

# Maryland Planning Commissioners Association 38<sup>th</sup> Annual 2021 Conference

October 25 - 27  
Virtual Conference  
GoToWebinar Platform



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**Monday, October 25**

**9 - 11 am**

**Open Meetings Act Training**

**Frank M. Johnson**  
**April Ishak**

**Deputy City Attorney, City of Gaithersburg**  
**City Attorney, Havre de Grace**

*In the 2017 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation requiring at least one member of each public body to take a training class on the Open Meetings Act. Under current law, each public body must designate at least one individual who is an employee, officer, or member to take the training class. While employees or staff can continue to take the training class, at least one member of the public body must be also designated to take the class. This training satisfies the requirement.*

**11 - 11:30 am**

**Conference Opening**

**Danny Winborne**  
**Robert S. McCord, Esq.**

**President, MPCA**  
**Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning**

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Tuesday, October 26

9 - 10 am

### Expanding Broadband Across Maryland

**Charlotte Davis**  
**John Hartline**  
**Matt Tefteau**  
**Dee Anna Sobczak**

**Executive Director**, Rural Maryland Council  
**Executive Director**, Tri-County Council of Southern MD  
**Government Affairs Manager**, Choptank Electric Cooperative  
**COO**, ThinkBig Networks

*The Presentation will inform the Planners of the difficulties of broadband expansion, such as permitting easements, access to right of way, zoning, adequate mapping to address where coverage is needed, and other infrastructural issues of broadband expansion. The presentation will also cover other barriers to broadband expansion such as affordability. Many Marylanders have access to broadband but are unable to afford the cost, therefore opting to go without broadband. The Pandemic has made access to broadband internet more essential than ever. Unfortunately, The Abell foundation reports that 23% of MD households are not connected to highspeed internet.*

10:15 - 11:15 am

### Leonardtown: A Most Exceptional Place

**Laschelle McKay**

**Town Administrator**, Town of Leonardtown

*As the only municipality in St. Mary's County, Leonardtown is unique, located 20 miles west of Patuxent River Naval Air Station, which represents 70+ percent of the county's economic activity and revenue. Town staff have been working on long term revitalization efforts, as the town has changed in innumerable ways. Leonardtown faces many challenges common to small municipalities. Laschelle will discuss the rebranding efforts and economic development strategy that led Leonardtown to be one of the fastest growing municipalities in Maryland while maintaining its small-town, walkable charm.*

12 - 1:15 pm

### Annual Meeting and Keynote Speaker

**Bill Butts**  
**Doug Wright**  
**Roxanne Hemphill**  
*Treasurer's Report*  
*Bylaws Update*  
*2022 Initiatives*

**Vice President**, MPCA  
**Treasurer**, MPCA  
**Secretary**, MPCA

### Keynote Address

**Lucille Walker**

**Executive Director**, Southern Maryland Heritage Area

1:30 - 2:45 pm

### Calvert County, MD: Citizen Planning Insights

**Major Steve Jones**  
**Greg Kernan**  
**John Mattingly**

**Chair**, Calvert County Planning Commission  
**Member**, Calvert County Planning Commission  
**Attorney**, Calvert County Attorney's Office

*Citizen Planners are those individuals who have an interest in playing an informed and active role in shaping the future of their communities. The current roles of these Citizen Planners offer insight, experience, and perspective into important topics of the day: Open Public Hybrid Meetings and Hearings, Comprehensive Planning, and Transportation Planning. The session will end with panel testimonials on "lessons learned" and "Ah-Ha" moments in their careers.*

**3 - 4 pm**

### **The Benefits of Annual Reporting**

**Carole Jaar Sepe, M.A.**  
**Denis Superczynski, AICP**

**Planning Commission, Frederick County**  
**Principal Planner, Frederick County**

*The Frederick County Planning Commission members have been discussing how to improve the annual report as part of Plan "Livable Frederick" implementation. The PC has been reviewing the state annual report requirement and have learned that only about 50% of counties or municipalities are providing an annual report. This indicates a lack of understanding of the requirement and the value of the reports. Planning Commission members need to get back to the basic and understand the state regulations, why the annual reports are required and necessary, and what are the benefits to the counties and state.*

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**Wednesday, October 27**

**9 - 10 am**

### **Diversity Metrics**

**Marc Brenman**

**Author & Managing Partner, IDARE LLC**

*Most diversity and inclusion initiatives lack good metrics and do not adequately quantify progress. This presentation will show how these programs can find, analyze, evaluate, and measure baseline statistics and progress. The quantification increases accountability and helps direct future efforts by finding what works and what does not. The coastal communities of Maryland and the Southern Maryland region traditionally experience issues of inequity, fairness, and nondiscrimination because of large vulnerable and marginalized populations, repeated environmental justice problems, and a demographic makeup similarity to that of many southern states.*

**10:15 - 11:15 am**

### **Sandbagging the Flood: Floodplain Variance Requests & What You Can Do to Help Reduce Flooding in Your Community (1 AICP CM Credit)**

**Kevin Wagner**

**Board of Zoning Appeals, City of Frostburg**

*This presentation will provide a brief overview of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), your community's responsibilities as part of the program and the important role you play in the process. We'll talk about minimum NFIP requirements, higher regulatory standards adopted by local governments and how these higher standards help reduce flood damage in your community. We'll also talk about how flood prevention techniques can help your community recover more quickly after a flood and be more resilient. The next flood will happen, it's just a matter of when.*

**12 - 1 pm**

### **Citizen Planner Recognitions**

**S.F.M.A.C**  
**Cynthia Gross**  
**Jules Dunham**  
**John Schmidt**

**Mayor Michael Benton, Town of North Beach**  
**Kimberley Knox, Baltimore City Baltimore Green Network**  
**Kimberley Knox, Baltimore City Baltimore Planning Department**  
**Kathleen Freeman, AICP, Caroline County, Department of Planning and Codes**

**1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**A Planner's Role in Addressing Climate Change  
(1.5 AICP CM Credits)**

**Greg Bowen**

**Executive Director, American Chestnut Land Trust**

*In this session, Mr. Bowen will explore how planner's working in the Chesapeake Bay watershed can respond to climate change. Threats to which planners can play an active response role include sea level rise, intensified storms, and destruction of species habitats and wildlife corridors. The session will inform participants of strategies for large landscape conservation and methods through which we can avert a new wave of residential sprawl.*

**3: 10 - 4:30 pm**

**Engaging Citizen Planners in Government Planning Exercises  
(1.5 AICP CM Credits)**

**Joe Griffiths (Moderator)**

**Gary Mauler**

**Kipling Reynolds**

**Victoria Olivier**

**Sarah Benton, AICP**

**LAT Manager, Maryland Department of Planning**

**Citizens Advisory Committee, Anne Arundel County**

**Division Chief, Community Planning MNCPPC**

**Planning Supervisor, Howard County Planning & Zoning**

**Planner Coordinator, MNCPPC**

*The most important stakeholders in any planning process are a community's citizen planners. Citizen planners include Planning Commissioners, Boards of Zoning Appeals members, Citizen Advisory Committee members, and the public. In this session, staff and citizen planners from Anne Arundel, Prince George's, and Howard Counties will share their experiences engaging citizen advisory committees and the public in comprehensive and master planning efforts.*

**4:30 pm**

**Conference Closing**

## Keynote Speaker



**Lucille Walker** has been the Executive Director of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (also known as Destination Southern Maryland) for the past 5 years. She is the Chair and legislative lead for the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition, and Vice-Chair of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). She serves on a number of statewide boards and steering committees and is the Cultural Heritage representative on the Advisory Council for the Mallow's Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. Ms. Walker is spearheading the effort for the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (a state-based heritage area) to become the 56th National Heritage Area

in the United States. Legislation has been introduced into the U.S. Congress by Senator Ben Cardin and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, with the support of Senator Chris Van Hollen. This designation will raise the national and international profile of the region. Additionally, this heritage area has created the Maryland Rediscovery 400 initiative, with the purpose of telling a more complete history of Maryland and its beginnings, with a focus on descendant populations, African Americans, and First Peoples, as Maryland looks ahead to the 400th Commemoration. Ms. Walker received her undergraduate degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland, followed by graduate studies at Oxford University. She received her Master's degree in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, Annapolis. Ms. Walker has held numerous positions in leadership and advocacy.

## Special Guest



**Robert McCord, Esq** is Secretary for the Maryland Department of Planning, providing comprehensive leadership of the Department's mission, objectives, and initiatives. With the Maryland Department of Planning since 2015, he has served as Assistant Secretary of Operations and Deputy Secretary. The secretary comes to the department with private sector and public experience. He worked in private practice in Bel Air, MD before joining the Harford County Law Department in 1998 as Deputy County Attorney, then County Attorney from 2004 -2014. He has seen issues from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore as a trustee on the Local Government Insurance Trust. He is an Adjunct Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law, 1990 - present. He holds a degree from Loyola University Maryland, B.A. (Business Administration and Philosophy), 1983; M.B.A. (Marketing), 1985; University of Baltimore School of Law, J.D. cum laude, 1989.

## Panelists



**Frank Johnson** has served local government as staff, an appointed official and an elected official, and in those roles has worked on open meetings act issues in several contexts since 2000. He is certified by the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance as an Open Meetings Act trainer. After serving on several local boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, he was in 2000 elected to the Mt. Airy Town Council, and Mayor in 2006. He has served as an appellate attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice and as Assistant Attorney for Carroll County and Montgomery County, Maryland, and since 2014 the City of Gaithersburg. There he serves as counsel to the Planning Commission, Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and several other City boards.



**April Ishak** began her legal career more than 25 years ago representing parties in class and derivative stockholder litigation in the Delaware Court of Chancery after graduating Rutgers University and Rutgers School of Law-Camden. Her interest in municipal law developed while working at the Bel Air law firm which represented municipalities in Harford County. In 2017, April was appointed City Attorney for the City of Havre de Grace. She opened her solo practice in June 2018. The remainder of her legal practice is dedicated to estate planning, estate administration, business law, and civil litigation.

Governor Hogan appointed April in 2015 to serve on the three-member Open Meetings Compliance Board. She was appointed by Governor Hogan to serve on the State Advisory Council on Administrative Hearings. April is a member of the Maryland Municipal Attorneys Association and is General Counsel to the MFRW. In 2020, April began teaching Open Meetings Act classes for the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance. April enjoys spending her spare time boating with her family on the Chesapeake Bay.



**Charlotte Davis** has over 20 years of professional experience in government, advocacy and political consulting. She has spent over ten years working within the Maryland General Assembly most recently as Chief of Staff for a Committee Chair. She has experience in non-profit management, managing a small organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of Montgomery County, Maryland. In the fall of 2012, Ms. Davis was a part of the successful campaign to change Frederick County's form of government from Commissioner to Charter. Currently, she serves as the Executive Director for the Rural Maryland Council, an independent state agency, which seeks to improve the quality of life while preserving the cultural heritage of Maryland's rural communities. She holds a BA in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland and a MA in Government from Johns Hopkins University. She lives in Middletown, Maryland with her husband and two sons.



**John Hartline** is the current Executive Director at Tri-County Council For Southern Maryland. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland was created as a regional planning and development agency for the tri-county area, consisting of all of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Established by the Maryland State Legislature as a public body corporate and politic to foster the physical, economic and social development of the area. He focuses on fostering collaboration with governmental partners and cooperation across business units to improve business performance and customer satisfaction. John advocates for leadership and in giving our team tools to help customers have a positive experience and measurable steps toward a final successful outcome, both in business and in government.



**Matt Teffau** is the Choptank Electric Cooperative Manager of Government Affairs and a lifelong Marylander. Teffau has been involved with politics and advocacy for over 15 years. After graduating from Salisbury University in 2010, he worked for Congressman Andy Harris (MD-01) on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant, handling agriculture and natural resources issues. Later, Teffau worked at the Maryland Farm Bureau and the Maryland

Department of Agriculture in Government Relations roles. Teffeu is a 2017 graduate from the LEAD Maryland program. Most recently, he collaborated with the executive team at Choptank Electric and local officials to advocate and pass HB 999, The Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020 which has enabled the Co-op to pursue broadband services to their members on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



**Dee Anna Sobczak** is the current COO of ThinkBig Networks. She is operating their Chestertown, MD showroom. ThinkBig is an internet service provider specializing in rural broadband. Our specialty is helping to solve the digital divide in unserved and under-served areas by partnering with local, state and federal government. ThinkBig currently provide internet services in Kent and Queens Anne's County, MD. They have just entered into a P3 agreement with Charles County to bring service to Nanjemoy and parts of Cobb Neck. That approximate 90-mile fiber build will begin 1st quarter 2021 and complete by August 31, 2023.



**Laschelle McKay** currently serves as the Town Administrator for the Town of Leonardtown. She has held this position since June of 2000. The Town is currently undergoing a renaissance and has many exciting development projects planned or underway. The Town Administrator is responsible for all of the day-to-day operations and management of the Town as well as all capital projects. Two major projects that Laschelle oversaw in her capacity as Town Administrator are the redevelopment of Leonardtown Wharf and the Port of Leonardtown Winery. Ms. McKay oversaw the design, funding and construction of these vital economic development and tourism projects. As Town Administrator, she also oversees coordination of a variety of public events held in the town each year. Additionally, Laschelle currently serves as Board member and Past President of the St. Mary's County Arts Council. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Visit St. Mary's, the tourism arm of St. Mary's County government. Laschelle was born in Kingwood, WV and moved to St. Mary's County in 1987. Her and her husband have two grown children, two stepchildren, and three grandchildren.



**Greg Kernan** is the former administrator with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and has served on the Calvert County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He is currently in his second term on the Calvert County Planning Commission having served in the role of Chair, and Vice Chair.



**Major Steve Jones** is the Bureau Commander of the Sheriff's Office in Calvert County. He has been a patrol supervisor, narcotics detective, child abuse investigator, Assistant Commander of Homeland Security and Special Operations. During his time in the Special Operations, he was the head firearms instructor/Armorer and range master. In 2008 Major Jones was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and have been the Commander to current date. It was his goal to continue education and the education of his subordinates. This will only assist in the positive results that have been seen from the Criminal Investigative Bureau. All major cases in Calvert County are handled by the Calvert investigative Team.



**John A. Mattingly** is life-long resident of Southern Maryland. He is an avid outdoorsman and local history buff. An attorney by profession, John has an extensive, successful trial record and his cases have garnered ten reported opinions (including one before the United States Supreme Court). John currently serves as an assistant county attorney and counsel to the Calvert County Planning Commission.



**Carole Jaar Sepe** is a 27-year resident of Frederick County, Maryland, who immigrated to the United States from Haiti in 1976, is fluent in the French, Spanish and Creole languages. Carole holds a Bachelor of Science and Master's in Architecture with a concentration in Urban Planning from Catholic University. As a small business owner and a construction consultant since 1987, she has over 30 years of experience in the construction industry and specializes in affordable housing. Carole is a current member and former chair of the Frederick County Planning Commission. She was appointed in 2015 and re-appointed in 2020. She previously served on the Frederick County Board of Zoning Appeals (2010-2013). Over the years, Carole has also served as a member of several other local boards including the Frederick County Student Homeless Initiative Partnership (SHIP), the Frederick Professional Women's Network (ProNet) and was the Coordinator of the Consultants Trainers Resource Network (CTRN) at Frederick Community College.



**Denis Superczynski** is a native Marylander. Denis has served as a community planner for over 30 years. With a background in architecture and urban planning, he has worked primarily in the public and private non-profit sectors, advocating for proactive policies at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels of government. While Denis has experience in many facets of land use planning including agricultural preservation, zoning regulation, historic preservation, infrastructure adequacy, development review, and master planning, his first love is long-range, comprehensive planning. Denis was a key contributor in the development of Frederick County's Livable Frederick Master Plan and continues to work toward its implementation.





**Marc Brenman** is the former Exec Dir, Wash St Human Rights Commission. Senior Policy Advisor for Civil Rights, US Dept of Transportation. Division Director, Office for Civil Rights, US Dept of Education. Co-author, *The Right to Transportation*; *Planning as if People Matter: Governing for Social Equity*; *When Hate Groups March Down Main Street: Community Response to Neo-Nazi and Extreme Rightwing Groups*. Editor and writer, *Religious Diversity in the Workplace*. Papers: *Social Equity Impact Assessment*; *Environmental Justice in Indian Country*; *Diversity in the Legal Profession*; *Reducing Minority Health Disparities*; *Reducing Police Violence*. Advisor, The City Project, Los Angeles. Diversity Stds Task Force, SHRM/ASTM. Instructor, Young African Leaders Initiative. Member, Equity Committee, Transportation Research Board. Former member, Native American Transportation Issues Committee, TRB. Consultant and expert witness on transportation equity legal cases.



**Kevin Wagner** has over twenty-five years of experience and worked with MDE for the last twenty-one years. Prior to joining MDE, Kevin worked in the private sector interned with MDE as a student. Kevin is a Community Assistance Program Manager with MDE. Kevin manages the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) for the State of Maryland. In that capacity, Kevin provides technical assistance to 147 communities that participate in the NFIP as well as a variety of other stakeholders. Kevin's involved with numerous groups at the local, state, and regional levels, conducts workshops and training, provides permitting assistance, assists with public outreach events.



**Greg Bowen** is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners with over 40 years of experience in planning, land preservation and public policy. Mr. Bowen worked for the Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning for 32 years, the last six as its Director. During that time, he oversaw the county land preservation program, which featured the first transferable development rights program in Maryland, along with two county purchase-of-development rights programs and three state easement programs. In 2006, he led efforts to rewrite the county zoning ordinance to address sea level rise and to permit agri-tourism, eco-tourism, heritage tourism uses, and value-added production on farms. He also led an effort to prepare watershed plans for all of Calvert's watershed and initiated water testing in all 21 watersheds.



**Gary Mauler** received his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Maryland and is currently an Engineer at Northrop Grumman Corporation. He is a member of the Jessup Improvement Association and is currently a board member where he has served for the past 25 year+ years. Mr. Mauler served on past General Development Plan committees in Anne Arundel County as well as a former member of the Dewey Beach, Delaware Planning and Zoning Board. His goal is to work within the CAC to develop a vision that reflects the wishes of the Citizens of Anne Arundel County and advocate for changes to the County Code to guarantee it will be implemented as planned.



**Kipling Reynolds** received her Bachelor of Science from the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs and received a Master's in Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Ms. Reynolds has worked in the State of Maryland for over thirty years and has experience working on General Plans, Sector Plans, Agricultural Preservation, Historic Preservation, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, Transportation studies and functional master plans. She is currently the Community Planning Division Chief for the Prince George's County Planning Department that is responsible for preparing master and sector plans, Neighborhood Revitalization and Placemaking.



**Victoria Olivier** joined Howard County Planning and Zoning as a community planning supervisor in January 2021 and leads the Sustainable Communities program, Route 1 Tax Credit and Plan Howard Academy. In her prior position, she worked with MDP as the regional planner for central Maryland. Before Baltimore, Victoria lived in Detroit and was a 2013-2015 Detroit Revitalization Fellow at Detroit Future City (DFC); ultimately serving as their Director of Land Use and Sustainability focusing on community-driven planning, and vacant land/vacant building transformation. Victoria began her career in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, first with the Preservation Resource Center and later with FEMA's Louisiana Recovery Office. She received a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of New Orleans. Victoria loves to travel internationally, exploring new places - large and small - especially with her husband and two daughters.



**Sarah Benton** is a Planner Coordinator in the Long-Range Planning Section of the Community Planning Division with the Prince George's County Planning Department, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. She joined M-NCPPC in February 2020 and is the Project Manager for the West Hyattsville-Queens Chapel Sector Plan. Prior to joining M-NCPPC, Ms. Benton worked as an urban planner at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C., where she focused on urban development and sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ms. Benton speaks Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese and has a passion for Latino outreach, healthy food access, and planning for an aging population.

## MPCA Executive Committee



**Danny Winborne** currently serves as the President of the MPCA for conference year 2021. Danny is a Planning Commissioner for the City of Gaithersburg, Maryland, serving since 2001. He helps to direct the growth and development of the City by reviewing all annexation requests, zoning applications, subdivision plats, development review plans, applications and plans for municipal improvements. Many of these processes are done in conjunction with the Mayor and City Council. Planning Commissioners frequently attend joint public hearings and work sessions with the Mayor and City Council on current development and long range planning issues. The Commission is supported by the City Planning Division of the Department of Planning & Code Administration. Danny has worked in the Information Technology field in both the Public and Private Sector for the past 35 years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from Morgan State University, a Master of Science in Business Information Technology Management from Johns Hopkins University and an MBA from John Hopkins University. Danny is currently the Deputy City Clerk for the City of Rockville, Maryland.



**Bill Butts** currently serves as the Vice-President of the MPCA. Bill has been a member of the Mt. Airy Planning Commission since 2010, and its chair from 2011-16. During that time, he directed an update of the Town Master Plan. In his professional capacity as a Registered Financial Advisor & Licensed Insurance Broker, Bill designs and develops financial programs and plans for individuals and small companies responsive to their financial goals and needs. Bill is very active in civic and youth programs in his community. He joined the MPCA Board in early 2018.



**Roxanne Hemphill** currently serves as secretary of the MPCA. She has been a Planning Commission Member in the town of Mount Airy since 2015 and before that was a member of the Board of Appeals for 13 years with the last 10 years as the chair person. She holds a Master's in Education from McDaniel College and is a licensed real estate agent since 1990 serving Maryland and Northern Virginia. She is certified by the National Association of Realtors as a Short Sale and Foreclosure Specialist. She is also active in her church by singing in various choirs and committees within her church.



**Doug Wright** was born and raised in Hagerstown. He is a graduate of North Hagerstown High School and Virginia Polytechnic Institute with a B.S. in Civil Engineering. After serving in the US Army for two years he worked for Virginia Electric and Power Company for ten years before returning to Hagerstown to work in his family business, Advertising, Inc., a regional outdoor advertising and sign company. Since returning to Hagerstown, he has been active with a number of non-profit, community-based organizations such as Jaycees, Boys and Girls Club, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Economic Development Commission, Goodwill Industries, Kiwanis Club and his church, Haven Lutheran Church. Since 1988 he has served on the City of Hagerstown's Planning Commission, where he has had the honor to serve as it's Chairperson since 1990. Doug has also been a member of the MPCA for three years and currently serves as Treasurer. Doug is most proud of his

family where he and his wife, Kathy raised two daughters who have blessed them with three wonderful grandchildren.



**Joseph (Joe) Griffiths** Serves as staff liaison to the MPCA Executive Committee. Joe joined the Maryland Department of Planning in 2017 as Manager of the Local Assistance and Training unit in Planning Services. Joe was previously Manager of the Community Information and Outreach division at the Loudoun County (Virginia) Department of Planning and Zoning, where he oversaw outreach and support functions for the county's major planning initiatives. Prior to that he was a Program Manager with the Pathways Community Development Corporation where he oversaw brownfield remediation and workforce development efforts. Joe holds an undergraduate degree in History from the College of William and Mary and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University.