

land necessary therefor if he, she or they be competent to contract; and in case the County Commissioners shall so contract they shall cause a plat of the said road to be made by the County Road Engineer and filed and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, with the deed or deeds conveying the land so acquired, which plat shall be referred to in and shall be a part of said deed or deeds, and the lands so conveyed shall be and become thenceforth the property of St. Mary's County, and be subject to the purposes and uses for which granted. If, however, the County Commissioners aforesaid shall proceed by condemnation in the exercise of the powers herein granted, all benefits and damages done, suffered or incurred by laying out, opening, and making of new roads, bridges or drains, or by altering, straightening, widening, grading, improving or closing up, in part or in whole, any existing public roads, bridges or drains, shall be determined or assessed by three persons, residents of St. Mary's County and above the age of twenty-one years, of which the County Road Engineer shall be one, who shall be appointed by the County Commissioners aforesaid, and shall, within ten days after notice of their appointment, take an oath before a justice of the peace of St. Mary's County that they will faithfully and fairly and without partiality or prejudice value and assess the cost of damages to be suffered and incurred by any persons interested in the said property over, through and by which the said road, bridge or drain is to be opened, closed, extended, widened, graded or improved; and also to estimate the benefits that may accrue therefrom to any such property owner, through and by which the said road, bridge or drain is to be opened, closed, extended, widened, graded or improved or any property adjacent thereto, or any other property injured or benefited by said road, bridge or drain; they shall give at least fifteen days' notice in a newspaper published in St. Mary's County of their purpose to lay out, open, extend, close up, widen, straighten, grade or improve the road, bridge, or drain as directed to be laid out, opened, extended, closed up, widened, straightened, graded or improved and of the day, hour and place of meeting for that purpose; and they shall meet at the time and place mentioned in the notice given by them and proceed to exercise the powers and perform the duty assigned to and required of them, and to ascertain whether any and what amount in value of the damages will be caused thereby for which the owner or occupant of any rights or interest, claimed in any ground or improvement ought to be compensated, over and above the amount in value of benefits which will thereby accrue to said owner or occupant thereof, and ascertain what amount in value of benefits will thereby accrue to any lot or parcel of ground by or through which the same may pass, or improvements made, or any other property or to the owner or occupant thereof, and which said lot or parcel of ground, or the owner or occupant thereof ought to pay. They shall locate boundaries and prepare an explanatory map giving a description of the road opened, closed, extended, widened, straightened, or bridge or drain, with each separate lot or parcel of ground deemed to have sustained damage or received benefit, and they shall, within twenty days, return to the County Commissioners such maps, together with the amount