

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 18, 2020

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on May 8th 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 10.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For: Rural Economies Workgroup	
Date and time:	May 8, 2020 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Marty Baker, L.J. Bennett, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Carpenter, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Charlotte Davis, Jason Dubow, Joe Griffiths, Les Knapp, Steve McHenry, Jim Mullin, John Papagni, Dan Rosen,
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance – 13 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 on May 18, which would be conducted virtually. 3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators) Jason Dubow reported: The Maryland Clean Energy Center is hosting 5 webinars on wood energy in June, focusing on the environmental benefits and showcasing their sustainable applications - see https://www.mdcleanenergy.org/biomass/ <p>According to Dan Rider, the DNR/MDE MOU to allow DNR Forest Service staff to assist with ensuring compliance with environmental laws during harvests is proceeding but is delayed somewhat due to the COVID crisis. The delay of field training days has pushed back the start date for implementing the program to October 1. Site visit forms have been established, and</p> 	

DNR has conducted a few dry-runs of how field visits would occur. DNR continues to collaborate with MDE on protocols to implement the program, for example: how does DNR Forest Service get informed of a harvest and coordinate on the review of permit applications, schedule site visits, and share reports with soil conservation districts and MDE.

Progress on the U.S. Commerce-funded economic adjustment strategy (EAS) is moving quickly. Many of the same issues addressed in the woodyard study provided answers or insights that are directly applicable to the EAS: for example, a chief problem Maryland has in retaining and recruiting the forest industry is the perception that Maryland is a tough place to establish new businesses and a widespread perception that Maryland does not like and therefore does not want the forest industry. Overcoming that perception will be a significant focus within the EAS. The consultant is scheduling interviews with individual businesses and scheduling group sessions (focus groups) with industry as well. Also, the forest inventory analysis is underway and pre-work on identifying specific markets to target for additional investigation.

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

Deborah Carpenter reported that the Subcommittee met on February 6 to discuss the following: 1) updates on Growth Commission and A Better Maryland implementation; 2) the shortage of Agricultural Marketing professionals (AMPs) on the Eastern Shore; 3) small town revitalization strategies and the MD APA presentation on Overcoming Barriers to Infill & Adaptive Reuse; 4) updates to Reinvest Maryland website; trail and park development as an economic development strategy. The subcommittee did not meet in April but will be having its next meeting on June 11.

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

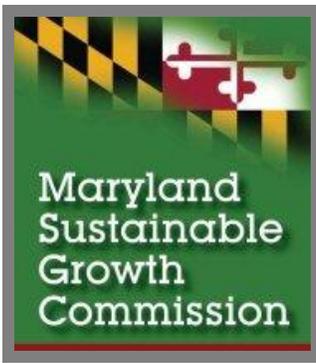
Dan Rosen reported the Subcommittee has not met for a while, but he noted the Subcommittee has continued to work on the Community Kitchen Directory project, but will hold off developing a final list of locations until after the COVID-19 pandemic is over to confirm whether the community kitchens are still open.

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

Jason Dubow reported Planning recently completed its quarterly update of the state's land preservation dashboard – see <https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/0f3ffd3350b24b17bd3b8e1705af3df5>

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

4. Next Workgroup meeting is May 8, 2020 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.



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 13, 2020

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on March 13th 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 8.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Economies Workgroup
Date and time:	March 13, 2020 @ 3 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Marty Baker, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Megan Darcy, Charlotte Davis, Jason Dubow, Joe Griffiths, Les Knapp, Jim Mullin, Dan Rider, Dan Rosen,
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance – 11 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 March 23, which is likely to be cancelled. 3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators) Jason Dubow reported: 1) DNR Forest Service continues to implement tasks that are part of the U.S. Commerce grant project. They have chosen a contractor for the economic adjustment strategy (ACDS LLC, aka Phil Gottwals) and had a kick-off meeting with them. A draft economic adjustment strategy should be completed by early fall with a final report due the end of October. Another task from the U.S. Commerce grant project is underway, which is a comprehensive survey of local zoning, including where forest processing facilities are allowed to be sited and additional requirements and restrictions for siting forest processing facilities in each county; 2) Also, DNR and MDE are continuing to work on the MDE/DNR MOU to support conformance with complicated environmental 	

regulations impacting timber harvests. The start date for the MOU is July 1; 3) the DNR Forest Action Plan draft will be shared soon.

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

Chuck Boyd reported for Deborah Carpenter that the Subcommittee met on February 6 to discuss the following: 1) updates on Growth Commission and A Better Maryland implementation; 2) the shortage of Agricultural Marketing professionals (AMPs) on the Eastern Shore; 3) small town revitalization strategies and the MD APA presentation on Overcoming Barriers to Infill & Adaptive Reuse; 4) updates to Reinvest Maryland website; trail and park development as an economic development strategy. The subcommittee will be having its next meeting on April 9.

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

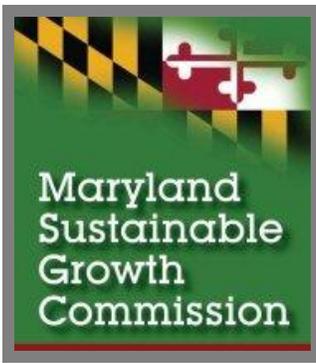
Dan Rosen reported the Subcommittee has not met for a while, but he noted the Subcommittee has continued to work on the Community Kitchen Directory project.

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

Jason Dubow reported Planning is developing a draft solar siting guidance webpage. The webpage is in response to the Governor's Task Force on Renewable Energy Development and Siting, which is seeking to identify ways to minimize the loss of agricultural and forest land to new utility-scale solar facilities. The webpage will include case studies of how local governments in Maryland have addressed solar siting, will identify best practices and lessons learned, and will provide a one-stop location to learn about the current judicial and administrative decisions affecting local solar siting efforts.

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

4. Next Workgroup meeting is May 8, 2020 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.



To: Susan Summers, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

From: Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

Subj: Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

Date: January 27, 2020

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on January 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 March 13.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Economies Workgroup
Date and time:	January 10, 2020 @ 3 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Marty Baker, Chuck Boyd, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Joe Griffiths, Jim Mullin, Dan Rosen, Francine Waters
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
1. Attendance – 7 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 January 27.	
3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions:	
A. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator) Chuck Boyd reported that Deborah Carpenter cancelled the December 5 meeting due to her taking a new job in Charles County. The subcommittee will be having its next meeting on February 6.	
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:	
1. <u>Community Kitchen Directory</u> : Dan reported the draft community kitchen directory was presented at the MARBIDCO meeting on December 18th. Attendees were asked to edit/add to/delete the facilities on the list.	

- C. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators)
Chuck Boyd reported for Jason Dubow, who was not able attend, but he received an email from Dan Rider updating on the status of several of DNR's grant initiatives, which Chuck Boyd read to the workgroup

US Commerce (EDA) Grant

The Economic Adjustment Strategy is moving forward: the RFP for the consultant was issued on January 2nd. Proposals are due to the Western MD RC&D by February 6th.

I'd also like to point out that part of the EDA funding pays for the development of a **statewide interactive GIS resource that links forestry data with economic development data**. For example, imagine a lumber company seeking a site for expansion: the GIS will allow relating wet-weather forest inventories to locations of key business needs, such as opportunity zones, highways and rails, locations of competitors, locations of potential partners, etc. AS far as I know, this would be the first of its kind in the US. The Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) is developing the GIS.

MAERDAF funded activities

Several grants were awarded by MAERDAF to elevate the awareness of forestry's importance to our quality of life:

The Maryland Forests Association conducted **3 listening sessions** across the State to first inform the audiences of the current status of key forest industries, and the purpose of the Economic Adjustment Strategy. These meetings will help later when the EAS consultant is pursuing input on what's working (and not working), and what opportunities should be pursued. Later this year, the MFA will sponsor additional meetings to assist the consultant with gathering input, convene a review committee to consider the early recommendations, and then host a statewide meeting to release and discuss the final report.

In addition to the EDA funding, the Western MD RC&D also received a MAERDAF grant to evaluate the **business prospects of a woodyard** operating in western Maryland. The intent is to determine whether or not the 1 million tons of pulpwood formerly consumed by the Verso mill in Luke could be redirected to various markets regionally or nationally. Similar types of woodyards also provide marketing capacities for wood products beyond pulpwood, such as enabling the distribution of sawlogs harvested to and from areas normally too distant to be economically viable.

Inspired by the Sustainable Forestry Council, the Maryland Forestry Foundation is partnering with the Maryland Clean Energy Center to delve deeply into the policy issues surrounding wood biomass utilization for renewable energy. The first step is to prepare a white paper discussing the merits and potential for wood energy in Maryland, and then discuss the barriers. This will then be followed by a one-day invitation-only forum for the environmental and renewable energy leaders to hopefully embrace the future for **using renewable energy markets as a much-needed tool for forest restoration** and sustainability.

MDE/DNR MOU

MDE and FS have a plan for engaging a forester with the loggers on every timber harvest. This **begins July 1, 2020**. A major step forward occurred with the adoption of new logging sediment and erosion control permits that explicitly provide landowner consent for DNR Foresters to enter their lands. With that accomplished, we now focus on

training our respective staffs on the communication protocols, document sharing, reporting, and field coordination.

A co-benefit of this effort is the development of a **General Permit for stream crossings**. DNR would be the permittee, and compliance would be ensured through the engagement process discussed above. Loggers and landowners would benefit from a speedier permitting process, and performance of the crossings would likely improve with the higher degree of **professional involvement** with design and implementation.

Charles SCD Pilot

Charles Farm Bureau, Forestry Board and the SCD discussed the concept of incorporating S&E into Forest Stewardship Plans. They rejected the concept. **Unfortunately, this effectively kills the effort** (for now). I was not invited to attend the discussion and that was unfortunate for it's clear to me that much of what they presumed could have been easily clarified and possibly allowed for a different discussion to occur. It's my belief that the idea is in fact a good idea and it's worth pursuing again, probably in a County where forestry is more familiar to the decision-makers.

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

No activities to report.

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

4. Next Workgroup meeting is March 13, 2020 at 3 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.