

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting

December 11, 2012/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Greenbelt Community Center
15 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, Maryland**

Meeting Summary

Members: Jon Laria, Derick Berlage, Greg Bowen, Diane Chasse, Cheryl Cort, Don Halligan, Frank Hertsch, Steve Lafferty, Sam Parker, Matt Power, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Ray Skinner, Duane Yoder

Attendees: Uri Avin, Marty Baker, Dr. George Bates, Mollie Byron, Celia Craze, Mayor Judith Davis, Mary Dolan, Delegate Anne Healey, Crystal Heide, Emmett Jordan, Brigid Kenney, Rose Krasnow, Leta Mach, Izzy Patoka, Cheryl Strafella, Mark Symborski

MDP Staff: Chuck Boyd, Arabia Davis, David Dahlstrom, Rich Josephson, Jenny King, Stephanie Martins, Graham Petto, Ryan Sigworth, Pat Russell

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Jon Laria, welcomed everyone to the meeting and the City of Greenbelt. He said that it was nice to travel around the State and see what is going on in other places. Mr. Laria noted that there will be a tour of the City Museum following today's meeting.

Regarding administrative matters, Mr. Laria advised that John Dillman retired and that Ms. Charlotte Lawson Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council, will replace him. He thanked Mr. Dillman for his valuable service on the Commission.

Mr. Laria then introduced Mayor Judith Davis. Mayor Davis welcomed Commission members and guests and stated that she was honored to host the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting in the City of Greenbelt. The Mayor noted that the City does not have planning and zoning authority. She credited the City with being both walkable and affordable. She likened the design of the City to the Garden City concept and explained that the design reinforced the idea of community by offering of a variety of green spaces, specifically playgrounds and parks.

Mayor Davis then introduced Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Greenbelt. Ms. Craze presented a power point presentation entitled “I Love Greenbelt – 1937-2012.” Some of the issues outlined in the PowerPoint included housing development in the community. Ms. Craze mentioned that she is in charge of the housing and code authority. She spoke about the City’s desire to improve and promote the Beltway Plaza Mall as a shopping destination. She outlined the issues facing the mall as it being oversized, underused, unattractive and difficult to get to it.

Mr. Laria thanked the local officials for their leadership.

Montgomery County Tier IV Exemption Request

Graham Petto presented a PowerPoint presentation that described the intent of the Tier IV Exemption process. Handouts were distributed to members and interested parties that summarized MDP’s completed review of Montgomery County’s application to exempt their Tier IV area from restrictions on major subdivisions.

Mary Dolan, Montgomery County staff stated that she strongly supported the goals of the Commission and legislation, and encouraged other jurisdictions consider the approach that Montgomery County has taken. She stated that their focus is geared more to areas with existing infrastructure. The county has established and will continue to maintain their agricultural resources, which promote the clustering of rural housing. The county has provided MDP all the data need to do this analysis, and asked that the Commission concur with the State staff’s assessment supporting Montgomery County’s Tier IV exemption request.

Frank Hertsch questioned the reason the density is lower than the yield with regards to the 1:25 acre yield. Ms. Dolan and Mr. Petto explained that the county’s development pattern, dating back to the “wedges and corridor” plan has consistently protected its rural areas through strong zoning restrictions, transfer of development rights and agriculture preservation.

Dru Schmidt-Perkins thanked Montgomery County staff for being the first to submit their Tier map to the State.

Steve Lafferty asked about the available development capacity that is remaining in the county. How much do you have to address growth? Ms. Dolan stated that their studies show there is plenty of land available for development until 2040. Mr. Lafferty asked whether MDP would be provided an opportunity to review future changes if any, to the plans or zoning. Mr. Matt Power responded that the law provides MDP the opportunity to review a county’s Tier IV exemption status if they make changes to their zoning in the future.

Frank Hertsch inquired whether MDP estimated the number of potential lots in the Tier IV areas and the expected ultimate development density in this area. Mr. Petto stated that MDP has calculated the number of units based on historical development patterns and zoning restrictions.

Matt Power said MDP will continue to refine its methodology in projecting future demand in Tier IV areas; however, we have strong confidence that in the case of Montgomery County that our analysis indicates that the county meets the 1 dwelling unit per 25 acres eligibility criteria for

the exemption. He then thanked staff – Graham and Stephanie. He also thanked Montgomery County staff for working with MDP.

Workgroup Updates

Adequate Public Facilities Workgroup

Frank Hertsch said they are still in the middle of the exercise, including interviews with various jurisdictions. He said they are pretty much on schedule to have a January draft report to disseminate to the Commission. The group is currently waiting for a few additional facts to provide a full and substantive report.

Concentrating Growth Workgroup

Derick Berlage said the group has been working on a number of issues, including some near term priorities and identifying six core programs (referred to 12/11/2012 handout). The 1st priority of the workgroup is garner support from the Commission to endorse an increase in the funding allocation to smart growth program of at least \$35 million. Mr. Berlage noted that the Financing Smart Growth report has identified important strategies, and encouraged the Commission members to support moving these agenda items forward. The 2nd priority is enhancing the existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) legislation. Mr. Berlage noted that next year (2013) is the time to move forward with proposed legislation (see handout).

Matt Power worked with staff at the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Community Development to improve on last year's proposed TIF bill. He reminded the members that Delegate Maggie McIntosh supported this bill last year, which he described as being a well-written bill. Mr. Power cautioned that the actual funding of this bill might be a little problematic and that we may need to piggy back this proposal on other the Sustainable Communities initiatives.

Ms. Cheryl Cort asked about the anticipated geographic scope of eligible TIF areas. According to Ms. Cort, in 2012 about 25 applications were approved through the Sustainable Communities Program. She suggested that a tighter, sharper focus was needed on areas to focus State resource on priority areas to ensure a bigger bang for State dollars.

Mr. Laria said he would like the Commission to provide formal endorsement on the proposed TIF legislation. He noted that it was his hope the State would create an Infrastructure Bank to augment the TIF legislation in the near future. He then asked the Commissioner's for their vote. – Derick Berlage made a motion to support and was seconded by Secretary Ray Skinner. All were in favor.

Mr. Sam Parker felt that passage of the TIF bill would demonstrate to local jurisdictions that the Commission is seeking to work with them.

Mr. Ray Skinner said he and Mr. Richard Hall have been trying to get to \$35 million. They have been working with DBM to make a recommendation to the Governor's office.

Mr. Derick Berlage then briefed members on the “Report Card” committee report (see handout). The committee has been working on developing a format for an annual report card showing the progress that Maryland is making in achieving Smart Growth. Mr. Berlage informed the members that this report is turning out to be heavily debated, but that he believed they would have some form of a report card to hand out at the January meeting.

Mr. Greg Bowen suggested including benchmarks associated with the Visions in the Report Card. He stated that you could do something that is not a real report card but an analysis of where we have been lately. He recommended that the Commission members look at where commercial growth is going. He added we do not need to have a final report; instead give some data of where things are going for the next year.

Mr. Steve Lafferty asked that for clarification on the purpose of the “report card?” Mr. Lafferty recommended that the framework for the report card be more of a public awareness strategy instead of a policy making tool. The Commission should consider giving a top level analysis and productive message on how the State is doing in terms of smart growth achievement.

Mr. Laria has expressed an interest in unveiling the report card at the 1st Annual Maryland Sustainable Forum and Awards Event in February. He asked that Mr. Berlage if the report card will be done by the January meeting? And for discussion purposes, Mr. Berlage was asked to come prepared to the January meeting to update the Commissioners on all the issues that are deemed controversial by members of the workgroup.

Mr. Lafferty question was whether the report card pertained to state, local and elected official performance? Response: The report card is on the State as a whole, and whether it has met the outlined sustainable growth goals. The report card will be similar to the Chesapeake Bay Report Card with a slightly different format.

Jon Laria updated the Commission on the work of the Streamlining Subgroup and his conversations with Prince George’s County officials. The other pilot area being considered is Annapolis.

Mr. Berlage also noted that rural growth is still in the research stage. He anticipates some progress in the next couple of months.

Education Workgroup

Chuck Boyd gave the report on behalf of Calvin Ball. A copy of the report was included in today’s meeting packet. The workgroup has been working hard on finalizing an agreed upon work plan and moving forward with its implementation.

Mr. Laria felt the workgroup is engaging in a diligent way and would like to hear a more detailed report at the January meeting from Mr. Ball. He added he was pleased to see more specific items in the report.

Kim Prium also provided comments on behalf of Calvin Ball and talked about the Maryland Sustainable Growth Challenge.

Housing Workgroup

Mr. Steve Lafferty gave an overview on the status of the Housing report and referred to a hand-out in today's packet. He spoke about the how the framework for the report was developed. The framework begins with a shared vision for housing in Maryland and focuses on three goals (noted in hand-out). The next step for this workgroup will be more challenging and will include identifying some implementation strategies. The Department of Housing and Community Development has already begun to engage various stakeholders to help determine what should be included.

Mr. Laria thanked Mr. Lafferty for providing a very good summary that focused on the goals. His question was "where do we go next and how does the existence of this report improve, add to and/or change the dynamics of the housing debate?" Mr. Laria encouraged Secretary Skinner and Delegate Lafferty to work with the workgroup to try to answer these questions. Mr. Laria indicated that the Commission looked forward to providing more feedback on the report.

Indicators Workgroup

Mr. Boyd followed up on this report saying that the workgroup and staff have looked at locally reporting requirements for local governments and the need to produce additional local indicators. He noted that the work of the Indicators Workgroup has different objectives than the efforts associated with the report card. Mr. Boyd then read over the five recommendations for the Commission to consider. These recommendations were included in today's packet of materials. Mr. Boyd added that MDP staff is looking to incorporate future indicators into PlanMaryland's implementation and associated reporting process.

One of the recommendations from the workgroup for the Growth Commission to consider is whether to sunset the Indicators workgroup on December 31, 2012 is needed. The rationale for this recommendation was workgroup's charge has been completed, and the longer term mission of growth indicators should incorporated into other workgroups, such as the PlanMaryland Workgroup. Mr. Laria express hesitation in sun setting the Indicators Workgroup at this time, questioning generally what indicators should we be collecting; who should collect – state or local; what is the real message; And, whether it is more of a PlanMaryland exercise?

At this time, Mr. Laria stated he did not want it to sunset or conclude the work of this group. Greg Bowen felt that a lot more information could be shared through GIS. He said the State is doing a lot of work, including aerial photography and trading of information.

Don Halligan said the report seems to answer the earlier question of what is the relationship to the indicators and report card. His question pertained to what is the role of the Commission as it relates to the indicators report.

Mr. Power agreed that having this group available as a good resource is very important.

Mr. Lafferty said we need to look at how we can get local and state data collection in a form that is useful.

Mr. Laria felt that additional investigation may be needed on the five recommendations. There needs to be substantive discussion on compliance with these indicators. He would like to understand a little more of what is going on with the five recommendations. We need to figure out whether the report of growth indicators would be best report by State agencies or the National Center for Smart Growth. Mr. Boyd stated that he would get back with the workgroup chair, Sandy Coyman, and MDP's lead staff to discuss the concerns raised by the Commission members.

WIP Workgroup

Brigid Kenney reviewed the events of Commission's November 8th meeting. She referred to copy of letter dated 11/27 (copy in hand-outs) sent to Senator Joan Carter Conway and Delegate Maggie McIntosh.

Ms. Kenney said the goal is to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Ms. Kenney will provide a one-page write up on the recommendations.

PlanMaryland Workgroup

Mr. Boyd said the group met last Friday, December 7th and went through the PlanMaryland Progress Report. Copies of the report are available and members can get a copy before leaving the meeting today. He then went through the report. The PlanMaryland Workgroup intends to continue moving forward with the implementation of the Plan by working with the State agencies and help refine the proposed conceptual the implementation strategies, as well as identify other possible strategies that may be needed. The workgroup will be meeting with each State agency to go over their strategies during the coming months.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Awards Selection Committee Recommendations

Mr. Laria thanked the committee members and others who reviewed the Sustainable Growth Award applications. Mr. Laria noted Selection Committee developed a flexible application process that enabled a diversity of well-deserving projects to be considered. The process that has been developed should serve as an excellent foundation for future years.

Mr. Bowen read through the recommendations of the Selection Committee (copy in hand-outs) that are being submitted to the Commission for endorsement. Mr. Laria asked for the Commission to support and formally endorse the seven awardees. Matt Power made a motion to support and was seconded by Cheryl Cort. All were in favor.

Mr. Laria noted that there was only one nomination in the category of Preservation / Conservation projects, and Selection Committee did not feel it was on the mark.

Mr. Boyd confirmed that the Maryland Sustainable Forum and Awards event would be held on February 5th in Annapolis Maryland. Mr. Laria directed staff to forward a "Hold the Date" for the 1st Annual Forum and Awards Program to the Commission Member. .

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.