



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 20, 2019

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on May 10th 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 12.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Economies Workgroup
Date and time:	May 10, 2019 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Chuck Boyd, Elliott Campbell, Deborah Carpenter, Debbie Herr Cornwell, Suzanne Dorsey, Jason Dubow, Colby Ferguson, Caroline Green, Joe Griffiths, Les Knapp, Steve McHenry, Jim Mullin, John Papagni, Dan Rider, Dan Rosen, Paul Spies
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
1. Attendance – 16 members attended in person or by conference call.	
2. Mr. Boyd briefed the Workgroup on the status of Growth Commission and its upcoming scheduled meeting in Crownsville, MD on May 20.	
3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions:	
A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)	
Dan Rider, DNR Forestry, provided an update on two projects.	
1. DNR continues to make progress with its MOU with MDE to allow for state foresters to assist with ensuring compliance with state sediment and erosion control law while onsite during forestry operations. DNR expects to begin implementing the activities within the MOU later this year. Beginning in 2020, DNR Forestry will re-initiate the pilot project with the Charles County Soil	

Conservation District that will integrate sediment and erosion control requirements into the landowner's forest management plan. This will facilitate timber harvest transactions by providing certainty to the timber buyer and significantly reducing the amount of time before timber harvest could begin, all while ensuring environmental regulatory compliance. The idea for the pilot project resulted from the efforts of the Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee's efforts.

2. Lastly, Dan Rider noted recent significant impacts to Maryland's forestry industry, including the loss of the paper mill in Western Maryland and 3 sawmills in St. Mary's, Dorchester and Wicomico Counties. He reported on DNR's intent to pursue funding from U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for an economic adjustment strategy. He noted that Maryland's forestry industry provides \$2.8 billion to Maryland's economy. A letter of support from the Commission would be very helpful.

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

Dan Rosen reported the Subcommittee has not met since its March 11 meeting, but he noted the Subcommittee has continued to work on two projects:

1. Livestock Processing Directory/Map: The map includes the inventory of beef cows, pigs and hogs, and sheep and lambs in each county. These data come from the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture, but the 2017 Census data have been released; the map will be updated next. In reply to Daniel Rosen's question, Steve McHenry said that the new livestock processing facility in St. Mary's County is not opened yet and is awaiting its USDA license. Once opened the facility will be added to the directory/map.
2. Community Kitchen Directory: Dan reported that county agricultural marketing professionals added a few community kitchens to the draft directory. The Subcommittee, however, still has not found a good source for kitchens made available by churches, fire brigades, etc. Caroline Green (MDH) reported to the subcommittee in her April e-mail that certain kitchens in a church, civic organization, etc. are operated as an "excluded organization" and cannot be used as an incubator kitchen (although they can be used by that excluded organization to prepare foods for events held by that excluded organization), so that could be an opportunity at least as an end-use for farmers. This issue will require further research by the Subcommittee. The plan is to complete a director and prepare a map similar in concept to the Livestock Process Directory/Map.

C. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator)

Deborah Carpenter reported the Subcommittee met on

1. The group discussed agritourism opportunities in rural communities, specifically reviewing the research from Dan Rosen on the topic. Knapp noted that this is still a big issue for counties and that the Planners Affiliate would be willing to discuss this issue as well. Boyd stressed the need to involve GICA, MDA, and AMPs in any discussions. Boyd will make arrangements to get the appropriate people to the table for discussions.
2. The group discussed small town revitalization and Debbie Carpenter highlighted the ReInvest MD website as a resource. Boyd explained the Planning Department intends to buildout the website and market it to local governments and private sector, including more direct outreach to Economic Development staff and MEDA.

3. The group discussed their role in helping to expand rural high-speed internet and decided that other groups such as the Rural Maryland Council are taking the lead and we should monitor their efforts and look for opportunities to support them.
4. The group briefly discussed the topic of Parks and Trails as economic development engines in rural areas led to an increased knowledge of the Great Allegheny Passage and Trail Towns. Caroline Green noted the community health benefit and will provide information to the groups on MDH initiatives to promote partnerships in creating active communities.
(See attached Subcommittee Minutes for more details.)

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

Chuck Boyd reported that Greg Bowen, Elliott Campbell, Jason Dubow and Dan Rosen held a conference call on April 30 to explore the opportunity to use DNR's "Parcel Evaluation Tool" that provides a Conservation Benefits and Ecosystem Service Assessment Report Card for every land parcel in Maryland, and combine it with data from the Beacon's *The Impact of Resource Based Industries on the Maryland Economy 2018*, and possibly other sources to present a comprehensive look at the value of preserved land on a statewide basis from a multitude of perspectives. Planning staff is following up on this meeting to research the subject more and formulate a potential work plan.

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

4. Next Workgroup meeting is July 12, 2019 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup – Rural Development & Recreation Subcommittee Minutes	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Development & Recreation Subcommittee
Date and time:	April 4, 2019
Called by: D. Carpenter	Facilitator’s Name: Deborah Carpenter
Attendance:	Deborah Carpenter, Joe Rogers, Jim Mullin, Caroline Green, Les Knapp and Chuck Boyd
Notes Taken By:	Deborah Carpenter
Minutes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting began with an update on the latest Sustainable Growth Commission meeting and the progress on A Better MD. At that meeting the Smart Growth Challenge Award winners presented to the group. Those presentations will be posted to the Sustainable Growth Commission’s website. The group learned that a draft of the A Better MD document is anticipated for release mid-May with a June 30th deadline for final presentation to the Governor. 2. Next the group focused on the topic of agritourism, specifically reviewing the research from Dan Rosen on the topic. Knapp noted that this is still a big issue for counties and that the Planners Affiliate would be willing to discuss this issue as well. Boyd stressed the need to involve GICA, MDA, and AMPs in any discussions. Chuck Boyd will make arrangements to get the appropriate people to the table for discussions. 3. The group discussed small town revitalization and Carpenter highlighted the ReInvest MD website as a resource. Boyd explained that the marketing strategy is planning to be enhanced with webinars, YouTube videos, newsletters, training opportunities and direct outreach to Economic Development staff and MEDA. 4. Discussion regarding rural high-speed internet centered around the groups’ role and the work that is already being done. It was decided that other groups such as the Rural Maryland Council are taking the lead and we should let them do their work without interference. 5. A brief discussion about Parks and Trails as economic development engines in rural areas led to an increased knowledge of the Great Allegheny Passage and Trail Towns. Green noted the community health benefit and will provide information to the groups on MDH initiatives to promote partnerships in creating active communities. 6. The next meeting will be held June 6, 2019. 	
Key Actions to be taken prior to next meeting	Describe action and indicate when action is due
1.	Debbie will create and distribute minutes and summary from this meeting and the agenda for next meeting.
2.	Chuck will initiate discussions with MDA re. agritourism
3.	Caroline will supply links to MDH Healthy Community Initiatives
Resource Materials used and draft documents	- Agenda, Research by Dan Rosen on Agritourism, ReInvest MD website, Vermont High Speed Internet Article, Task for on Rural Internet Report, Trail Town Program link