

## **Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting**

**September 28, 2015 / 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Washington County Free Library  
100 South Potomac Street  
Hagerstown, MD 21740**

### **Meeting Summary**

#### ***Members Present:***

Jon Laria, David R. Craig, Derick Berlage, Deborah Carpenter, Diane Chasse, Devon Dodson, Robert Goldman, Frank Hertsch, David Lever, Mary Ann Lisanti, James Kruger, Gerrit Knaap, Charlotte Lawson-Davis, David Lever, Heather Murphy (Marty Baker), Sandi Olek, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Kevin L. Small and Bruce Williams

#### ***Elected Officials:***

Councilmember Martin Brubaker and Delegate Brett R. Wilson

#### ***Attendees:***

Tom Ballentine, Stephen Goodrich, Scott A. Nicewarner, Kathy Maher, Valerie A. Means, John Papagni and Garland Thomas

#### ***MDP Staff:***

Brandon Wright, Chuck Boyd and Arabia Davis

#### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair, Jon Laria, welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Mr. Laria thanked the representatives from the City of Hagerstown and Washington County.

Mr. Laria noted that the Washington County Free Library received a 2015 Sustainable Growth Commission – Smart Growth Award for reviving an aging building situated in the heart of the City.

He then introduced City Councilmember Brubaker. Mr. Brubaker welcomed the Growth Commission to Washington County and spoke briefly about the Mayor and City Council's commitment to continue to attract new businesses, while maintaining the cultural and institutional strengths of downtown Hagerstown.

#### **Overview of Downtown Hagerstown Tour**

Ms. Kathy Maher, AICP, Planning Director of the City of Hagerstown Planning and Code Administration Division provided the Commission with a tour and overview of the various redevelopment efforts that have taken shape in the downtown Hagerstown area. Ms. Maher's explained that the revitalization and redevelopment of downtown Hagerstown was made possible through collaboration with State/city/county officials, private donations and community input. The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, the Maryland Theatre – Community's City Center Plan, the Artist and UMD Student housing projects, and the Main Street program were a few of the projects highlighted during the tour. (*See a copy of the PowerPoint handout in the September 28 agenda packet.*)

#### **Overview of Washington County**

Stephen Goodrich, Director of Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning, provided the Commission a virtual tour of Washington County covering the various historic monuments and trails in

the county. Mr. Goodrich's presentation highlighted: the County's comprehensive plan update (which has involved extensive public outreach and use of social media), the County's landfill waste to energy effort and its solar energy project, the County's innovative wastewater treatment facility, and the County's school adequate public facility approach that utilizes an "Alternative Mitigation Contribution" formula to determine monetary contributions from developers when pupils generated by new development exceed certain adequacy thresholds for public schools. Mr. Goodrich also mentioned some of the planning issues facing the County, such as medical cannabis, the Robinwood/Yale /HCC Mount Aetna Technology Park development, and the County's discussion of a possible Growth Tier Map.

Derick Berlage inquired whether Washington County had a transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Mr. Goodrich responded saying the County has looked at TDRs, but has not pursued any legislation establishing a program.

Charlotte Lawson-Davis asked if the County's Priority Funding Areas (PFA) match its growth areas and whether there have been any problems with PFAs. Mr. Goodrich stated he is not aware of any local problems with PFAs.

Frank Hertsch asked Mr. Goodrich to explain more about the County's Alternative Mitigation Contribution. Mr. Goodrich referred the Commission to the formula displayed in his PowerPoint presentation. He also confirmed that Hagerstown has not adopted an APFO.

#### **Administrative Matters and Updates**

Mr. Laria introduced the newest member – **Devon Dodson**, MDE Designee for Secretary Grumble. Mr. Laria also informed the Commission that 17 nominations have been submitted for the 2016 Sustainable Growth Awards. He encouraged members that have the time to participate in the Awards Selection Committee, as well as inviting them to sit on the panel to the Sustainable Growth Challenge Student presentations.

Secretary Craig announced that the Governor's Regulatory Reform Commission is having regional meetings throughout the state and encouraged the Commission members to visit the Lt. Governor's webpage for the upcoming meetings in their area.

#### **Reinvest Maryland Strategy**

Secretary David R. Craig indicated that the Department of Planning is providing assistance to local jurisdictions seeking to developing reinvestment strategies and is seeking input from jurisdictions on policy/laws/regulations that they view as impediments to redevelopment. At this time, ten jurisdictions responded and the central themes mentioned by many local officials were: there are limited available State resources; Priority Funding Areas need to be re-examined; the lengthy State Highway Administration access permitting process; and the impact stormwater management regulations have on development. The Secretary noted that Peter Conrad has been asked to work with other State agency representatives to expand technical support so that development issues are resolved effectively and expeditiously. Planning is also working with the Department of Commerce to identify possible improvements to One Maryland Tax Credit program that may possibly expand opportunities for distressed municipalities.

The Commission members discussed the status of tax credit programs currently under review by the Augustine Commission.

Mr. Laria stated that he would like to have the Growth Commission continue to assist with the implementation of the Reinvest Maryland initiative, and would welcome the opportunity to help advance the numerous recommendations the Commission identified in its report.

**Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development (SEED) and Beyond Smart Growth: An Economic Development Strategy for 21st Century Maryland –**

Gerrit Knaap provided the Commission a recap of the Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development (SEED) project and proposed going “Beyond Smart Growth: An Economic Development Strategy for 21st Century Maryland.” The SEED project was initially funded by the Surdna Foundation with the intent of introducing economic development and equity into PlanMaryland initiative a couple of years ago. In addition to National Center for Smart Growth, this project included the following project partners: Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, Jobs Opportunity Task Force, BRIDGE, 1000 Friends of Maryland, and Maryland Department of Planning. The deliverables for the SEED Project were: reports on *Challenges and Opportunities for Economic Prosperity in the 21st Century; The Poor, the Unemployed, the Overburdened, but not Forgotten; Beyond Smart Growth: An Economic Development Strategy for 21st Century Maryland;* and MDP’s *Placing Jobs: Good Planning Promotes Economic Development* website.

Mr. Knaap summarized the conclusions of the SEED report - “Over the long run, the Maryland Economy continues to perform well, but

- Growth has slowed substantially in recent years
- Inequality continues to rise
- Prosperity varies extensively by region
- Housing affordability remains a pervasive problem
- Traffic congestion will continue to rise
- The Maryland economy of the future is likely to look a lot like it looks now.”

Mr. Knaap highlighted the recommendations from the SEED projects:

- Capitalize on Enduring Strengths
  - Grow or maintain federal government employment
  - Use transportation investments to stimulate economic growth
  - Embrace diversity
- Address Persistent Weaknesses
  - Improve tax and regulatory environment
  - Support diverse and growing industries
  - Address regional economic disparities
  - Provide affordable housing in high opportunity areas
  - Use prices to help manage road capacity
  - Assess the state’s economic infrastructure
  - Track the consumption of ecosystem services
  - Update the state’s land use planning tools
  - Integrate economic development with smart growth

Mr. Laria thanked Mr. Knaap for updating the Commission on this very important topic and asked members how the Commission could get involved in addressing some of the recommendations presented in the SEED reports. Dru Schmidt-Perkins acknowledged that the information in these reports presents some of the toughest challenges facing Maryland. Mr. Knaap suggested that he would offer to assist in moving some of these recommendations forward through the former-PlanMaryland Workgroup that he chaired.

Mr. Hertsch stated that regarding updating the State’s land use planning tools the use of impact fees has been counter-productive to smart growth efforts. He recommended that a study should be conducted to

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission  
Meeting Summary for September 28, 2015

look at the upfront costs that developer's pay (impact fees) for new development versus user fees that local governments charge to recoup the costs of jurisdiction financed infrastructure.

Mr. Berlage noted that the State's PFA law is really an "on-off" economic development strategy, and that maybe, the State needs to consider a broader economic development strategy.

**Briefing on the Rural Economies Smart Growth Effort**

Chuck Boyd briefed the Growth Commission on the recommendations from the Rural Economies Workgroup's Subcommittees on Land Preservation and Sustainable Forestry. He advised them on the results of the follow-up investigations that the Commission requested at the September meeting. Mr. Boyd pointed out the Rural Economies Workgroup recommended a series of letters be sent by the Chair of the Growth Commission - (1) expressing support for the Land Preservation Subcommittee's recommendation protecting the current dedicated funding sources for land preservation, and (2) requesting various agencies/organizations participate in pursuing the Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee's work plan.

The Commission members expressed general support for sending these letters. Mr. Laria stated that he would work with staff to finalize and send out the letters.

**Workgroup Updates**

Mr. Laria stated that Workgroup status reports have been included in the Commission's agenda packet:

- Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Workgroup
- Concentrating Growth Workgroup
- Education Workgroup

**Public Comments**

None.

Chairman Laria adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.