

**Approved Minutes**  
**MSBA Planning Committee**  
**March 3, 2010 -- 6 p.m.**  
**Columbia, Maryland**

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting convened at approximately 6:10 p.m. Those attending were: Robert Anbinder, Henry Dugan, Susan Erlichman, Tom Lynch, John Murphy, Mary Murphy, Vasilios Peros, Ted Staples, Alan Bussard, Elizabeth Morris, Michael Siri, Paul Carlin, Tom Murphy, Bob Kalinowski, and Karen Federman Henry.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the November 9, 2009, meeting were approved.

**Subcommittee reports**

- Relevance of the bar—Mary Murphy provided the survey that will be distributed to members to evaluate the County Attorney's Offices, the State's Attorney's Offices, the Attorney General's Office, and the Public Defender's Office. Committee members may provide her with comments by March 15, after which she plans to send the survey out for responses.
- Certification of specialties—John Murphy gave a summary of the information collected by this subcommittee. The overall focus of the subcommittee's review was to identify who would administer the certification, what areas of practice would be certified, what costs are involved, pros and cons of certification, and other factors that may be useful to the leadership of the MSBA in deciding whether to pursue certifications. Most states allow specialties through the ABA certification process or a separate vendor, so that the structure for evaluating the certification is in place and has credibility. In Maryland, allowing the certifications would require a change in the Maryland Rules, because Maryland prohibits attorneys from representing themselves as specialists. The MSBA would benefit from the input of the Court of Appeals and the Rules Committee in advance of making a final decision to pursue establishing certifications in Maryland. It appears that the certifications are primarily used for marketing, and that it does not mean that someone without the certification is not competent to

handle a particular practice area. As the practice of law becomes more international, it may become more important to have the certifications in order to compete in the marketplace with other jurisdictions. The group recommended a couple of additional sources for the subcommittee to review. The subcommittee will prepare a summary of its work and include the pros and cons that it ascertained in its work.

- Website and electronic filing—Vasilios Peros described the work of the subcommittee. It has reviewed the websites of other jurisdictions and identified some areas that could benefit from change to reduce clutter and improve the ease of navigating the site. A question arose as to who the website is intended to serve—if it is for members or attorneys only, then certain features are more important, like webinar access, blogs, or gift cards for new members. If the website is intended to provide information for the public, there may be other needs to address. The group has not evaluated electronic filing methods yet.
- Member development—Henry Dugan reported that this subcommittee had engaged in several interviews, with interesting results. The Young Lawyers' Section expressed an interest in finding ways to help members develop a role in the bar association, while the Leadership Academy indicated resistance to the idea. The Leadership Academy seemed to view the approach as an attempt to merge the Academy with the YLS, rather than as a mechanism to develop member participation in the MSBA beyond the Academy year. The subcommittee will continue to meet with representatives of both the YLS and the Leadership Academy to discern an approach that will be amenable to both groups.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting has been set tentatively for May 5, 2010, to allow the subcommittees to complete their work and submit their findings before the annual meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.