



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

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

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

**Date:** May 22, 2017

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on May 12<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 July 14.

<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:	May 12, 2017 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Chuck Boyd, Jason Dubow, Suzanne Dorsey, Joseph Griffiths, Meredith Hill, Steve McHenry, Jim Mullin, John Papagni, Matthew Tefteau
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
<b>Agenda and Notes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance – 9 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 Frederick, MD on May 22.</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 Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)                    Jason Dubow reported for Dan Rosen that Subcommittee met on April 20 to review a proposed outreach product (an information table) about food processors and slaughter houses in Maryland. The Subcommittee considered a list of questions from the Center for Agro-Ecology’s report <i>Health, Safety, and Welfare? A Report on the Factors that Favor or Hinder the Flow of Local Food in the Chesapeake Bay Region</i> to identify a small number of questions to work to answer over the next year or two to help implement the report’s recommendations. This could include researching the effects on Maryland farmers of the Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA), which tends to favor large producers over smaller ones, and the hurdles it creates for local producers of fruit and vegetables. The</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

Subcommittee also had a meaningful discussion about strategies to promote jobs and value added food production, identifying rental commercial kitchen space as a topic worthy of further investigation and potential opportunity for technical assistance to local communities.

- B. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)  
Jason Dubow reported on the Subcommittee's efforts:  
As a result of the January meeting of Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee staff with Charles County and the Charles County Soil Conservation District, DNR held a follow-up meeting in March with Charles County Soil Conservation District staff to identify the steps to move forward with the agreed upon pilot program. If effective, the pilot program should facilitate forestry transactions for private landowners (through an early determination of site-specific permit conditions) without reducing any of the existing environmental protection standards. Also, DNR and MDE are pursuing a collaboration whereby DNR Service Foresters will serve as technical advisors on all timber harvests. The goal is to provide industry with assurance that their actions are reviewed professionally and by persons familiar with specifics of timber harvesting, and create opportunities for better implementation of best management practices.
- C. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)  
The Subcommittee has not met since the last Workgroup meeting, and there is no update on Subcommittee activities.
- D. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator)  
Mr. Boyd reported for Ms. Carpenter that the Subcommittee met twice on April 13 and May 4, where the Subcommittee continues to review and prioritize the recommendations listed in the Reinvest Maryland document. A final listing of prioritized recommendations will be forwarded to the Reinvest Maryland Workgroup for consideration in updating the report. See the attached summary minutes from the two meetings for more details.
- E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator)  
Mr. Boyd reported that no Subcommittee efforts took place.

4. Next Workgroup meeting is July 14 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:	April 13, 2017
Called by: D. Carpenter	Facilitator’s Name: Deborah Carpenter
Attendance:	Deborah Carpenter, Kim Brandt, Jim Mullen, Meredith Donaho (for Charlotte Davis), Chuck Boyd
Notes Taken By:	Deborah Carpenter
<b>Minutes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The meeting began with Chuck updating the group on the process and timeline for the Reinvest MD group. Debbie noted that as our work feeds into theirs it was necessary to speed up our review to match their timeline. Consequently, we will be reviewing 3 recommendations at both this meeting and the next.</li> <li>2. The group briefly discussed the prioritization results for Recommendations #1 and #2. At the time of the meeting only 3 members had completed their prioritizations and Debbie stressed the need for feedback from all members. No more prioritizations were received for Recommendation #1. Jim stated that the educational priorities received a few more responses. Thus, far the top rural priorities for Recommendation #2 are 1) developing initiatives to foster small business development, 2) expanding funds for pre-development soft costs and 3) establishing more reliable, sustainable funding sources for IRR.</li> <li>3. The group reviewed Recommendation #3 of the Reinvest MD document – identify and address regulations and policies that may impede reinvestment. Chuck was able to provide historical insight and make note of good opportunities to showcase best practices. Regs # 2, 3 and 7 were highlighted as best practice and educational opportunities. Chuck was also able to explain the DRRA in more detail for the group.</li> <li>4. The group reviewed Recommendation #4 of the Reinvest MD document – deploy targeted financial tools. The group discussed the fact that in many cases it is not a lack of funding that is the problem but rather that the funding available is complicated, difficult to obtain, or have criteria that make it hard to either apply or compete. In rural areas in particular, small towns with part time staff often cannot complete those applications. It was decided that a new strategy needs to be formulated to specifically address the needs of the rural communities with regard to this issue.</li> <li>5. The group reviewed Recommendation #5 of the Reinvest MD document – promote equitable development. Chuck was once again able to provide clarification on some issues. Discussion ensued about Eq#4 over the fact that in many rural areas there is not a lack of quality education but more a problem with dropping enrollment and closing schools. It was felt that a new strategy addressing this issue would be helpful.</li> <li>6. Next Subcommittee meeting is May 4, 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 Recommendations #3,4 & 5, as well as Recommendations #1 & 2 and educational priorities if they haven’t already done so.
<b>Resource Materials used and draft documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ReInvest MD Recommendations #3, 4 &amp; 5</li> <li>- Prioritization forms for Recommendations #3, 4 &amp; 5</li> </ul>

<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:	May 4, 2017
Called by: D. Carpenter	Facilitator’s Name: Deborah Carpenter
Attendance:	Deborah Carpenter, Kim Brandt, Jim Mullen, Joe Rogers, Les Knapp, Diane Chasse, Chuck Boyd and Joe Griffiths
Notes Taken By:	Deborah Carpenter
<b>Minutes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The meeting began with Debbie reviewing the status of past prioritization exercises and reminding the group of the process.</li> <li>2. The group reviewed Recommendation #6 of the Reinvest MD document – encourage excellence in community design &amp; preservation. Chuck explained why the concept of community design was important to downtown revitalization. It was noted that Des #1 &amp; #2 both revolved around education and support for better design and preservation, but one was focused on encouraging state support while the other was focused on local government support. Des #3 is to ensure the state works with organizations who support community design and preservation, while DES #4 encourages partnerships between communities and the educational sector.</li> <li>3. The group reviewed Recommendation #7 of the Reinvest MD document – use metrics to gauge success &amp; drive reinvestment. After discussion about whether this recommendation is necessary, it was decided that it should remain but that it should be generalized to reflect the need to conduct ongoing discussions to assess success and to continue to review processes and evaluate progress.</li> <li>4. The group reviewed Recommendation #8 of the Reinvest MD document – accelerate transit-oriented development (TOD). The group believes that most of these strategies are not applicable to rural areas with the exception of TOD#9 and TOD #21.</li> <li>5. Next Subcommittee meeting is June 8, 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 follow up with an email asking for a prioritization of Recommendations #6, #7 & #8.
2.	<b>Debbie</b> will re-write the strategies in Recommendation #7 and submit for the groups review.
3.	<b>All</b> will ensure they have prioritized the strategies in Recommendations #6, 7 & 8 and send them to Debbie by the next meeting.
4.	<b>All</b> will ensure they have prioritized the strategies in past Recommendations, as well as the educational topics of Vision #3 (Rec #1) by the next meeting. Educational topics get sent to Jim.
<b>Resource Materials used and draft documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ReInvest MD Recommendations #6, 7, &amp; 8</li> <li>- Prioritization forms for Recommendations #6, 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>