

Council for Maryland Archeology, Inc.



Roy F. Young, II
President, Chief Executive Officer
The Montpelier Foundation
11350 Constitution Highway
Montpelier Station, VA

April 4, 2022

Dear Mr. Young,

On behalf of the Council for Maryland Archeology (CfMA), I write to express my disappointment and frustration with the situation unfolding between the executive board of the Montpelier Foundation (TMF) and the Montpelier Descendants Committee (MDC). CfMA would like to express our support for the MDC and for the staff of the foundation as they struggle to understand and correct the board's recent undemocratic decisions to strip power-sharing status from the MDC. Furthermore, we are disturbed by recent allegations that archaeological staff jobs have been threatened over attempts to deliver in good faith on promises made by your organization.

In June of 2021, TMF received well-deserved positive press regarding the decision to share power with a committee representing the descendants of those enslaved at Montpelier. We were inspired by your efforts to become a model for co-management, reconciliation, and commemoration of the institution of slavery and the damage it has done to the people of our nation. Additionally, the partnership between Montpelier's professional archaeologists and its descendant community is a role model in our field and has advanced archeological method and theory by uncovering enslaved peoples' housing and interpreting their role in the historic community. Your recent actions have squandered a remarkable opportunity to act as a national leader in descendant engagement. TMF is excusing itself from meaningful participation in difficult but necessary conversations that will help move this country forward.

CfMA is committed to building a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the archeological disciplines and in the study of the human past. The Council's leadership fosters a professional community that effectively interprets the many stories revealed through the archeological record. In doing so, CfMA encourages and honors the voices of diverse stakeholders to accurately represent our shared heritage. Because of this orientation toward diversity and social justice, CfMA condemns TMF's recent actions regarding its descendant community in no uncertain terms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie T. Sperling'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Stephanie T. Sperling, M.A.A.
President, Council for Maryland Archeology

Cc: Paul Edmondson, President and CEO, National Trust for Historic Preservation