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Office of the Mayor
Gavin Buckley, Mayor
160 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-2517

AP-8-25

February 7, 2025

To: Alderpersons, City of Annapolis

From: Mayor Gavin Buckley

Re: Heritage Commission appointment

Pending your approval, I would like to appoint Ms. Heather Ersts to the Heritage Commission. Ms. Ersts' appointment has been recommended by Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and will fill a vacancy on this commission.

Heather Ersts
3327 Arundel on the Bay Rd
Annapolis, MD 21403

Ms. Ersts' term will expire on 6/30/2028. A copy of her resume is attached.

Thank You.

GB/hrr

Reviewed by: <u>Economic Matters Committee</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Favorable	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfavorable
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>3/19/25</u>
Committee Chair	Date

Application Form

Profile

Heather

First Name

E

Middle Initial

Ersts

Last Name

Email Address

Home Address

City

State

Postal Code

Are you a resident of the City of Annapolis?

Yes No

What ward do you live in? *

Nonresident

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Heritage Commission: Submitted

Interests & Experiences

Are you an employee of the City of Annapolis?

Yes No

Do you do business with the City of Annapolis?

Yes No

If yes, please detail.

I am the Director of Tourism Development at Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County. In that role, I identify and develop tourism programs and products utilizing market research and grant opportunities to inspire, inform, and maximize the opportunity of domestic and international travelers to Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. I also provide destination development technical assistance to Annapolis businesses, partners, and stakeholders.

Are you currently serving on any city boards or commissions?

Yes No

Demographics

Dr. Marcie Taylor Thoma, 800 Parkwood Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403, 410.991.7107 Karen Brown, Historic Annapolis, 18 Pinkney Street, Annapolis, MD 21401, 443.454.6488 Kristen Pironis, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, 26 West Street, Annapolis, 21401, 301.633.8335

References

[Ersts Resume 2023.pdf](#)
Upload a Resume

I have had a life-long interest in Annapolis history and would be honored to serve on the Annapolis Heritage Commission. My thesis for my history master's degree was about Annapolis business women in the mid eighteenth century and I have worked as a curator at Historic Annapolis and the Annapolis Maritime Museum. Two years ago, I left the Maryland Office of Tourism to join the team at Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County so that I could be more involved with promoting, creating visitor experiences, and be more present and involved in the town in which I live and love. Applying to be appointed to the Annapolis Heritage Commission is just the type of involvement I am seeking, and I believe I have the expertise and professional knowledge that would be a benefit for the commission.

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission?

Please see attached resume.

Other experience (volunteer experience, memberships, etc.)

Please see attached resume.

Educational background (Please answer here or attach resume or CV)

Please see attached resume.

Work experience (please answer here or attach resume or CV)

HEATHER E. ERSTS

EXPERIENCE

VISIT ANNAPOLIS & ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

August 2023–present

Director of Tourism Development

Identify and develop tourism programs and products utilizing market research and grant opportunities to inspire, inform, and maximize the opportunity of domestic and international travelers to Anne Arundel County. Provide destination development technical assistance to businesses, partners, and stakeholders.

STATE OF MARYLAND, OFFICE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

February 2014–July 2023

Partnership and Outreach Manager, Tourism Development Unit

Initiate projects and work with international, federal, state, county, and private-sector partners to develop tourism experiences and products to attract domestic and international visitors to Maryland. Represent the Department of Commerce on the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Arts & Entertainment District Committee. Serve on state grant review panels for Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, Recreational Trails, and Bikeways.

- Team Lead: Great Chesapeake Bay Loop, Harriet Tubman 200, International Underground Railroad Month, 400 Years of African American History Fellows
- Past Team Lead: Fish & Hunt Maryland, C&O Canal Experience, Crab & Oyster Trail, Savor Maryland
- Team member: 2018 & 2016 Maryland Fleet Weeks, War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission

HISTORY INNOVATION, Annapolis MD

July 2013–present

Principal; Social Historian, Decorative Arts Curator, Interpretation and Programming Professional

Working in partnership with historic sites and organizations to connect the public with historic places and convey specific, targeted educational messages. Creating effective and engaging programming and interpretive products, public programs, and exhibitions. Grant writing and management. Clients: Cloverfields Preservation Foundation, Galesville Community Center, Woodwardville Preservation Society, Annapolis Maritime Museum, and Maryland Humanities Council.

HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS, Annapolis, MD

August 2009–July 2013

Vice President of Museum Collections and Interpretation

Responsible for all aspects of the mission-related activities of the organization including museum collections, exhibitions, scholarship, interpretation, public and education programs, historic garden, and volunteers. Acting curator, registrar, and educator. Supervised a staff of seven. Involved in all fundraising activities, marketing, and grant writing.

- Led 100% grant-funded team with on-budget, multi-year project about runaways 1729–1865 including database, stage performance, and traveling exhibit *Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake*.
- Increased by 60% Historic Annapolis memberships over four years directly attributable to public programming.

ANNAPOLIS MARITIME MUSEUM, Annapolis, MD

March 2007–July 2009

Education Director, Curator, Grant Writer, and Volunteer Coordinator

Researched, designed and delivered all education programs for the museum. Management Team member for \$1.5 million renovation of the McNasby Oyster Company building. Curated, designed, and installed exhibitions. Wrote and served as administrator of grants. Recruited, trained, and managed volunteers and volunteer programs.

- 80% success rate in securing grants, raised over \$900,000 in two years.

CHARLES MACK DESIGN, Baltimore, MD

April 2004–January 2007

Assistant Exhibition Designer and Exhibition Coordinator

Designed museum exhibitions for a variety of historical, cultural, and art institutions. Assisted clients to think creatively about interpretation and programmatic possibilities. Coordinated and participated in all aspects of exhibition development, design, and installation. Managed budgets and schedules. Contract registrar as requested.

- Design team member that created the underground museum at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS FOUNDATION, Annapolis, MD

February 2001–April 2004

Curator

Researched, created, and implemented a wide variety of public programs for all ages. Responsible for all aspects of care, inventory, and public access over 2,000 objects, including decorative and fine arts, manuscripts, photographs, and ephemera. Updated storage spaces, re-housed and inventoried the fine and decorative art collection. Trained and supervised volunteers.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Baltimore, MD

October 1995–February 2001

Exhibition Coordinator—July 1998–February 2001 **Gallery Assistant**—October 1995–July 1998

Coordinated the development and installation of temporary, traveling, and on-line exhibitions.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

2015–2017 Commodore, Eastport Yacht Club

CEO of a \$3 million business including marina, restaurant and bar, clubhouse and grounds and 850 club members. Additional club programs include sailing/boating instruction, banquets, world-class regattas and race committee, and major charity events. Oversaw paid staff of 30, supervised General Manager, coordinated 20 volunteer committees, served as Chair of the Board of Directors and presiding officer at membership meetings.

2013–2019 Eastport Yacht Club Executive Board

2005–2008 Chief Elf, Eastport Yacht Club Lights Parade, Annapolis, MD

EDUCATION

THE ATTINGHAM SUMMER SCHOOL, THE ATTINGHAM TRUST FOR THE STUDY OF COUNTRY HOUSES AND COLLECTIONS, Great Britain, 2004.

M.A. HISTORY OF AMERICAN DECORATIVE ARTS, PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN/ THE SMITHSONIAN ASSOCIATES, Washington, DC, 2000.

- Honors Thesis "The Diffusion of Knowledge and Growth of Taste in Decorative Art: The Decorative Art Society of Baltimore, 1878–1929."

M.A. HISTORY, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, Fairfax, Virginia, 1995.

- Thesis "Cooking Up the Dough: Annapolis Women and Their Businesses, 1745–1755."

B.A. HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, College Park, Maryland, 1992.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2020 Four Rivers Heritage Area Partnership Award "A Celebration of Harriet Tubman & Frederick Douglass"

2015 Schwartz Prize, Federation of State Humanities Councils for *Hometown Teams, Galesville Hot Sox*

2015 Four Rivers Heritage Area Heritage Partnership Award, "Field of Dreams: Homegrown History"

2013 Four Rivers Heritage Area Best Tourism Product, *Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake*

2012 Four Rivers Heritage Area Heritage Partnership Award for *Our Common Threads* Exhibition

- Quilts created by Annapolis Middle School 7th grade for the 45th Anniversary of School Desegregation

