



**Rural Economies Workgroup**

**November 14, 2016**

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

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

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

**Date:** November 14, 2016

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on November 4<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 the attached “Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document” on the status of each subcommittees’ efforts.

The summary of the Workgroup’s discussion follows. The next meeting of the full Workgroup is January 13.

<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:	November 4, 2016 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Greg Bowen, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Carpenter, Elliott Campbell, Debra Celnik, Charlotte Davis, Jason Dubow, Meredith Hill, Les Knapp, Steve McHenry, Jim Mullin, Erin Penniston, Dan Rosen, Nancy Servatius, Matt Tefteau
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
<b>Agenda and Notes:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance – 12 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 Chestertown. He mentioned the focus of the upcoming Commission meeting will be on the Renewable Energy Siting in rural areas, and briefing of the Rock Hall Working Waterfronts project. He noted that the Commission is still in its formative stages of learning about various state initiatives/programs.</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. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator) Mr. Boyd reported that due to staffing limitations, he has not been able to move the subcommittee’s agenda forward. He noted that MDP staff is still working to develop a communication tool that will help explain how the PFA law applies in terms the general public could easily understand. He hoped to have something ready for an upcoming Healthy Waters Roundtable event on December 14. Deborah Carpenter offered to take over the scheduling of</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

Rural Development Subcommittee meetings. Mr. Boyd agreed to forward a list of email contacts to Ms. Carpenter, so she can start scheduling those subcommittee meetings.

B. Sustainable Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)

Dan Rosen reported that he sent an email to the Subcommittee members on August 11 informing them about the *Johns Hopkins Center for a Liveable Future* had created an interactive [Maryland Food Systems Map](#). Since Subcommittee was interested in creating a directory of food processors, Dan wanted to let the Subcommittee know that much of this information may already exist. The map can display a vast amount of information, and the databases that underlie the map are easily accessible. He asked Subcommittee members to review the website and provide him feedback on whether or not the data from the interactive Maryland Food Systems Map met the requirements of the proposed directory and if additional information is needed that's not included in the map. Colby Ferguson said that the data tables on the website should suffice. Dan will contact other subcommittee members for consensus, then put the data in a more usable form for the subcommittee's purposes.

C. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)

Jason Dubow reported that the Subcommittee met on October 28 to discuss next steps on the Priority Action Items approved by the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission. Next steps identified included the following: First, with regard to promoting potential state grant programs to support commercial-scale wood energy, the Subcommittee discussed different community colleges and universities that have expressed interest and how wood energy is one of DNR's strategies in Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Subcommittee members agreed to reach out to their university contacts to encourage their pursuit of wood energy systems, which can power both heating and air conditioning. Second, with regard to the need to integrate sediment and erosion control plans into forest management plans, DNR staff developed a white paper to explain the urgency of this regulatory reform. Subcommittee members offered to provide different services, including review of the white paper, obtaining endorsement of the white paper, and the convening of a forum for a larger discussion to help move the issue forward. Third, with regard to forest cooperatives, the Subcommittee agreed that an important step would be to find a county willing to pilot a single permit (and single fee) approach for a collective group of landowners interested in harvesting and tree care. The pending meeting with Charles County and the Charles County Soil Conservation District, mentioned at the last Workgroup meeting, with assistance from the Subcommittee's MACo designee, Charles Rice, will inform the Subcommittee's work on these issues. Other items discussed included getting onto the agenda for the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture (GICA), which has addressed regulatory obstacles to other agricultural product industries, such as viticulture, and the finalization of DNR's pending list of suppliers in Maryland of local or certified wood, which can be of significant interest to local architects and developers seeking to construct green buildings.

D. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)

Dan Rosen reported that the Subcommittee had not met since the last Workgroup meeting in July. Since then a new issue has arisen on the horizon: using farmland for industrial scale electricity generation from solar panels. The Maryland Energy Administration, MACo, and other stakeholders are working on the matter. The central concern is the extent to which power generation facilities are exempt from local and state regulations. The stakeholders are not opposed to renewable energy but would like local prerogatives to be respected.

E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator)

Mr. Boyd indicated that following the Rock Hall Working Waterfronts presentation, he would be working with Jim Mullins to start initiate a work plan for this subcommittee, probably focusing on the implementation of these working waterfront plans.

4. Next Workgroup meeting is January 13 at 3 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.