

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND
LEGISLATIVE SESSION DAY 2016-11**

RESOLUTION NO. 26-2016

Title of Resolution: Garrett Island - Letter of Support

Synopsis: A Resolution to support the transfer of Garrett Island from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the National Parks Service as a component of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail for the purpose of ensuring public access to this island and advancing regional economic development through partnership and heritage tourism.

Introduced by: Councilman Patchell

Introduced and ordered posted on: June 7, 2016

Scheduled for consideration on: June 21, 2016

By: _____
Council Manager

Notice and title of Resolution having been posted by _____ at the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton and consideration by the Council having been scheduled on _____.

By: _____
Council Manager

Explanation: CAPITAL LETTERS INDICATE LANGUAGE ADDED TO EXISTING DOCUMENT
~~Strike through~~ indicates language deleted from existing document
Underlining indicates language added to document by amendment.
~~Double Strike through~~ indicates language stricken from document by amendment

1 **WHEREAS**, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, Inc. (LSHG) has been designated as the local
2 management entity for the development of land and water based trails in the Lower Susquehanna Heritage
3 Greenway since the year 2000; and, therefore, is proposing the island transfer, in accordance with locally and
4 legislatively adopted plans; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the LSHG in partnership with our government, the Chesapeake Conservancy, The
6 Conservation Fund, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, the Maryland Scenic Byway Program and the
7 National Park Service have developed a series of comprehensive management plans for land and water trail
8 development of state and national historic trails and byways in our jurisdiction; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Garrett Island formerly known as Palmer’s Island, and later Watson Island, is 200 acres with
10 the highest elevation being 80 feet is situated at the mouth of the Susquehanna River, which is one of the
11 oldest rivers on earth and the longest non-navigable river in North America with drainage into the Atlantic
12 Ocean; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Garrett Island is the only rocky island in the tidal waters of the Chesapeake Bay; King
14 James I of England awarded Edward Palmer the island as part of a land grant in 1622; William Claiborne
15 established the island as a trading post in 1637; and the Proprietary Government of Maryland ordered
16 fortification on the island whereupon Fort Conquest was built in 1643; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Garrett Island was the first settlement in Cecil County and once home to John C. Paca,
18 grandson of William B. Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a Maryland Governor; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the US Department of the Interior was authorized to purchase Garrett Island as part of
20 Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge to be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2004, pursuant
21 to 16 U.S.C. Section 668dd Public Law 108-131; and

22 **WHEREAS**, public access for boaters, paddlers, fishermen, campers, and explorers has been
23 extremely limited to Garrett Island since it was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and

24 **WHEREAS**, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Trail) was established by
25 Congress in 2006 to commemorate John Smith’s historic 3,000-mile voyages of discovery on land and
26 water around the Chesapeake Bay; to help promote the conservation, public enjoyment, and appreciation
27 of the Chesapeake watershed’s rich natural and cultural history; and to provide for recreational
28 opportunities along the Trail; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Garrett Island is a crucial component of the history of Captain Smith’s exploration of the
30 Chesapeake Bay, and is believed to be the first site where Captain John Smith encountered and traded with
31 the Susquehannock Indians in 1608, and

32 **WHEREAS**, Garrett Island can provide tremendous recreational, tourism, educational and cultural
33 benefits to the region because of its strategic location in Cecil and Harford Counties in Maryland, between
34 the waterfront communities of Perryville, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit ; its association with John
35 Smith, the Susquehannock Indians and other important events in our national, state and local history; and
36 its outstanding sheltered waters, beach landings, and other recreational features; and

37 **WHEREAS**, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Trail is to be administered by the National
38 Parks Service, pursuant to 16 U.S.C. Section 1244(a)(25)(C); and

39 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND,**
40 hereby urges the United States Congress and the Department of the Interior to take such actions as are
41 necessary to transfer Garrett Island and Battery Island to the National Park Service, designate and administer
42 the Trail as a “unit” of the National Park System, and reauthorize the Chesapeake Gateways program.

43 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND,** supports the
44 transfer of Garrett Island from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the National Park Service to be managed
45 and interpreted as part of the Trail, with appropriate public access and stewardship of the Island and its
46 resources.

47 **AND BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND,** supports
48 the designation of the Trail as a Unit of the National Parks System and reauthorization of the Chesapeake Bay
49 Gateways and Water Trail Program as a program of the Trail.

50 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this Resolution be sent to the Maryland General
51 Assembly and Governor of the State of Maryland, whereby requesting their endorsement.

52 **AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Resolution shall take effect on the date of its passage by the
53 County Council of Cecil County, Maryland

INTRODUCED: June 7, 2016

ADOPTED: _____

President of the Council

ATTEST:

Council Manager