



**To:** Susan Summers, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

**From:** Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

**Subj:** Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

**Date:** March 20, 2017

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on March 10<sup>th</sup> to review the progress of its subcommittees (Sustainable Food and Food Production, Sustainable Forestry, Land Preservation and Protected Open Space, Rural Development and Recreation, and Sustainable Fisheries). See below the “Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document” that summarizes the status of each subcommittees’ efforts. The next meeting of the full Workgroup is May 12.

<b>Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document</b>	
<b>Meeting Notes For:</b>	<b>Rural Economies Workgroup</b>
Date and time:	March 10, 2017 @ 3 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Michael Bayer, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Carpenter, Jason Dubow, Joseph Griffiths, Meredith Hill, Jim Mullin, John Papagni, Dan Rosen, Sarah Taylor-Rogers, Duane Yoder
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
<p><b>Agenda and Notes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance – 14 members attended in person or by conference call.</li> <li>2. Mr. Boyd briefed the Workgroup on the status of Growth Commission and its upcoming scheduled meeting in Crownsville.</li> <li>3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)                    Jason Dubow reported on the Subcommittee’s efforts:                    Since our January 13 meeting with Charles County Planning Department and the Charles County Soil Conservation District (SCD), DNR had a follow-up meeting on February 10 with the Charles County SCD. At the meeting, which was very encouraging for DNR and the SCD, the parties agreed to develop a pilot program for the pre-approval of logging applications in Charles County. The pilot program involves a modification of procedures only, while still conforming to all environmental laws and regulations.                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For this approach, the landowner would submit all standard information for permits, and the SCD would review the material for technical sufficiency. This</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

review would be at the same level of scrutiny as with any review, and any deficiencies would be pointed out for needed correction.

- At the end of the SCD review, the permit is not yet authorized; however, the SCD would notify the landowner that the materials are technically sufficient and can be relied upon for a predetermined amount of time.
- As a result, the landowner can then manage his/her property with confidence and market the timber at a moment's notice. Also, any timber buyers would have a much better sense of what can or cannot be harvested on the property and any other restrictions associated with it.
- This approach makes the chances for a successful transaction much higher by reducing uncertainty related to the timber product. Also, this approach reduces pressure on all parties for obtaining permits expeditiously once a transaction is agreed upon. The permit application becomes active when the operator/logger signs the application form and the SCD is notified of this.

B. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)  
Dan Rosen reported that the Subcommittee had not met since the last Workgroup meeting, and there is no update on Subcommittee activities.

C. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator)  
Ms. Carpenter reported on the Subcommittee met twice on February 9 and March 2, where they are review each grouping of recommendations listed in the Reinvest Maryland document, starting with the five Vision recommendations in February and the eleven Program recommendations in March. After reviewing each set of recommendations, the Subcommittee participant rank priority of implementing those recommendations. See the attached summary minutes from the two meetings for more details.

D. Sustainable Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)  
Dan Rosen reported that the *Johns Hopkins Center for a Liveable Future*, which created an interactive [Maryland Food Systems Map](#) gave us permission to use their database on Maryland slaughterhouses/ processors as the Subcommittee's directory. The Johns Hopkins CLF was pleased to have their research disseminated. Staff will sort the data to eliminate processors that don't take livestock from others, then subcommittee members will review the information for accuracy. After that, MDP staff will format the data table for public presentation. The audience/hosts for online and hard copies are under discussion. The Subcommittee will also evaluate more of the CLF's wealth of data for the opportunities to identify gaps statewide between livestock producers and processors.

The Subcommittee is considering a review of a report just released by the Center for Agro-Ecology-- "HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE? A Report on the Factors that Favor or Hinder the Flow of Local Food in the Chesapeake Bay Region"-- to see if they can help overcome some of the obstacles listed.

E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator)  
Mr. Boyd reported that no Subcommittee efforts took place.

4. Next Workgroup meeting is May 12 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.

<b>Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup – Rural Development &amp; Recreation Subcommittee Minutes</b>	
<b>Meeting Notes For:</b>	<b>Rural Development &amp; Recreation Subcommittee</b>
Date and time:	March 2, 2017
Called by: D. Carpenter	Facilitator’s Name: Deborah Carpenter
Attendance:	Deborah Carpenter, Duane Yoder, Joe Rogers, Chuck Boyd, Jim Mullen, Meredith Donaho, Charlotte Davis
Notes Taken By:	Deborah Carpenter
<b>Minutes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome – The meeting was opened by reviewing the list of attendees and reviewing action items.</li> <li>2. The group reviewed the prioritization of the Visions in Recommendation #1. Thus far the top priority is a tie between Vision #1 and Vision #3. Under Vision #1 bullet b is the top priority.</li> <li>3. The group reviewed the prioritization of the educational topics listed in Vision #3. Top responses to date were: zoning tools to support infill &amp; redevelopment, small businesses role in community revitalization, measuring the benefit of compact, mixed use infill &amp; redevelopment, looking at mechanisms for ensuring adequate public facilities and minimizing the impact of APFOs on infill &amp; redevelopment.</li> <li>4. The group reviewed Recommendation #2 of the Reinvest MD document – create and better fund innovative, effective reinvestment programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program #1 – Funding sources are available, but not predictable and their existence is often dependent upon the political climate. The process to acquire the funds is lengthy, complicated and difficult.</li> <li>• Program #2 – This program was discussed in conjunction with Program #3.</li> <li>• Program #3 - The first three programs address the need for dedicated funding mechanisms for different aspects of development. Some funding sources are federal and our influence on federal programs may be minimal. Opportunity exists for discussion and to be innovative with alternative funding sources.</li> <li>• Program #4 – The state is already working on this and some progress has been made.</li> <li>• Program #5 – These programs have been beneficial for historic sites that are challenging to rehabilitate and more effective in urban areas. They are complicated and not generally used by small businesses.</li> <li>• Program #6 - Mid-market projects meet the demand for projects that do not qualify for the low income housing funding but do meet the market demand generated by middle income families on the lower end of the spectrum. The MD Mortgage Purchase Program works well, but it only aids in single family construction and not multi-family. DHCD cannot give funding for new construction outside of a PFA. Federal programs have a smaller eligible income range, while state programs have more flexibility.</li> <li>• Program #7 - This idea works well in markets with appreciation, but not so well in stagnant markets.</li> <li>• Program #8 - There are funds available for these types of projects but generally those funds do not cover soft costs such as planning and engineering.</li> <li>• Program #9 - No discussion was had on this topic.</li> <li>• Program #10 - No discussion was had beyond emphasizing how important small businesses are to a vibrant small town main street.</li> <li>• Program #11 - MDP wishes to review the program to ensure that it is accomplishing its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Next Subcommittee meeting is April 13, 2017</li> </ol>	
<b>Key Actions to be taken prior to next meeting</b>	Describe action and indicate when action is due
1.	<b>Debbie</b> will contact all members to remind them to submit their prioritization for Recommendation #1 Visions, Vision #1 bullets and Vision #3 educational topics.
2.	<b>Debbie</b> will follow up with an email asking for a prioritization of Recommendation #2 Programs with an eye to what is most beneficial and actionable.
<b>Resource Materials used and draft documents</b>	- ReInvest MD Recommendation #2

<b>Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup – Rural Development &amp; Recreation Subcommittee Minutes</b>	
<b>Meeting Notes For:</b>	<b>Rural Development &amp; Recreation Subcommittee</b>
Date and time:	February 9, 2017
Called by: Deborah Carpenter	Facilitator’s Name: Deborah Carpenter
Attendance:	Deborah Carpenter, Dianne Chasse, Joe Rogers, Chuck Boyd, Joe Griffiths, Jim Mullen
Notes Taken By:	Deborah Carpenter
<b>Minutes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome – The meeting was opened by reviewing the list of attendees and discussing the addition of other members. Chuck contact Kim Brandt from Thousand Friends of MD who expressed interest and Jim contacted Josh Hastings of the Eastern Land Conservancy. Both will be contacted prior to the next meeting.</li> <li>2. The group reviewed the proposed 2017 Strategies and approved them as written. They include investigating Reinvest Maryland, creating specific recommendations and identifying potential pilot projects, specifically for the enhancement of rural development.</li> <li>3. The group reviewed Recommendation #1 of the Reinvest MD document – establishing a vision for reinvestment. The group was reminded that at the end of review the goal is to be able to prioritize these visions with an eye to what is not only most beneficial to rural development but also what is most actionable.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision #1 – Discussion around this vision included discussion of the on-line tools created by MDP, staffing abilities and limitations within MDP, the need to identify problems in alignment of resources to discover solutions, and how many programs may overlap when looking at targeted areas for investment.</li> <li>• Vision #2 – The better coordination of local economic development &amp; revitalization efforts was seen as an often politically sensitive problem. Garrett County’s Mayors Association was identified as a model, which may be difficult to replicate elsewhere. It was decided that perhaps the best way to address this issue was by actively pursuing Vision #3.</li> <li>• Vision #3 – A good educational strategy that encompasses all stakeholders was determined to be arguably the most actionable item with immediate benefits; however, the list of topics needs to be refined and prioritized.</li> <li>• Vision #4 – Financial opportunities and barriers take on significant meaning in rural areas. It was suggested that a conversation needs to be held with rural banks, financiers, developers, economic development professionals and the like to gain a better understanding of the issues.</li> <li>• Vision #5 – Inadequacy of infrastructure is a significant problem and one that is difficult to solve, since financing of projects to improve infrastructure is difficult to come by. It was decided that perhaps the best way to tackle this issue is to first focus on one type of infrastructure, define the problems and then address possible solutions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Next Subcommittee meeting is March 2, 2017</li> </ol>	
<b>Key Actions to be taken prior to next meeting</b>	Describe action and indicate when action is due
1.	<b>Debbie</b> will contact the two proposed new members about joining and provide them with relevant information.
2.	<b>Debbie</b> will follow up with an email asking for a ranking of Recommendation #1 Visions with an eye to what is most beneficial and actionable.
3.	<b>Debbie</b> will follow up on the educational strategies vision by asking the group to prioritize the educational topic list while adding topics that may be missing.
<b>Resource Materials used and draft documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copy of SB796</li> <li>- 2017 Draft Schedule of Work</li> <li>- Reinvest MD Recommendation #1</li> <li>- Reinvest MD Overview of Recommendation #1</li> </ul>