



Education Work Group Report July 22, 2013

TO: Jon Laria, Chair, MD Sustainable Growth Commission

FROM: Calvin Ball, Chair, Education Workgroup

SUBJECT: Progress Report

DATE: July 22, 2013

The Education Workgroup is on the horizon of completing one of the Commission's charges: Review and submission of the educational requirements for members of Planning Boards and Commissions and Boards of Appeals to the General Assembly. We are also excited about several other innovative initiatives we are collaborating on which you will find highlighted below.

Review of the Education Requirements for Members of Planning Boards and Commissions and Boards of Appeals

As you know, part of our Commission's legal charge is to offer feedback on the Planning Commissioner Training Assessment. The Education Workgroup has put together a thorough draft for the Commission's review and has previously offered our recommendations. We welcome the feedback of the Commissioners and would like to discuss how to move forward with reporting to the General Assembly.

Sustainable Growth Challenge

We have finalized the Sustainable Growth Challenge framework and our focus has shifted to securing participating institutions. I'm delighted to report we have two institutions on board: University of MD, College Park and Allegheny College with the former entertaining registering two separate teams. We are connecting with our contacts at institutions that have previously expressed an interest in the hopes of confirming their participation. Our goal is to have at least three participating institutions in the Challenge.

Institutions expressing interest are: Towson, Morgan State University, Howard Community College and Montgomery College. Notre Dame of Maryland is highly enthusiastic about our Challenge and we hope to confirm them shortly. In fact, we are discussing project details at this point. We had garnered much interest at Salisbury University; however, they are now looking to spring 2014 to participate. We now welcome the assistance of the Commission if you have any contacts at these institutions to help solidify their participation.

By late August, but prior to the start of the school semester, our goal is to identify regional issues at the local level that have elements of environmental, design and economic impacts for the students to undertake if they have not already identified a project. Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and Maryland's Main Streets have expressed an interest in partnering with our Workgroup and help identify projects for students if they need assistance. We encourage the Commission's assistance to identify a list of potential projects students could select from if they do not creatively design one independently.

Once the semester begins, the Workgroup and a list of subject matter experts will be available to the professors and/or students on a need basis. We may also need to call upon the Commission for their expertise to present before the class should this be option the professor would like us to explore.

We have established a website for this project where institutions can register for the Sustainable Growth Challenge. <http://planning.maryland.gov/YourPart/773/SGChallenge.shtml>. We have requested institutions to register by August 2013 so that we can launch our inaugural Challenge in fall 2013. Students are anticipated to present before a panel of judges in late November. Dates are still being circulated but we anticipate this to take place before Thanksgiving. We are seeking at least 2 Commission members who are interested in being involved and we hope to have these Commissioners identified before the Commission's September meeting.

Collaboration with Realtors to Promote Smart Growth

We are making progress on this project. Our first step is to create an outline that must to be submitted to the Real Estate Commission for approval for Continuing Education Credits. Mike Paone is working with us to develop the timeline and we hope to have a draft outline within the next few weeks.

We anticipate submitted the outline to the Commission for feedback prior to its submission to the MD Real Estate Commission as it's important that we have the support of the Commission as we move forward in this venture. We anticipate this process could take approximately up to 90 days.

Once we have the approval from the Real Estate Commission, we will then approach each of the individual schools (approximately 30 schools in Maryland) with the approved outline. Our goal is to start in Howard County. Along the way, we will check in with the Commission and welcome any feedback you may have on possible classes. Our vision is to ensure the classes are tied to PlanMD and 12 visions.

As always, we welcome suggestions from the Commission members on who may be interested in and available to be an instructor. This person would meet with Jim Hyatt to coordinate the outline to be submitted to the Real Estate Commission.

Social Media Marketing

Our LinkedIn group, “Sustainable Growth Maryland” continues to grow with 67 members. Our forum is open to all and we encourage everyone to post. At our meeting in June, we had a chance to connect with MDP’s new communications Director, Valerie Berton as well as John Coleman. We discussed what type of messages and news we are looking to share. We explored branching out to a new medium “Instagram” and we are still vetting whether this is a viable and sustainable social media marketing tool for the Workgroup.

We also plan to add Twitter to our social media campaign. The account will be created and Valerie and Bryce are exploring hash tag names that can be used to allow users to search for tweets about The Commission. The hashtag may be something like #SustainMD or #SGmaryland.

To garner interest and excitement, it was suggested we could post items relevant to where Commission meetings are going to be held leading up to the next Commission meeting. Bryce inquired whether MDP could assist with our posting efforts and MDP/Valerie offered their assistance.

Bryce and Christine have met with MDP and they have agreed to a few phone conferences and meetings to complete the setup. MDP will help maintain the accounts once set up is complete and Bryce, his staff, and Christine will work to provide content. Christine’s marketing campaign aligns well with this vision and she has attended the first conference call and will be active in this effort.

***Smart, Green & Growing:* A Proposed Marketing Campaign to Engage All Marylanders in Achieving Smart, Sustainable Growth**

While working on this project, we strategized that it was most effective to align with the State’s *Smart, Green & Growing* campaign to coordinate with their interagency marketing team and identify how the Education Workgroup can best collaborate. At our May meeting, Scott Hines of DNR shared that their initiative is driven by staff at DNR and they’ve developed an interagency website. There is a communications group comprised of a representative from each of the agencies.

In addition, the Maryland Department of Planning has taken a proactive role in promoting the state’s sustainable growth efforts and has hired a new communications director.

Our goal is twofold: connect with SG&G and attend one of their upcoming meetings to identify how our Workgroup can assist their efforts and to consult MDP’s communications team with the same objective.