

out public bridges or drains, when in their opinion the public necessity or convenience requires the same, without any previous application or petition. The County Commissioners may contract with the owner or owners of the land for the purpose of laying out, opening, extending and making new roads, bridges or drains, or for altering, straightening, widening, grading, improving or for closing up in whole or in part any existing public road, bridge or drain, or for the right of way over the 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, 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, 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