



## St. Michaels commissioners OK funding for nature trail

By **CLAY OWENS** Staff Writer

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ST. MICHAELS The future of St. Michaels' nature trail took two steps forward Aug. 27, as the commissioners approved a possible funding program and a license agreement so a footbridge can be constructed.

The commissioners unanimously approved the funding document, pending review and approval by the State Highway Administration. SHA is providing a \$470,000 Transportation Enhancement Program Grant to the project.

The trail, measuring a bit over 1.3 miles in length, runs along the west side of town. The project is estimated to cost \$1.3 million, mainly coming from grants or contributions from groups wanting to see the trail become a reality.

Commissioner Donna Hunt thanked the town and its former commissioners, St. Michaels Rotary, Elm Street Development, Environmental Concern and Friends of the Wilson Shook Family for their efforts in getting the project as far as it is, saying the trail would be of great benefit to the town.

"There's so many components of this. Once we get this done, it will really be a big asset to the town," Hunt said.

The commissioners also unanimously approved a resolution allowing the town to enter into a 20-year license agreement with Delmarva Power for a bridge to be built on 4,800 square feet of its property at the end of West Chestnut Street spanning a narrow section of San Domingo Creek. The town will pay a total of \$1 for use of the area.

At the request of the utility, the bridge will have a roof so fishermen casting lines off it will not get them tangled in the overhead electric lines.

While a name for the bridge has not been officially determined, one that has been mentioned is the Bill Shook Memorial Bridge to honor the memory of one of the trail's biggest proponents. The Shook family is donating the bridge, which might be built at an off-site location and then put into place because of limited space there.

Earlier in August, the commissioners passed a resolution accepting an easement from Hatton's Garden LLC of McLean, Va., on a small parcel of land at the south end of town so a parking lot for the trail could be constructed. The town is not being charged for the easement.