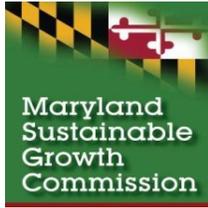


Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting



May 23, 2016
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Allegany Museum
3 Pershing Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Meeting Summary

Members Present:

Susan Summers, David R. Craig, Tom Ballentine, Richard Brush, David Caporale, Deborah Carpenter, Michael Davis, Charlotte Davis, Marty Baker representing Charles Glass, Les Knapp, James Kruger, David Lever, Randy McClement, Elliott Campbell representing Sandi Olek, Andrew Sargent representing Steve Pennington, Kevin Small, Eric Soter, Leo Vondas, and Jessica Zuniga.

Elected Officials:

Allegany County Commissioner President Bill Valentine, Garrett County Commissioner President Paul Edwards, and Maryland Delegate Jason Buckel

Attendees:

David Dorsey, Angie Patterson, Shawn Hershberger, and Candace Donoho

MDP Staff:

Deputy Secretary Wendi Peters, Brandon Wright, Chuck Boyd, Kristen Mitchell, Bill Atkinson, David Cotton and Vicki Day

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Susan Summers, welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Ms. Summers acknowledged and thanked all of the elected and appointed officials from Allegany and Garrett Counties and the City of Cumberland for attending the meeting.

Tour of Downtown Cumberland

Ms. Summers commented that downtown Cumberland's efforts exemplify many of the principals of economic development highlighted in Reinvest Maryland. She thanked Shawn Hershberger, Executive Director of Cumberland Economic Development Corporation, for the walking tour of Baltimore Street.

Introduction of New Members

Ms. Summers welcomed the newest members of the Commission, Tom Ballentine, Randy McClement and Michael Davis, and asked each to provide brief introductory comments. An updated summary biography of the Commission members was included in the agenda packet.

Overview of Allegany and Garrett Counties and City of Cumberland

Ms. Summers then introduced Allegany County Commission President Bill Valentine. Mr. Valentine welcomed the Growth Commission to Allegany County and the City of Cumberland. He spoke briefly about the County's commitment to continuing to bring economic growth to Allegany County.

David Dorsey, Allegany County Planning Coordinator, briefed the Commission on the County's land preservation accomplishments under the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and Rural Legacy Programs.

Angie Patterson, Allegany County Land Use & Planning Engineer, provided a brief overview of the County's effort to accommodate development and comply with state laws and regulations. She noted the County has updated its stormwater regulations, implemented upgrades to its wastewater treatment plant, and prepared/adopted a Tier Map. Ms. Patterson highlighted several redevelopment projects in the LaVale area that the County is working on. Ms. Patterson did express concern about the MDE's restudy of the "Aligning Growth" policy which is part of the State's Watershed Implementation Plan. When asked what the biggest challenge for growth is in the area, Ms. Patterson pointed out that they are competing with West Virginia for growth/investment, and West Virginia doesn't have to deal with the regulations that developers in Allegany County have to address. Ms. Patterson went on to point out the challenges developers have getting the needed funding to make the projects financially possible.

Deborah Carpenter, Garrett County Director of Planning, gave a "Garrett County 101" presentation to the Commission (a copy of the PowerPoint is included in the online agenda package). Ms. Carpenter reviewed the historic development pattern of the county and noted the clustering of development around the municipalities and the Deep Creek area. Ms. Carpenter pointed out the challenge of providing public services when much of the State's assistance for infrastructure requires those areas to be in a PFA, and given the low density of development in the County, those areas do not qualify to be designated as a PFA. Ms. Carpenter stated the County has adopted a Tier Map and that due to the significant amount of steep slopes, poor soils and the weak housing market, the County has major limitations on future subdivision activity – particularly outside of those areas served by public sewer. Ms. Carpenter proposed that some state programs should be adjusted to meet regional conditions, suggesting that the State's policies, like the PFA law, should be modified based on whether the region is growing. Ms. Carpenter recommended grouping development-related policies: (1) Increasing Population? → Full application of policy; (2) Stagnant Populations → Partial application of policy; and (3) Declining Population → No application of policy.

Paul Edwards, Garrett County Board of Commissioners President, highlighted a number of challenges Garrett County is facing in attracting new growth. When asked to identify a particular area of regulatory reform that should be investigated, Mr. Edwards noted that the sprinkler requirement is particularly harmful to the cost of constructing new homes, when compared to the cost of constructing the same home in Pennsylvania or West Virginia, and as a result, development in the county suffers.

Delegate Jason Buckel expressed his appreciation to the Growth Commission for coming to Allegany County and encouraged members to visit the area often. He noted several collaborative efforts where the state and local governments are working together. He pointed out the groundbreaking event that day for the new Allegany County High School and other economic development projects occurring in Cumberland.

David Lever inquired about Garrett County's workforce development. Ms. Carpenter noted that there has been a reorientation at the high school and at Garrett College to focus more on technology.

Michael Davis asked about the transportation challenges to growth in Garrett County. Ms. Carpenter stated they have been trying to advance rural transit-oriented development in the county, but the problem is the lack of bus service. The county has paratransit service for seniors and the disabled, but given the distance between the towns, it is difficult for transit-dependent people to get to work in the county. People typically have to have a car to travel in the county, but some cannot afford a car.

Shawn Hershberger, Cumberland Economic Development Corporation, Executive Director, recapped a variety of economic development strategies that they are using to encourage new investment in Cumberland. He noted Cumberland is part of the largest Enterprise Zone in the State of Maryland. They have used historic tax credits to rehabilitate buildings in the downtown and offer a Lenders Loan Pool to make locating in the Central Business District more appealing. He encouraged the Commission members to visit some of the stores in the downtown and come back often.

Administrative Matters and Updates

Chuck Boyd reported that the Growth Awards Selection Committee consisting of (Charlotte Lawson-Davis, Jim Kruger, Eric Soter, and Bryce Turner) reviewed a total of 17 nominations. One conference call meeting was conducted to review, rank and recommend a total of eight Growth Awardees. A motion was made by Jim Kruger and seconded by Charlotte Davis to endorse the following recommended 2016 Sustainable Growth Award recipients:

Leadership and Service

Civic Works' Retrofit Baltimore Program
Community College of Baltimore County
Laura Wright

Sustainable Communities

The Centre
Center for Parks & People at Auchentoroly
Terrace
520 Park Avenue
Pike & Rose Project

Preservation/Conservation Projects

Washington County Solar Initiative Project

Ms. Summers called the vote and all were in favor and no one opposed.

Mr. Boyd expressed his appreciation for the Selection Committee's service and stated that staff will begin coordinating the venue of the awards ceremony. Once a date and time are established, the Commission members will be notified. Mr. Boyd also mentioned that staff will begin the process of getting the 2017 Sustainable Growth Awards nomination materials ready for July.

Reinvest Maryland: Next Steps

Kristen Mitchell briefed the Commission on the Reinvest Maryland next steps. Ms. Mitchell noted that the Commission will need to make decisions on (1) the extent of revisions to the Reinvest Maryland document itself; (2) what process and schedule does the Commission want to follow to make these revisions; and (3) who will be responsible for developing the recommended revisions.

Ms. Mitchell noted that in the past, the Growth Commission used workgroups to do the detailed research, writing and revisions, and then the full Commission reviewed the recommended changes and endorse the final document. She noted that if the Commission wants to follow that same approach, a proposed process and schedule has been prepared:

- Establish Reinvest Maryland workgroup and assign a chair – May 23
- All Commission members review the Reinvest Maryland document and submit comments and suggested changes back to workgroup
- The workgroup will meet several times to go over the document and suggested changes
- The workgroup will distribute a draft set of recommendations to the Commission (July 15)
- The Growth Commission reviews workgroup updates (July 25)
- The Reinvest Maryland workgroup finalizes its recommend revisions for the Commission to approve and then publish (September 2016)

Ms. Mitchell then briefed the Commission on the results of the preference survey which suggests areas that Reinvest Maryland should focus on. Based on those Commission members participating, it appears the following categories are the most important for further investigation:

- Small business growth and entrepreneurship
- Tax policies to support reinvestment
- Transportation policies
- Infrastructure financing tools, techniques, policies
- Economic development strategies for small towns

The topic of *Infrastructure financing tools, techniques, and policies* appears to have a slightly higher level of importance than the other issues.

Ms. Summers asked the Commission for volunteers to participate in the workgroup. Jessica Zuniga, Les Knapp and Deborah Carpenter volunteered. Ms. Summers assigned Jessica Zuniga to serve as chair of the workgroup. Eric Soter encouraged the revision of the Reinvest Maryland document to look into tracking the effectiveness of implementation tools that promote infill, redevelopment and revitalization.

Deputy Secretary Peters noted that we had heard today from representatives of Allegany and Garrett County on the challenges they are seeing in promoting economic development in their communities. She asked if there were other areas that the Commission and State agencies should be investigating? Finance and Regulatory Reform were mentioned by several Commission members as two areas needing more study. Leo Vondas stated that small businesses and tax policies are two of the logical top issues to consider. Les Knapp noted that transportation and infrastructure are other areas that need consideration.

Maryland's Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
Economic Development / Redevelopment Efforts

ARC Program Manager Bill Atkinson reported the Maryland Appalachian region consists of three counties (Allegany, Garrett and Washington) along with their twenty-four municipalities. The Appalachian Maryland State Implementation Strategy focuses on five Targeted Investment Priorities:

- a. Technology Development including the continuation of building a broadband network
- b. Education and workforce training
- c. Contributing to or increasing the economic impact of tourism in the region
- d. Development of energy
- e. Health Care services

Maryland's ARC Program Manager, Bill Atkinson works with planning and economic development officials from all three counties to identify and formulate projects that address these priorities. Projects that can demonstrate that they will contribute to improving or increasing the economic impact of these Targeted Investment Priorities will be given priority in rankings for funding.

Commission Members' Preference Survey Results & Discussion

Chuck Boyd briefed the Commission on the preference survey results. The initial survey included five questions, two of which were open ended. A total of 23 Commission members participated in the survey. Question #1 focused on Reinvest Maryland; and Questions #2 and #3 focused on what other areas the Commission's charge should be investigated? Based on the Commission preference survey, the following is the ranking of areas needing improvement:

Rank the importance of these areas to improve

- Tied for #1 State and local planning coordination
- Tied for #1 Efficient and predictable state and local development regulations
- #3 Coordination and funding for infrastructure and land preservation needs
- #4 Educational and outreach programs that promote good planning practices

Mr. Boyd directed the Commission's attention to the handout of Commission responses to Question #3: What other areas of investigation and policy recommendations should the Growth Commission explore? (See a copy of the handout in the online agenda package for responses to Question #3.) He also pointed out a few Commission members responded to the last question: Is there anything else you want to share in regard to the Growth Commission? (See a copy of the handout in the online agenda package for responses to Question #5.)

Mr. Boyd stated that he would be contacting members of the Commission to participate in different workgroups based on their indicated preferences.

Workgroup Updates

- Education Workgroup – see handouts
- Rural Economies Workgroup Report – see handouts

Public Comments

None.

Chairwoman Summers adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.