

The Charter of the City of Annapolis

“Anne, by the Grace of God, of Greate Brittain, France, and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, Queen, Defender of the faith, &c. To all and singular our faithfull subjects within our Province of Maryland, Greeting, whereas, there is a very pleasant, healthful and comodius place for trade, by act of the Generall Assembly of this our Province, laid out for a towne and porte, called Annapolis, in honour of us, which said towne and porte, hath in few years (especially, since the accession of our trusty and well beloved John Seymour, Esq., our Capt. Generall and Governour-in-Chiefe, of this our Province, to the Government thereof,) very considerably encreased in the number of its inhabitants as well as buildings, both public and private, soe that it excelleth all other townes and ports in our said province, and for that our present seate of Government, within our province aforesaid, is fixed att the said porte and towne, whereby the same is become the chiefe mart of the whole countrey, wee, being willing to encourage all our good and faithfull subjects as well att present, resideing and inhabitting, or which hereafter shall, or may inhabitt, or reside within the said porte of Annapolis, of our Royall Grace, good will, and meer motion with the advice of our Council, in our said province, have thought fitt, and doe by these our letters pattents, constitute and erect the said towne and porte of Annapolis, together with the circuits and presincts thereof, includeing the lands heretofore laid out for the said towne and porte of Annapolis, publick pasture, and towne common together, with the River and Creeks adjacent, into a Citty, by the name of the Citty of Annapolis, and doe grant to the inhabitants of the said Citty that the same Citty shall be incorporated a Citty, consisting of a Mayor, one person learned in the law, stiled, and bearing the office of Recorder, of the said Citty, and six Aldermen, and tenn other persons to be Common Councillmen, of the said Citty, which said Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Councillmen shall be a body incorporate, and one community forever in right, and by the name of Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Council, of said Citty of Annapolis, shall be able and capable to sue and be sued att law, and to act and execute, doe and performe as a body incorporate, which shall have succession forever, and to that end to have a common seale, and that Amos Garrett, Esqr., one of the inhabitants of the said Citty, shall for the present be, and be named Mayor of the said Citty, for the ensueing year, and Wornell Hunt, Esqr., Recorder thereof, and William Bladen, John Freeman, Benjamin Fordham, Evan Jones, Tho. Boardley, and Josiah Willson, Esqrs., inhabitants of the said citty, shall be Aldermen thereof, soo long as they shall well behave themselves therein, haveing first taken and subscribed the test and severall oaths for security of the Government, as by Law established and allsoe the oath appointed by us or our present Governour, to be taken by the Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen of the Citty of Annapolis, aforesaid; Which shall be administered to them by our Governour-in-Chiefe, keeper of the greate seale of this our province for the time being, or by such other person or persons as wee, our heirs and successors, or our Gov. aforesaid, for the time being, shall, from time to time, authorize and appoint to administer the same, and wee grant that the said Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen, or the Major parte of them shall ellect and choose some others of the most sufficient of the inhabitants of the said City, being freemen thereof, to be of the Common Council of the said City, for soe long time as they shall well behave themselves, and to perpetuate the succession of the said Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Council in all times to come, wee doo grant, that, for the future, they shall assemble in some convenient place in the said citty, upon the feast day of St. Michael, the Archangell, in every year, and shall ellect and choose by the Major vote of such of them as shall be then present, one other of the Aldermen of the said citty, for the time being, to be Mayor of the said citty, for the ensueing year, and upon decease or removeall of the said Mayor, of the said citty, for the time being, or upon any decease, or deceases, removeall, or removealls, of the said Recorder, or Aldermen, or any of them, or within one month, after such respective decease, or deceases, removeall, or removealls, the residue of the said Aldermen, together with the said Mayor, or if he shall be living or the major part of them whom shall at a set time by them to be appointed within ye said citty and presincts ellect and nominate some other person or



persons to be Mayor, Recorder, Alderman or Aldermen of the said City in the place and places of such person or persons soe deceased or removed respectively as the case shall require soe as the said mayor to be Ellected and nominated to be att the time of such Ellection and nominaion actually one of the Aldermen of the said City and soe as the said Recorder soe to be Ellected and nominated, be a person learned in the law, soe as the said Alderman or Aldermen soe to be Ellected and nominated be actually att the time of such Ellection and Nominacion of the Common Council of the said City, the said Mayor, Recorder, or Alderman, or Aldermen, soe to be Ellected and Nominated, first Takeing the severall and Respective Oaths before mencioned to be appointed as aforesaid, and shall likewise then fill up by the Election of the free Voters of the said City, out of and from among the Inhabitants and freeholders of the said City, the full number of tenn persons to be Common Councillmen; and that the said persons hereby appointed and named or hereafter to be Ellected and nominated mayor, Recorder, or Aldermen, be Justices of the peace within the City presincts and liberties thereof, having first taken the oaths usually appointed to be taken by the Justice of the Peace, the said Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen hereby named and appointed or hereafter to be Ellected, nominated, or any three of them, whereof the said Mayor or Recorder, for the time being, shall be one, shall have, within the presincts of said City, full power and authority to make Constables and other nessesary officers, and to rule, order, and govern the inhabitants thereof, as justices of the peace, are or shall be authorized to doe, and shall have power to execute all the Laws, Ordinances, and Statutes, in that behalfe, made as fully and amply as if they were authorized thereto, by express, commission, named therein, willing and commanding that noe other justices of the peace or quorum within our said county or province, doe att any time hereafter, take upon them or any of them to execute the office of a justice of peace within the said City, or in the presincts thereof; notwithstanding any comission at large, authoriseing them thereunto, saveing the authority and jurisdiction of her majesties' justices of oyer and terminer and Goale deliver, now or hereafter to be assigned, dureing the time of their holdeing their severall respective Courts in the said City, and further wee will and grant unto said Mayor, Recorder, and Common Council of said City, for the time being, full power and authority, after the space of six years, to ellect a Sherriff for said City, but that untill then the Sherriff of Anne Arundell county for the time being, shall be Sherriff of the said county and to make, order, and appoint such by-laws and ordinances among themselves, for the regulacion and good Government of Trade and other matters exigences and things within the said City and presincts, as to them, or the major parte, shall seem meet to be consonant to reason and not contrary, but as near as conveniently may be agreeable, to the Laws and Statutes now in force, which said Bye-laws, shall be observed, kept, and performed by all manner of persons, Tradeing and Resideing within the said City, under such reasonable pains, penalties, and forfeitures, as shall be imposed by the said Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Councillmen, or the major parte of them then assembled from time to time, not exceeding forty shillings sterling, the said pains, penaltys and forfeitures to be raised by distress, and sale of the goods of such person offending, and to be employed for the publick benefitt of the said City att their discession; and further, wee doo grant and give full power, lycence, previllidge, and authority, to the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Councillmen of the said City, for the time being, and their successors forever, and alsoe all freeholders of the said City, that is to say, all persons owneing a whole lott of land with a house built thereon, according to law, and all persons actually resideing and inhabiting in the said City, haveing a visable estate of the vallue of twenty pounds sterling, att the least, and likewise, all persons hereafter who shall serve five years to any trade within this City, and shall, after the expiration of their time, be actually housekeepers and inhabitants in the same, to send two citzizens and delegates to every one of our assembly or assemblys, hereafter to be held, or att any time or times, hereafter to be called, to be held for this, our said Province of Maryland, to be ellected and chosen out of the inhabitants, actually being and resideing within the said City, haveing a freehold or visable estate of the vallue of twenty pounds sterling therein, by said Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Common Councillmen, Freeholders, and Freeman as aforesaid, or the major parte of them being present, by virtue of our writt or writts of action to be sent to them for that purpose, which said writt or writts, wee doe hereby grant, shall be issued out and sent to the said Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen, soe often as occasion shall require; provided, that all such ellector or voters as aforesaid, doe take an oath to be true to the interest of the said City before they be admitted to such vote; and provided, alsoe, and att all times after the end of the next Generall Assembly, to be held for this province, noe Freeman, as aforesaid, not being a freeholder as aforesaid, shall have the libertie of such vote as aforesaid, until free three months, after such his freedom obtained; and when hereafter, there shall happen any Generall Assembly to be held, according as writts shall be sent to the severall and respective counties for ellecting Deputies or Delegates for

their severall and respective counties in this our province of Maryland, wee further grant that the said cittyzens and delegates, by them soe as aforesaid ellected and sent, shall have full and free votes and voices in all and every of our Generall Assemblys, touching or concerning all matters or things thereto, to be discoursed and handled as other, the Deputies or Delegates of the severall and respective countys, formerly have had, now have, or hereafter shall have; and further, wee grant and give lycence to the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Councill of the said Citty, for the time being, and their successors forever, to have and to hold two marketts weekly within this said Citty, on every Wednesday and Saturday in the weeke, in some convenient place to be by them appointed within the presincts Liberties of the said Citty, and alsoe two fairs yearly to be kept on Munday, otherwise, called St. Phillip and Jacobs Day, and on the feast of St. Michaell, the Archangell, or on the next Day succeeding, each or either of them, in case they shall happen to fall on the Lord's Day, for the sale and vending all mannor of goods, cattle, wares, and merchandizes whatever, on which said fair Days and first two days before and after all persons coming to the said fairs together with their cattle, goods, wares, and merchandizes, and returning thence shall be exanpt and previllidged from any arrest, attachments, or executions whatsoever, and that the said Mayor and Aldermen shall have power to sett such reasonable tole upon such goods, cattle, merchandizes, and other comodities as shall be sold therein, respectively as shall be thought fitt, not exceeding sixpence on every beast sold, and the twentieth parte of the vullue of any comodity, and shall and may hold a courte of Pypowdry dureing the said fair, for the determinacion of all controversies and quarrels which may happen therein, according to the usuall course in England, in the like cases, and wee grant unto them all profitts and perquisits due, incident, and belonging to said markett, fair, and Courte of Pypowdry; and further wee doe grant that the said Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen, or any three or more of them, shall hold a Courte of Hustings within the said Citty where they are hereby impowered to make proper officers and to sett reasonable fees, not exceeding what are now allowed in the County Courte, and shall have jurisdiction and hold plea of trespass and Gectment for any lands or tenements within the said Citty, as alsoe of all writts of dower for the same lands and tenements, and of all other actions personall and mixt, and as a Courte of Record give judgement and award execucion thereon, according to the Laws and Statutes of England and this Province; provided, the demand in the said action personall and mixt exceed not the sume of six pounds, ten shillings sterling, or seventeen hundred pounds of tobaccoe; and, provided, nevertheless, that any party or partys, plaintiffs or defendants, shall be at their liberty on good grounds to bring writts of habeas corpus and certiorarie, to remove any plaints from the said Hustings to the Provincially Courte of this Province and alsoe to appeale from the judgment of the Mayors, or bring writts of error att their choice to the Provincially Courte under such limitacion and regulacion as is already by the act of Assembly of this Province assigned for prosecuting appeales and writts of error from the County Courtes to the Provincially. In testimony whereof, wee have caused these our letters to be made pattend, given att Annapolis, under the Greate Seale of our said Province. Wittness our trusty and well beloved John Seymour, Esq., Captain Generall and Governour-in-Chief of our said Province, this twenty-second Day of November, in the seventh year of our Reigne &c., Annoque Domni, 1708."



Transcription of Charter by Mary Bronson, Annapolis DOT
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