



Maryland Sustainable Growth Commion

Rural Economies Workgroup Report

March 23, 2015

To: Jon Laria, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

From: Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

Subject: Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

Date: March 19, 2015

The Rural Economies Workgroup met once since the January Growth Commission meeting, while four of the five subcommittees have met at least once. Each of these subcommittees is in the formative stages, but the participants have shown great enthusiasm that substantive recommendations will come out of their deliberations. A summary report of the Workgroup's March 13, 2015 meeting, containing summaries from the four subcommittees, is attached to this report.

The next meeting of the full Workgroup is May 8.

## **Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document**

<b>Meeting Notes For:</b>		<b>Rural Economies Workgroup</b>		
Date and time:		March 13, 2015 @ 3 pm		
Called by: Greg Bowen		Facilitator's Name: Chuck Boyd		
Attendance:	Greg Bowen, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Carpenter, Elliott Campbell, Daniel Colhoun, Nevin Dawson, Jason Dubow, Heather Gramm, Laverne Gray, Charlotte Lawson Davis, John Leocha, Jim Mullin, Amy Owsley, John Papagni, Mark Powell, Donald Shell, Duane Yoder			
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd			
<b>Agenda and Notes:</b>				
<p>1. Attendance – 17 members attended in person or by conference call.</p> <p>2. Chuck Boyed reviewed the <b>Key Actions</b> listed in Jan 4<sup>th</sup> Workgroup meeting notes.</p> <p>3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions:</p> <p>A. Sustainable Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Laverne Gray facilitator)  Dan Rosen presented a review of national and state trends in agriculture  Subcommittee discussed possible strategies for focus on. The consensus of the group was go with #4 –“Identify opportunities to improve local food distribution and sales through the promotion of food hubs and other regional distribution systems that allow farmers to better access institutional and retail markets.” Next steps are to seek out model ordinance on agritourism and begin looking into issues related to food distribution.</p> <p>B. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)  1) Topic- Reviewed Dr. Tjaden’s publication on Maryland’s Forest Resources in a Dynamic Environment.  2) Topic- Discussed process of making recommendations to change State policies related to sustainable forestry  3) Topic- Discussed what members of the Subcommittee have already done working in other groups, which can be used to further sustainable forestry  4) Topic- Discussed new strategies for advancing sustainable forestry in Maryland and approaches to addressing them.  -New strategies needed for how industry is evolving; e.g. managing for product may not resonate as much as managing for forest health (Don Outen).  5) Next Steps: Bob Tjaden will synthesize several important documents over past 10 years for committee. Don Outen will summarize the work of the Sustainable Forestry Council. Items will be circulated end of March, meet in April.</p> <p>C. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)  1) Discussed how the current Maryland’s Ag Land Preservation Goal was established.  2) Discussed challenges of setting a new goal and possible standards that could be used.  3) Discussed the need for more predictable land preservation funding that is not diverted to other state funding priorities and possible strategies to promote the importance of land preservation to economic development and fiscal responsibility.</p>				

D. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator)  
Reviewed pending bills in General Assembly related to rural communities:  
\* SB 196 – Rural Economic Development Program Bill (Senator Edwards' bill) - Subcommittee discussed bill – no actions or recommendations. Individuals will continue to monitor on their own.  
\* SB 134 – Open Space Incentive Program – Payment to Counties  
Subcommittee discussed bill – no actions or recommendations. Individuals will continue to monitor on their own.  
Subcommittee discussed possible strategies. Les Knapp offered to survey MACO planning directors to see if they had any recommended strategies.

E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Chuck Boyd facilitators)  
This Subcommittee is still being organized. Jim Mullin is working with the facilitators to identify potential participants. The intended focus of this subcommittee would be to look at the landside aspects of fisheries and any regulatory impediments that may impact the fishing industry, and not focus as much on water quality and fishing habitats.

4. Next Workgroup meeting is May 8, at 1 pm at MDA Headquarters in Annapolis.

<b>Key Actions (and who has agreed take on)</b>	Describe action and indicate when action is due
1. Proposed legislation	Chuck Boyd was asked to circulate to the Rural Economies Workgroup members the two bills discussed by the Rural Development & Recreation Subcommittee. He was also asked to forward the web link to the STAR report on economic development activities in western Maryland prepared by the National Center for Smart Growth
2.	
3.	
4.	
<b>Resource Materials used and draft documents</b>	- Subcommittee Meeting Notes - -