

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

September 23, 2013/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Cecil County Council Chambers – Elk Room
200 Chesapeake Boulevard
Elkton, Maryland**

Meeting Summary

Members: Jon Laria, Mary Ann Lisanti, Karl Brendle, Greg Bowen, David Carey, Cheryl Cort, David Costello, Charlotte Lawson- Davis, Carol Gilbert, Rich Hall, Don Halligan, Frank Hertsch, Gerrit Knaap, Robb Merritt, Sandi Olek, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Bryce Turner and Duane Yoder

Elected

Officials: Tara Moore (County Executive), Joe Fisona (Mayor of Elkton), Robert Hodge (County Council President), Alan McCarthy (Vice President County Council), Joyce Bowsbey (Council Member), Michael Dunn (Council Member), Diana Broomwell (County Council Member)

Attendees: Robert Amato, Kimberly Brandt, Tony DiGiacomo, William and Linda Harris, Crystal Heide, Carolyn Kappra, Phyllis Kirby, Fred and Linda Kleiner, Jim Massey, Harold McCormick, Ross Merritt, Jeanne Miner, Mary Rogers, Rupert Rossetti, Eric Senstrom and Nancy Valentine

MDP Staff: Chuck Boyd, Amanda Conn, Peter Conrad, Arabia Davis, Rich Josephson, Jenny B. King, Stephanie Martins, Graham Petto and Pat Russell

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Jon Laria, welcomed and thanked County Executive Tari Moore, Mayor Joe Fisona, and the County Council Members for allowing the Commission to host their meeting in Cecil County. He added that was a pleasure to be in Cecil County. Mr. Laria also thanked the Commissioners and interested parties for their willingness to travel to the different local jurisdictions throughout the State to attend the Commission meetings. Mr. Laria noted that hosting these meetings around the State provides the opportunity for others to see what is being discussed by the Commissioners.

Mr. Laria announced that Governor Martin O'Malley has named Mary Ann Lisanti as Vice Chairman of the Commission. He asked that the elected officials in attendance introduce themselves and that the Commission members do the same. County Executive Tari Moore welcomed everyone to Cecil County and gave brief remarks, and then turned the meeting over to Mayor Joe Fisona. After welcoming everyone to Elkton, the Mayor gave some background information about the City. He noted that the City needed assistance from the State to bring commuter rail service to the City of Elkton.

Overview of Cecil County's and the Town of Elkton's

Mr. Eric Sennstrom provided an overview of the Cecil County and stated that they have taken a number of steps to promote smart growth in the county, including changes to their zoning ordinance. He noted that they are looking for ways to attractive development to their growth area. Mr. Sennstrom mentioned that they are currently working on a "brownfield" ordinance, and that they recently adopted an ordinance to promote infill development. He further advised that two new zoning districts were created to accommodate mixed use development and that they are working aggressively to accommodate anticipated growth.

Ms. Jeanne Minner talked about the historic preservation efforts in the Town of Elkton. She noted that the town's largest project, Elk Landing, was acquired in 1999 using POS funding. The town is work with the Historic Elk Landing Foundation, Inc. to operate the site as an interpretive living history museum. The town and Foundation continue to seek public and private funding to restore the Hollingsworth House and stabilized the Stone House.

Mr. Dave Carey inquired about development potential along Rt. 279 and whether water and sewer were available. Ms. Minner's responded that it depends on which side of the road and which road segment. Water and sewer are available for some portions, but other parts are not served because of wetlands and other nearby environmentally sensitive lands.

Mr. Duane Yoder asked what, if any, impact has the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process had on the county. Ms. Minner stated that they received 15% to 18% of the growth from BRAC. This relatively low percentage of military families settling in Cecil County was due in part to the limited inventory of transitional housing available. She noted that Cecil County really does not have adequate water and sewer capacity at this time to accommodate the growth.

Karl Brendle asked if there was potential to link the MARC system with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) rail system and get a train stop in Elkton. Mayor Fisona stated that Town officials are working with SEPTA, who are willing to partner and put funding towards the expansion of the MARC station. They are currently waiting to get a Memorandum of Understanding signed regarding this issue.

Mary Ann Lisanti inquired whether they were getting sufficient support from Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (WILMAPCO). She expressed concern that more funding is needed to address the transit issues in Cecil County. Mayor Joe Fisona indicated that WILMAPCO is an active partner in getting commuter rail to Elkton.

Mr. Laria thanked Mr. Sennstrom and Ms. Minner for their presentations.

2014 Sustainable Growth Awards Update

Mr. Greg Bowen, Chair of the Awards Selection Committee, provided the update on the 2014 Sustainable Growth Awards Program and stated how important it is to recognize the successful projects throughout the State. He mentioned that the awards ceremony held in Annapolis on February 5, 2013 was very successful, and we working to have this coming year's ceremony as successful. He said there is even more excitement with this next round of nominations, with the

receipt of many more submissions. He mentioned that the Awards Selection Committee had met several times to review all of the applications; however, they needed at least one more meeting to wrap up the final recommendations for the full Commission's consideration. He added that the process has been well-balanced with submissions in all of the award categories. He informed the Commission members that a conference-call between now and November would be required to ratify the recommendations, so video recording of the awardees can proceed as soon as possible. In closing, Mr. Bowen acknowledged the nice balance of Commission member participation on the Awards Selection Committee.

Mr. Laria felt last year's awards were very good and extremely gratifying. He thanked the Commissioners for doing such a good job in encouraging the submission of quality award nominations. He thanked staff for their efforts and extended his appreciation to the Committee for the good job that they were doing to move this process forward. He added that he was happy with the quality and diversity of nominations. He reminded everyone that the awards ceremony is scheduled for February 5th, 2014 in Annapolis and that Mr. Mitchell Silver, the immediate past president of the American Planning Association (APA.) would be the featured speaker.

Presentation on the Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development Initiative (SEED)

Gerrit Knaap gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Planning for Sustainable and Equitable Economic Growth." He noted that this is the work they have been doing for some time now and that the project was funded by the Surdna Foundation. Mr. Knaap said they have moved beyond a smart growth agenda to a sustainability agenda.

Mr. Knaap said for anyone interested in reading the 10 page report which contains a lot of data, could visit the website at: <http://smartgrowth.umd.edu/seedproject.html>. A two-page handout summarizing the report was given out in today's packet of materials.

Mr. Bowen commented on the importance of having sufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate anticipated growth and to recognize the challenge of regional infrastructure inequalities. He also stated that there was a need to address the unemployment disparities. He also noted some graphs did not include agriculture, but some did.

Mr. Yoder brought up the issue of transit. He said we need to give more thought to highway improvements to serve rural areas and not just look to urban transit-oriented developments.

Mr. Laria said that before each meeting, he makes it a habit to read the charge for the Commission and encouraged members to do the same. He noted it has a land use flavor to it, but it addresses quality of life issues as well. He said he appreciates what Mr. Knaap is trying to do in making sustainability a larger portion of the Commission's agenda. Mr. Laria added that we also need to look at what the rural smart growth looks like, and I hope we will have a robust discussion at a later time on this issue.

2035 Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) Update

Mr. Don Halligan gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "An Overview of the Maryland Transportation Plan." However, before discussing the MTP, he wanted to clarify a few issues. He noted that federal transportation funding requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations

(MPOs) to work with local governments, state transportation departments (like MDOT) and transit and rail providers (like SEPTA and MARC) to collaboratively address regional transportation concerns. The Secretary of MDOT sits on each of the MPOs in the state. Mr. Halligan briefed the Commission on the draft Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) that was recently released and can be downloaded from MDOT's web site. Mr. Halligan encouraged Commission members to comment on the plan. He noted that the process will wrap up in January 2014 with submission of the final MTP to the General Assembly. Mr. Halligan pointed out the plan will be implemented through the consolidated transportation program (CTP), addressing the statewide priorities to move people and goods - safely and efficiently.

Ms. Dru Schmidt-Perkins noted that climate change was not really mentioned in the Plan. Mr. Halligan acknowledged that MDOT is looking into this issue.

Mr. Laria mentioned that it was really nice to see integration of PlanMaryland into the plan and the effort to promote greater coordination. Mr. Halligan pointed out that MDOT recognizes regional differences in transportation needs, and the plan presents different strategies to address them.

Accounting for Growth (AFG) Workgroup and Regulation Update

Mr. David Costello provided an update on the Accounting for Growth (AfG) Workgroup and regulation update. He reminded the Commission that the State's goal is to reduce nitrogen going into the Bay, and the State is developing a program to reduce the costs of pollution control. He said MDE has been meeting with stakeholders to develop consensus around these very issues. The workgroup has concluded its work and submitted its report. He noted that there was considerable agreement among the stakeholders. One key issue that has not reached full consensus is the baseline allocation issue. However, Mr. Costello noted there are additional meetings scheduled to continue the discussion, and he hopes to have draft regulations by mid-October.

Mr. Laria referred everyone to the letter from Secretary Bob Summers, which was included in their meeting packet.

Discussion on Charles County's Proposed Comprehensive Plan Changes

Mr. Laria noted that the Commission's charge addresses a number of objectives, including promoting the 12 Planning Visions, encouraging economic development, and advocating for well-informed and effective planning commissions. This next subject addresses all of these matters. Mr. Laria asked for MDP to provide the Commission a briefing on the Charles County proposed Comprehensive Plan Update and its current status in the review process.

Mr. Rich Hall offered the Commission some brief introductory comments regarding the Charles County Comprehensive Plan update. He then introduced Graham Petto, who presented MDP's analysis of the proposed comprehensive plan changes from the 2006 plan. Mr. Petto highlighted that the plan changes the intent of 2006 Agricultural Conservation land use district from one that is "not to accommodate development, and to prevent scattered uncontrolled development over areas of open countryside" to the objective of 2012 Rural Residential land use district where "the long-range land use over time can be replaced by rural residential housing on large lots as the

dominant use.” Mr. Petto presented the analysis that the 2006 plan had 82% of the county’s land planned or zoned for resource conservations, while the proposed 2012 plan would drop the resource conservation level to 8%. Mr. Hall said that he is deeply concerned about what is being proposed in Charles County.

Mr. Laria said the Commission is not in the habit of taking sides, and the Commission does not have the legal authority to review or comment on the comprehensive plan. He acknowledged that State agencies have expressed serious concerns about the proposed plan. Mr. Laria indicated that he would like to hear from Charles County officials to better understand their perspective on how this plan would advance the 12 Planning Visions.

Ms. Cort acknowledged that she supports this idea.

Mr. Yoder said that we should not make any conclusions until the Commission hears Charles County’s perspective.

Mr. Knaap concurred that this was a serious issue. He favors this body monitoring the comprehensive plan process, but that this body should be very careful in taking any position.

Mr. Laria felt that it was reasonable to express concern, and he would like to invite Charles County officials to come and speak.

Mr. Yoder indicated that he would like more information on this issue.

Ms. Lisanti stated that there is a very fine line that the Commission needed to walk. We do need to recognize that this is a local issue; however, on the other side of this issue is state’s commitment of the public investment in infrastructure and resource protection. Ms. Lisanti said she would be very interested in hearing from the folks of Charles County.

Mr. Costello moved that the Commission invite Charles County to a meeting to discuss their proposed comprehensive plan. Ms. Cheryl Cort seconded that motion. All were in favor with no opposition. Mr. Laria said he will prepare a letter to Charles County to invite them to explain to the Commission their proposed comprehensive plan.

Workgroup Updates

Mr. Laria said that because of time constraints, he would defer to the members to identify any of the reports warrant discussion at this time. The reports were distributed earlier for your review. Report updates can also be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Public Comments

Several people visiting today’s meeting gave comments:

Valerie Vacioni of North East Maryland thanked members for coming to Cecil County. She said she read PlanMaryland. She felt that as a resident of the County that they did not benefit from the Plan. She noted the issue of nutrient credit trading would not benefit Cecil County. She also questioned the validity of the information, i.e. where are you getting this information from? She

said she did not see how this is going to work for the State. Creating equity is another concern; as well as road tolls. Ms. Vacioni thanked everyone for listening.

Harold McCormick noted a few of his own concerns regarding PlanMaryland. He said there are job opportunities in Baltimore and if you want to work, you can. He said the white population in Baltimore has dwindled and it is a haven for illegal immigrants. He indicated that the rural resources are being directed to the urban areas. Maryland resists mining for natural gas. Maryland is taking the toll money from Cecil County to pay for the ICC in Montgomery County. He indicated that he did not feel that Cecil County was adequately represented as being part of Maryland.

Maureen Rogers also questioned the implication of the Charles County comprehensive plan.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.