

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting

January 27, 2014

**Department of Housing & Community Development
100 Community Place
Crownsville, Maryland**

Meeting Summary

Members: Jon Laria, Calvin Ball, Greg Bowen, Diane Chasse, Amanda Conn (for Secretary Richard Hall), Cheryl Cort, Sandy Coyman, Carol Gilbert (for Secretary Ray Skinner), Alan Girard, Don Halligan, Steve Lafferty, David Lever, Mary Ann Lisanti, Robb Merrit, Ursula Powidzki, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Duane Yoder

Attendees: Kevin Baynes, Wiley Hall, Caroline Varney-Alvarado

MDP Staff: Valerie Berton, Chuck Boyd, David Dahlstrom, Arabia Davis, Karen Kennedy, Jenny King, Pat Russell

Administrative Matters and Updates

The Chair, Jon Laria, thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Mr. Laria noted that during the Legislative Session, meetings for January and March will be held in Annapolis. He advised that the 2014 meeting schedule with confirmed meeting locations will be handed out by the March meeting. In the meantime, he asked that Commission members add the meeting dates included in today's meeting packet onto their respective calendars.

2014 Annual Sustainable Growth Awards Update

Mr. Laria reminded everyone that the 2nd Annual Forum and Awards Ceremony is being held on Wednesday, February 5, 2014. He reiterated that it is important for everyone to rsvp. He also mentioned that the Governor has been invited and that members should make every effort to attend this important event.

2014 Sustainable Growth Student Challenge Awards Update

Mr. Calvin Ball briefed members on the success of the Growth Challenge Awards, adding it was very exciting to witness the 12 competing teams coming together to present their projects in front of a panel of judges. In total, four winners were selected. Mr. Ball felt that it was a great event and could be used as a terrific learning opportunity for other universities and colleges.

Mr. Laria also expressed his pleasure with the students who participated in the Inaugural Student Growth Challenge. He mentioned that there was a wide-range of presentations from both undergraduate and graduate students. The presentations included a thorough analysis of the complex issues and challenges associated with sea-level rise, adapting the community of support

mixed-use development, and improving access to the local greenway. Mr. Laria asked that State agencies engage in a dialogue with the students that participated in the Challenge going forward in a show of support for all of their efforts.

Ms. Valerie Berton informed the members that MDP will provide a scrolling slide show on the Commission's website and that a press release would be sent out prior to the event. Mr. Bryce Turner recommended that a PDF of the highlights also be forwarded to interested parties.

Other Items of Interest

Ms. Amanda Conn announced that MDP won a Maryland National Planning Award for the small Town Trails Program. This award will be presented at the National APA Conference in April and staff from MDP's Western Maryland office will accept the award.

2014 General Assembly Session

-Legislative Initiatives

Ms. Conn briefed members on the reauthorization of the Sustainable Community Tax Credit, which has been one of the State's most effective smart growth tools helping redevelop deteriorated historic structures. In addition to reauthorizing the tax credit, the proposed legislation will include a small businesses tax credit up to \$50,000 to restore historic commercial properties. She stated that currently small businesses cannot really effectively compete with the large commercial historic rehabilitation projects under the existing tax credit program.

Mr. David Costello reported that the Maryland Department of the Environment is sponsoring a couple of Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) bills that would allow funds to be used to: 1) connect onsite sewage systems to public sewer service outside of PFAs; and 2) remediate conventional onsite septic systems with best available technology (BAT) septic systems.

Ms. Diane Chase mentioned the Maryland Department of Agriculture's land preservation program is doing pretty well. There are no departmental bills proposed to alter the land preservation program.

Mr. Don Halligan stated that the Maryland Department of Transportation has no major legislation, just a lot of procedural bills.

Mr. David Lever noted the Commission may be interested in the Green Building Bill which alters the definition of a 'high performance building.' This bill applies to State capital projects such as State buildings and schools.

Ms. Carol Gilbert noted that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has three legislative items of interest: 1) a bill enhancing the Neighborhood Business Works Program to address food deserts; 2) a bill that supports construction financing of "Net-Zero Housing"; and 3) a bill streamlining some of the rental programs through consolidation.

Ms. Dru Schmidt-Perkins noted that the Department of Natural Resources has a wildland's bill in that would add almost 22,000 acres of state land to the Department of Natural Resources' Maryland Wildlands Preservation System.

-Budgetary Issues

Ms. Carol Gilbert highlighted DHCD's Smart Growth Program funding level report that was provided in today's meeting materials. Mr. Laria stated that, while the State's budget is still not in very good shape, he would be doing everything he could to promote the increase recommended by the Growth Commission for the Smart Growth related programs. He noted that these are very important initiatives deserving additional funding support. Ms. Gilbert informed the Commission that DHCD has received an additional \$3 million as part of the Governor's budget to expand the Maryland Mortgage Program that provides financial assists to people wanting to purchase a home.

Ms. Cheryl Cort noted that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority is seeking a commitment of \$50 million from the State. Ms. Cort hoped that the State would provide this funding to improve the reliability of the Metro system, which in turn makes compact development near Metro stations more attractive.

Mr. Costello added that the O'Malley Administration has made its commitment to fully-fund Program Open Space and that bonds will be used to fill the gap.

Mr. Laria wanted to make everyone aware that the Urban Land Institute provided a Partnership Grant to Baltimore City and Philadelphia to examine building reuse. The City and Philadelphia will be developing a national template for the reuse of buildings. This project is just beginning to kick off. Mr. Laria said to please let him know if you are interested in learning more about this initiative. They will be looking for best practices in Baltimore City that focus on how to reuse existing buildings and recommending strategies to overcome barriers to building reuse. Materials on this grant effort will be forwarded to members.

Smart Growth Investment Fund Report

Ms. Gilbert gave a presentation on the Smart Growth Investment Fund Workgroup Report. Mr. Steve Lafferty said that the workgroup decided early in the process that any resources derived from this fund would be targeted in Sustainable Communities. . The consensus of the workgroup was that MEDCO should lead the next phase of the effort to establish a "patient capital" investment strategy.

Mr. Laria concurred and noted that we need to try to achieve a public-private partnership. He mentioned that in the near future, the Commission should invite Mr. Robert Brennan to provide an update on the difference between capital and equity.

2014 Commission Workplan

Mr. Laria distributed copies of the letter he received from the Governor and Lt. Governor on accelerating Maryland's infill, redevelopment, and revitalization efforts. Mr. Laria felt that this is a remarkable opportunity for the Commission. He noted that the Commission will need to figure out the best way to implement the tasks outlined in the letter. He encouraged all State agencies to work in collaboration with the Commission to move this effort forward. This body will need to organize the work plan for 2014 and possibly form a new team to lead the charges

outlined in the letter. Mr. Laria asked members for their thoughts on how to respond to the letter.

Ms. Conn mentioned that the Governor spoke with Mr. Richard Hall, and Mr. Hall believes that infill, redevelopment and revitalization should be the Commission's next area of concentrated effort. Ms. Conn reiterated that the Governor is very interested in this initiative moving forward expeditiously.

Ms. Perkins concurred that the Governor's letter presents an exciting opportunity for the Commission. She expressed her commitment to the effort.

Mr. Turner agreed with the comments of both Mr. Laria and Ms. Schmidt-Perkins regarding this being a great opportunity and success for the Commission. He also commended Mr. Laria for his leadership. He suggested that the Commission consider focusing its efforts on specific areas to demonstrate how infill and redevelopment can make a difference.

Ms. Mary Ann Lisanti commented that the Commission will first need to determine how to approach this charge and that the members will first need to identify the challenges. She said that several things could make a difference. We will need to craft a plan moving forward; and examine how we pull these components together; and package our approach appropriately.

Mr. Bruce Williams recommended that the Commission identify the best method to engage local governments in this discussion. Mr. Williams also expressed interest in being an active member in helping to shape and implement the task identified in the letter.

Mr. Alan Girard mentioned, regarding the education and training tools, that the Education Workgroup is already in place and is addressing these issues.

Mr. Turner suggested highlighting for the Governor and Lt. Governor some demonstration projects.

Mr. Greg Bowen stated that this would be an on-going process.

Mr. Laria said it is important for everyone to pitch in. He commented that this should be meaningful and gratifying, and that everyone should be proud of the things that have been accomplished by the Commission so far.

Accounting for Growth Update

Mr. Costello stated that MDE's Accounting for Growth Workgroup ended its work this past fall. However, discussions with various interest groups have been ongoing for several months. The discussions have centered on several issues: One being the nutrient baseline, which addresses how much nutrient load a developer would have to offset. The other outstanding issue is "phosphorus." The question here is to what extent and how do we account for phosphorus. Current thinking is the offset actions taken to address the nitrogen load should also address the additional phosphorus load. The draft regulations are expected to be completed soon and will be

shared with stakeholders. This will be submitted to the Legislature after Session. Mr. Costello said he hopes to have them submitted by April.

Ms. Lisanti encouraged MDE to circulate a copy of the AfG summary to interested parties.

Housing Maryland Report

Ms. Gilbert handed out copies of the December 2013 “Housing Maryland” report prepared by DHCD. She did a brief synopsis of the publication.

Mr. Laria asked members if they had anything to add on the Workgroup reports.

Other Workgroup Updates

Mr. Bowen said there have been concerns about investing in land preservation.

Mr. Bryce (reporting for Calvin Ball) said there has not been a lot of public awareness or press on the sustainable growth challenge. He added the Realtor and Planning Commissioner training continues to go forward.

Public Comments

None

Chairman Laria adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.