

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting

May 11, 2015/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**The Donaldson Brown Center
200 Mount Ararat Farm Road
Port Deposit, Maryland 21904**

Meeting Summary

Members Present:

Jon Laria, David R. Craig, Derick Berlage, Greg Bowen, Lynn Buhl, Boyd Campbell, Daniel Calhoun, Deborah Carpenter, Alan Girard, Robert Goldman, Frank Hertsch, Leslie (Les) Knapp, Mary Ann Lisanti, Matt Holloway, Gerrit Knapp, Charlotte Lawson-Davis, David Lever, Robb Merritt, Sandi Olek, Ursula Powidzki, Kevin L. Small, Bryce Turner, Bruce Williams and Duane Yoder

Elected Officials:

Mayor Wayne L. Tome, Sr., County Council President Robert Hodge, Bill Harris on behalf of Delegate Hornberger and Bob Amato on behalf of Senator Wayne Norman

Attendees:

Bob Amato, Vicky Rinkerman, Toni Lozzi, Tim Prigg, Marty Baker, Lisa Webb, Eric Sennstrom, Michael R. Pugh, John Papagni and Mary Ann Skilling

MDP Staff:

Chuck Boyd, Arabia Davis, David Dahlstrom, Linda Janey, Kristen Mitchell and Joe Tassone

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Jon Laria, welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Mr. Laria thanked the Bainbridge Development Corporation representatives for providing lunch and organizing the tour of the former Navy Training Center at Bainbridge and National Historic Tome School for Boys located in Port Deposit Maryland. He then introduced Secretary David R. Craig, the Honorable Wayne L. Tome, Sr., Mayor of the Town of Port Deposit and the Honorable County Council President Robert Hodge.

Mayor Tome thanked the Commission, Secretary of Maryland Department of Planning and the Bainbridge Development Corporation for hosting today's meeting in Cecil County. The Mayor spoke about the historic character of the Town, citing the Susquehanna River as being one of the town's primary assets. The Town's population is a little over 800. It is approximately 1.7 miles long and 02.3 miles in square area.

Mayor Tome described the social ills impacting the western portion of the town, such as the increase in unemployment and poverty, which are a direct result of the lack of job opportunities. The redevelopment of Bainbridge will create jobs, which will contribute positively to the Town's economic sustainability. The Mayor emphasized that the need for these jobs is critical as they move forward with plans to bring fiscal stability to a once vibrant and flourishing town.

The Mayor expressed a desire to partner with County/State officials to discuss how historic tax credits can be utilized to revitalize the Town. He also mentioned that a goal of the Town is to relocate the wastewater treatment plant away from the waterfront area, which is presently operated by Cecil County.

In collaboration with the State Highway Administration, the Town is working on a drainage project for Route 222 that is intended to address the decade long stormwater drainage and flooding issues that have plagued the Town. He mentioned that there are a number of development opportunities on Main Street. He asked the Commissioners to refer all prospective land developers to his attention.

On behalf of County Executive Tara Moore, Council President Hodge welcomed the Commission back to Cecil County. He thanked the Governor for implementing the toll reduction, which will provide a financial relief to the residents in Cecil and Harford Counties. The County President concurred with the Mayor's position that the redevelopment of Bainbridge will assist with the stabilization of the town's fiscal situation.

He spoke to the county's efforts to establish a transportation plan for the Route 40 Corridor. The plan is intended to address various transportation challenges such as a surge in population in that part of the county and the ever changing traffic patterns.

County Council President Hodge then touched on the Maryland Department of the Environment's mandate to improve the water quality of the Northeast River Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant at Seneca Point by the means of enhanced nutrient removal. The deadline for project completion is December 31, 2016. A ribbon cutting is planned when the project is completed.

Secretary Craig greeted the Commissioners and interested participants. He thanked the dignitaries and Cecil County representatives for agreeing to host this meeting. Secretary Craig provided context on the construction and academic nature of the National Historic Tome School for Boys and the positive impact the school has had on past/present generations. The State looks forward with working with the County and municipality to bring the redevelopment of the Bainbridge Naval Center to fruition.

Administrative Matters and Updates

Mr. Laria welcomed Mary Ann Lisanti on her recent re-appointment to the Commission by Governor Larry Hogan and introduced all the new members:

Mary Ann Lisanti is a member of the Maryland House of Delegates for District 34A (Harford County). Mary Ann is designated Vice-Chair. She previously served as the representative from the Maryland Association of Counties. She holds a M.S. Degree from Central Michigan University in Public Administration.

Ms. Lynn Buhl is the Senior Policy Advisor at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). She sits on the commission as MDE Secretary Ben Grumble's designee. She serves in the role of an ex-officio member. Ms. Buhl spoke briefly about having had an opportunity 10 years ago to tour the Bainbridge property and participate in the discussions concerning the redevelopment of the site. Ms. Buhl looks forward to working with the Commission to advance its charge.

Kevin L. Small is appointed as a representative of the Maryland Municipal League. Mr. Small is the Director of Planning for the Town of Bel Air; he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Kansas State University. He previously worked in the private sector at Frederick Ward Associates, Incorporated in Bel Air and LDR International in Columbia, Maryland. Mr. Small thanked the Chair for the introduction and looks forward to participating on the Commission.

James Kruger was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan on May 4th, 2015. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and also has a Master of Public Policy Degree with a concentration in Urban Policy. While Mr. Kruger was unable to attend today's meeting due to health reason, he has expressed an interest in participating in future meetings.

APA's 2015 National Planning Excellence Award

Mr. Laria congratulated the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) on receiving APA's 2015 National Planning Excellence Award for a planning agency. Chuck Boyd, Deputy Director, MDP and principal staff to the Commission mentioned that MDP was honored at the 2015 National Planning Awards luncheon on April 20, 2015 at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, Washington. This highly recognized achievement was included in APA's April 2015 magazine.

Overview of the Town of Port Deposit

Ms. Vicky Rinkerman, Town Administrator from the Town of Port Deposit, briefed the Commission on the Town's plans to update its comprehensive and revitalization plan, zoning codes and other ordinances to ensure that they align with the State's goals and objectives. Ms. Rinkerman also discussed the Bainbridge property located in Port Deposit as being one (1) of nine (9) areas designated as an Enterprise Zone in Cecil County and the recent re-designation of the property. The designation is important to the Town because it provides the land owner with the ability to apply for tax credit incentives. The Town also qualified for and received the designation as a Maryland State Sustainable Community, which makes them eligible to apply for resources through the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development. A primary goal of officials is to maintain the historic character of the Town. The Town has plans to submit an application in the early fall to the Maryland Historical Trust for a small commercial tax credit.

Overview of Cecil County

Mr. Eric S. Sennstrom, Director of Cecil County's Department of Planning and Zoning spoke to the State's efforts to address the county's future development and infrastructure needs and their situation with the high cost of tolls. A recent study performed by Cecil County has identified the Town of Port Deposit as economically depressed. County officials recognize that future plans to address Route 40 and Route 222 are important first steps to ensure that the overall long term economic development goals for the region are met.

Mr. Sennstrom discussed a recent meeting with Secretary David R. Craig and MDP staff to discuss the county's December 2014 Tier Map. Per this discussion, county officials are in the process of developing and presenting a modified map that will incorporate the state/county understanding of the appropriate tier designations for the county. In terms of migration, it was noted that the county is seeing a spike in relocation of Amish farmers from Lancaster Pennsylvania to Cecil County.

In closing, the county supports the Bainbridge project and will continue to work with the Town to ensure this project moves forward.

Question: What is the impact of the Perryville MARC station?

Answer: A vast majority of commuters from New Jersey and Maryland utilize the park/ride at this facility. To address the greater demand for public transportation, discussions are currently underway to possibly develop a plan that would allow for MARC service to be extended to the Elkton, Delaware, Newark and Pennsylvania areas.

Question: Has there been any discussion concerning the extension of MARC to include weekend service?

Answer: The MARC Train does not offer weekend service north of Martin Airport; however, the county would like to explore the possibility of an extension of service to include limited weekends.

**Comment: It is rather important to point out that a significant transportation challenge faced by this region is that Cecil/Harford Counties are not represented on the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Question: What State policy changes would help the county?

Answer: The repeal of SB 236 “Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012.”

Question: What is prompting the Amish farmers to move from Lancaster to Cecil County?

Answer: It has been noted over the years that Amish farmers have moved their communities to Cecil County because the cost of land in Lancaster County, PA is becoming increasingly expensive to purchase. Their move has stabilized the agricultural sector.

Question: Have the revenues from the Hollywood Perryville Casino helped the economy of the county?

Answer: The revenues from the casino have been helpful.

Overview on the Redevelopment of the Former Bainbridge Naval Training Center

Donna Tapley, Executive Director of the Bainbridge Development Corporation provided a presentation on the former U.S. Navy Training Center at Bainbridge (NTCB). Ms. Tapley noted that the center is located on 1,200 acres. As background information, Ms. Tapley noted that the site was transferred from the United States Navy to BDC in 2000. The timeline for BDC's mixed-used development plan was hampered when it was discovered that the former navy site was contaminated. Since learning of the contamination issues, BDC has been involved in ongoing discussions with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Navy to develop a viable solution that is acceptable to all parties involved. At present, the Navy has offered BDC \$350 million to address their redevelopment efforts. BDC and Navy are still in negotiations on the cost to rehabilitate the site. BDC is also responsible for the maintenance and revitalization of the 1901 Tome School. This 50 acre parcel has a historical preservation easement that will factor into the redevelopment of the property.

While it was noted that Cecil County is not currently listed as a “One Maryland Jurisdiction: qualified distressed county.” Ms. Tapley spoke about the possibility of working with the State to tap into One Maryland resources for the Bainbridge property given that it is located in a distressed community, which would allow economic development projects to qualify for State income tax credits. In addition, the eligible projects need to provide 25 new jobs.

Question: Would the Town of Port Deposit qualify under the criteria established for a qualified distressed county?

The Town could meet the poverty level; however, Cecil County currently does not meet the established poverty level for a “distressed county.”

**Comment: HB 820: One Maryland Economic Development Tax Credit – Distressed Municipal Corporations, sponsored by Delegate Stephen Lafferty. This bill proposed to expand the tax credit to qualified businesses, if they are located in a stressed municipality.

Mr. Michael R. Pugh, Chairman of the Baltimore Development Corporation interjected that after hearing the Navy's initial offer for the Bainbridge redevelopment plan, the corporation modified its vision for the Bainbridge Center to have a greater emphasis on industrial and commercial usage; the proposal for the Tome School is for this parcel to contain office, retail and residential spaces. Mr. Pugh stated that the new vision for the center is less costly and reiterated the Mayor and the County President's position that the redevelopment of the center will help create jobs and contribute to economic viability of the Town. The implementation of the plan will require collaboration at the local, state and federal level to address the water and other infrastructure needs.

BDC would like to work with the Department of Business and Economic Development to improve the Enterprise Zone designation. It is BDC's hope that the Commission could serve as an ombudsman and advocate for the redevelopment of the Bainbridge Center and Tome School.

Question: Will broadband/WIFI access be available?

Answer: Yes, broadband and WIFI access will be available.

Question: Please describe the development partner. What other assistance is needed?

The property was transferred from the United States Navy to BDC. MTPM LLC is the development team chosen to carry out the Project. MTPM has development rights on all but 150 acres of the site. Tome School Campus (50 acres) and additional 100 acres are under the control and responsibility of the BDC for redevelopment. Assistance will be needed to redevelop the Tome School property. Ideally, officials would like to re-zone the Tome school property and the extra 100 additional acres for a mixed-use development, to ensure that an investor would be able to capitalize on their investment.

A copy of the Bainbridge Naval Center briefing document and PowerPoint presentation are included in the today's meeting packet.

Briefing on the Sustainable Growth and Conservation Indicators for use in the statewide Smart Growth Status Check

Mr. Derick Berlage, Chair, Concentrating Growth Workgroup noted that the Smart Growth Status Check effort has been under discussion for more than two (2) years. He commended Joe Tassone for his hard work and dedication on the creation of a comprehensive web-based tool.

Mr. Tassone provided an overview of the online Indicators/Status Check Summary/Report.

Specific comments concerning the Executive Summary/Report:

- It was pointed out that Maryland is obligated to address water quality in some fashion and that it is noticeably missing from the Sustainable Status Check effort.
- Additional editorial changes are needed to address concerns raised by the Maryland Association of Counties (specifically, pertaining to the septic Growth Tiers, formatting of the report, etc.)
- There was a concern raised that the report could be interpreted that 97% of Garrett County is resource area, which raised a question on whether the report is saying that 97% of Garrett County should not be developed? Some sort of an acknowledgement is needed to clear up this possible misconception.
- Explanation of the causes (in this case, why developed residential acres outside of PFAs grew by 77% while 71% of all single family residential parcels were developed in PFAs). Without some explanation of the drivers of suburban development, the average reader might find these statements puzzling or even contradictory. It was suggested that specific examples be provided. People always need to relate information back to their own experience. In this example, an image of a small inner-city parcel vs. a large suburban estate parcel might carry the message.
- Clarify the trends: is this process accelerating, stabilizing, or decreasing? The timeframe offered (1999 to 2012) doesn't provide this information.
- A very general statement such as "Considerably more of future growth must occur in PFAs" isn't helpful unless (1) there is an explanation of why it's important to address this situation (impact on transportation, air and water quality, public finances, community, etc.) and (2) something should be offered as a solution. Without the second of these, the lay reader might leave the document thinking, "Well, there's nothing we can do about the problem."

Mr. Laria explained the intent of this tool is not to serve as a policy analysis rather the intent is for it to serve as data communication tool. If there were agreement across the board, then this tool would not be articulating much. A credible message is needed for this application.

After much discussion, the Chair suggested that the Commission members:

- Provide Mr. Tassone with written comments; and that,
- Minor tweaks would be made to the report and be re-circulated to Commissioners for final review;
- Final step would be to obtain an electronic approval from each of the Commission Members.

A copy of the Sustainable Growth Status Check PowerPoint and link to the online Executive Summary are included in the today's meeting packet.

Briefing on the Rural Economies Smart Growth Effort

Mr. Greg Bowen informed the Commission that the five (5) workgroup subcommittees are fully engaged and making progress. The membership of the Commission is expanding to include additional stakeholders.

A copy of the Rural Economies Workgroup PowerPoint is included in the today's meeting packet.

The Chair thanked Mr. Bowen for his hard work and asserted that the workgroup's role is essential to advancing Maryland's rural economies mission.

Other Commission members praised the presentation and commended the workgroup on their examination of the role of food hubs in rural market places.

It was also mentioned that Delegate Maggie McIntosh introduced modified language for the Open Space Program that seeks to cap program funds because the thinking is that the program has accomplished its intended goal. The hope is that the Workgroup will help investigate this matter and possibly develop a primer to inform the legislature on the need to abstain from capping this program and the land preservation issues that still need to be addressed.

Another Commissioner suggested that the workgroup design an un-biased survey that will reach the individuals in the necessary and respective industries.

Workgroup Updates

- Education workgroup
A copy of the workgroup's report is included in today's packet. The group is interested in suggestions from members of the Commission on potential sponsors for the Sustainable Student Growth Awards.
- Rural Economics Workgroup
A copy of the workgroup's report is included in today's packet.

Public Comments

None.

Chairman Laria adjourned the meeting at 3:51 p.m.