgrade of the trees, shrubs, and flowers. There is no walkway from Coxen Rd. to the front door of the JPH. We are discussing with a mason, such a sidewalk using old bricks in the style of 1800's era homes.

In closing, thank you Town Commissioners for your continued support of HMD. We look forward to working with you in this new year to better promote and showcase our historic town.

Sincerely,

Maureen O'Connell  
President, Historic Medley District