

The Mid Shore Regional Council held a regularly scheduled meeting on March 18, 2009 at the Caroline County Library in Denton, Caroline County. Members in attendance included: Allen Nelson, Bill Brooks, Burton Wilson, Carolyn Spicher, Ellery Adams, Gale Nashold, Jeff Ghrist, Robert Hanson, Kurt Fuchs, Lin Spicer, and Walter Chase. Economic Development Directors in attendance were: Keasha Haythe of Dorchester County and JOK Walsh of Caroline County. County Managers/Administrators in attendance were Andy Hollis of Talbot County and Rick Barton of Caroline County. MSRC Staff present was: Scott Warner, Wenfei Uva and Terry Deighan. Guests in attendance included: Jim McCormick of Caroline County; Lee Whaley, representative of Senator Ben Cardin; Sarah Bunch, Economic Development and Transportation Planner; Mindie Burgoyne of DBED, Linda Prochaska, special assistant to Senator Mikulski; and Eric Rippons of Cambridge.

Action Items:

Mr. Adams gave the blessing, dinner was served and Chairman Nashold called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. at which time introductions were made. The first order of business was approval of the minutes from the November 12, 2008 meeting. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Mr. Chase seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously. The next order of business was approval of the treasurer's report. Treasurer Allen Nelson presented the report highlighting a few minor changes in reporting format due to changes in budgeting; Chairman Nashold asked if there were any questions, being none the report was accepted as presented.

Before continuing with the agenda Chairman Nashold asked DBED representative Mindie Burgoyne if she would like to address the Council. Ms. Burgoyne took the opportunity to give an update on the changes within DBED, including the appointment of Christian Johansson as the Secretary.

Old Business

Update on MSRC becoming an EDA Economic Development District

Mr. Warner explained to the Board that the first week of March 2009 EDA Area Director Calvin Edghill informed the MSRC that he is anticipating the EDD packet to be in final review by the new EDA Washington DC staff very soon. Mr. Edghill asked the MSRC to get updated support letters with new dates in case they might be needed; letters from the Governor's office, Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties. The Governor's letter was received at the MSRC office on March 11, 2009, and as of this evening the MSRC was also in receipt of all three letters from the Counties as well. To better explain how important EDD Districts are and how few there are Mr. Warner supplied Board Members with color coded maps of the state of Maryland showing the individual EDD Districts to date.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Mr. Warner announced that on December 15, 2009 the MSRC held the CEDS Executive Committee meeting at which time they had to evaluate six proposed projects. Of the six

projects submitted four made the criteria to be presented to the full CEDS Committee on January 6, 2009. At that meeting all four projects were approved for inclusion in the document. The MSRC staff updated the CEDS document and on February 18, 2009 the updated CEDS document was sent to the EDA Philadelphia office. The updated document can be viewed on the MSRC website at www.midshore.org, click on "Reports & Publications".

Maryland Broadband Cooperative

Mr. Warner stated that the state \$3.8 million has been approved to match the \$3.2 million EDA funds and construction has started below Salisbury, also pre-engineering is being done from Elkton to Chesapeake College, which includes the Caroline Technology Park; construction should start within the next couple of months. The Salisbury to Chesapeake Bay Bridge construction is complete and testing is currently under way. Also Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Parole talks are progressing. To date there are currently over 40 members of the MdBC and the MdBC has been very engaged with state and federal officials concerning the federal broadband stimulus package working closely with Office of the Governor - Intergovernmental / GOCI Executive Director Izzy Patoka, DBRD Financing Programs Managing Director Jim Henry as well as both Senators' Cardin and Mikulski's offices.

Business and Technology Parks

Caroline County

Caroline County Administrator Rick Barton informed Board members the first phase of the park is nearing completion and focus is being emphasized on promoting what is ready now and not to rush the project but to realize it is a long term vision and to treat it as such.

Dorchester County

Dorchester County Economic Development Director Keasha Haythe gave an update stating they have been working closely with the MSRC and EDA Economic Development Representative Anne Cavalier in preparing the pre-application for the Dorchester County Business and Technology Park EDA grant and she hopes to be able to submit the pre application shortly as the MOU has been approved by Dorchester County Council and City of Cambridge Council and is awaiting signatures. In addition, she hopes to put out an RFP for sewer in the next 30 or 60 days.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC)

In Executive Director Fred Smyth's absence ESEC President Allen Nelson gave the following updates concerning ESEC activities. ESEC has continued to work with St. Michael's officials and organizations to revitalize the business environment in town. Fred Smyth is now also on the Denton Redevelopment Committee. He is also working with several micro loan applicants; 2 in Dorchester County, 1 in Denton and 2 in Talbot County. He has lent technical assistance as well as brain capital consulting assistance to several businesses; 3 in Dorchester County, 2 in Caroline County and 3 in Talbot County. He has been working with Dorchester Chamber to establish a 'brain capital' group to focus on Dorchester since a majority of the requests have come from Dorchester in the past six months, and also ground work is being laid to establish a Latino Chamber of Commerce under the Dorchester Chamber. A Dorchester CEO roundtable will launch in conjunction with the Economic Development Office and the Dorchester Chamber, hopeful the same will happen in Caroline County.

Shore Venture entrepreneurship preparatory program

Mr. Nelson explained this program is a partnership with Chesapeake College and SCORE, implementing the FastTrac program by the Kauffman Foundation. The first class was March 11, 2009 at Chesapeake College and there were 40 participants; 11 from Caroline County, 15 from Dorchester County, 10 from Talbot County and 4 from Kent County. The program seems to be quite a success to date and has a waiting list for the next session already. Mr. Nelson added in addition to classes already underway talks have begun about possibly adding a retail/restaurant class as well to the program.

MUST (Maryland Upper Shore Transit)

In MUST Coordinator and Chesapeake Bay Region Technical Center of Excellence C.E.O. John General's absence Mr. Warner gave the following updates. The MUST program FY10 budget requests have been submitted to the State for \$156,700 (last year's allocation of \$40,000 plus the \$116,700 additional budget from the May 2008 Business Plan), the MSRC will probably receive \$40,000 (amount received the last several years) with each County submitting \$5,000 each (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot). The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)/New Freedom (public transportation funding) grants were reviewed by the regional committee and recommendations were forwarded to the state. The scheduling and asset allocation system advanced technology demonstration project final report is being drafted by KFH Group Senior Transportation Planner Buffy Ellis. It should be completed in the near future. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) Building a Vision for Regional Transportation Committee is finalizing the study briefs and preparing recommendations. The study was headed by Stu Sirota of TND Planning Group. The ESLC will promote the recommendations by presenting to the Eastern Shore regional councils. And the CBRTCE's BRAC Impact on Eastern Shore Commuting Patterns Study should be completed by mid-April

Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

Wenfei Uva gave the following updates she has been working on since the MSRC last met. She has continued to Support Farmers' Market Development in the Region.

The local Farmers Market Starting Dates are as follows:

Caroline County: Denton Main Street Farmers Market – May 13th, 2009,
Federalburg Farmers Market – 4-H operated (July-August)

Dorchester County: Cambridge Main Street Farmers Market – mid-May 2009

Talbot County - Easton Farmers Market and St. Michaels FreshFarm Market –
April 18th, 2009; Oxford Farmers Market – May 6th, 2009

Dr. Uva also shared there will be an additional farmer's market pilot project this year in Federalburg and it will be run by the 4-H Club.

This year Wenfei announced she has also been assisting in organizing farmers markets at local festivals including Oxford Day in Oxford – April 25, 2009. The Nanticoke River Shad and Music Festival – Vienna, April 25, 2009 and the Delmarva Chicken Festival – Queen Ann County 4-H Park – June 19 and 20, 2009. She encouraged everyone to try and attend. She has been developing Educational Farm Tours to Promote Agriculture in the Region. Including assisting Dockside Express, a tour company in Tilghman, to organize two farms tour packages – one in May and one in August 2009. She has also been in collaboration with Dockside Express, local farms and county tourism offices in planning agricultural tours for the 2009 Buy Local Week celebration between July 18th and 26th, 2009. As she mentioned at our last meeting she is continuing the Four Season Tour collaboration with the Easton Club East community. Also on February 5th, Dr. Uva

attended the 2009 Maryland Agriculture Dinner in Glen Burnie. More than 850 people attended the dinner. The Mid-Shore Regional Council received a \$1,000 award to develop agriculture tourism marketing materials for the Mid-Shore region.

Shore Gourmet

Dr. Uva has been collaborating with the Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC), the Shore Gourmet Denton Market located at the Emerson House Restaurant opened for businesses in November 2008. Beth Brewster, Director of CCC was pleased with the holiday sales. The Shore Gourmet Market will be moving with the CCC at the end of March to the corner of Market and 2nd Streets. Dr. Uva continues to recruit new retail outlets and producers for Shore Gourmet and is coordinating with Shore Gourmet businesses and the St. Michaels Food and Wine Festival for a Shore Gourmet exhibit at the 2009 St. Michaels Food and Wine Festival on April 24 to 26, 2009 on the campus of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels. A proposal to the USDA Rural Development office for a Rural Business Enterprise Grant for future funding for Shore Gourmet has been submitted and we should know if Shore Gourmet will receive the grant or not in the near future.

Grape and Wine Industry Development

Dr. Uva continues to work with the Maryland Wineries Association to develop a Chesapeake Wine Trail – to promote and market the wineries on Maryland’s Eastern Shore – scheduled to be launched in May (Talbot – currently - St. Michaels Winery and Little Ashby’s Vineyards, in planning – Tidewater Vineyard; Dorchester – 2010 - Layton’s Vineyard and Winery).

Agricultural Business Development and Recruitment

Dr. Uva has also provided consultation to businesses and individuals on developing and evaluating their agricultural ventures. Last year, the MSRC had a couple successes working with producers in the region applying to the USDA Value-Added Producer Grant. This year, the MSRC will be working with 3-5 producers in the Mid-Shore Region to submit proposals. The program application is scheduled to be announced sometime in March.

General Operations

On December 4th, MSRC and MARBIDCO co-sponsored an Eastern Shore Rural Business Service Providers forum in Easton. About 50 people participated, and a number of federal and state agencies, as well as, regional and local organizations and businesses shared their programs and resources for working with rural businesses. An Agriculture Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting was held on December 17th. In the meeting, the committee agreed to serve as the Board of Directors for Shore Gourmet, Inc.

Mindie Burgoyne of DBED stated she went on several business site visits this past month with Dr. Uva and wanted to share how impressed she was with her professionalism and knowledge, and wanted to express how important it is to continue to get funding for her position as she is a remarkable resource with a terrific depth of education and helpful experience which enriches our area.

Eastern Shore Economic Development/Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) partnership

Mr. Warner announced the partnership held a conference entitled “Business Opportunities through Technology Transfer” at Salisbury University on January 29, 2009.

The aim of the event was for Eastern Shore businesses to join state and local economic development professionals to leverage advancing technology for new business opportunities and get assistance in solving individual business challenges, several panel discussions took place including the University Panel, Economic Development Panel, and Federal Agency Panel. A presentation by TEDCO regarding funding opportunities was also provided. Break-out sessions by EPA, NASA, and USDA-ARS were also held. Mr. Warner noted there was a keen interest shown regarding the Geo Dashboarding presentation given during the conference. Sponsors of the event included: Mid-Atlantic Federal Lab Consortium, Salisbury University, Maryland TEDCO, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, Small Business Development Center, Chesapeake Bay Regional Technical Center for Excellence, University of Delaware, TCCLES and the MSRC. Some of the local key organizers were CEO of CBRTCE John General, Talbot County Economic Development Director Paige Bethke and DBED Eastern Shore Regional Development Representative Mindie Burgoyne.

Regional Council FY10 funding

Mr. Warner informed MSRC Members that the TCCLES Executive Director Mike Pennington and he had a meeting on January 13, 2009 with staff members in the Office of the Governor, Intergovernmental / Governor's Office of Community Initiatives Executive Director Izzy Patoka and Special Assistant Ashley Valis, to explain the activities of the MSRC and TCCLES. They thought they may only have 15 to 20 minutes when in fact they spent over an hour and fifteen minutes with Mr. Patoka and Ms. Valis. Mr. Warner and Mr. Pennington also informed them on the legislation that forms the Councils and the standing within the government and the allocation funding mandate.

Currently, the DBED budget has the council FY10 funding at \$112,000 and the Department of Legislative Services recommended the Council budgets be reduced to FY09 funding \$98,000. DBED is recommending that the Councils stay at \$112,000.

GIS Dashboarding Project update

Mr. Warner introduced Sarah Bunch who is the newly hired Economic Development and Transportation Planner; she works along with James Garrity who is the Eastern Shore Economic Development Dashboard Specialist but could not join us this evening. Ms. Bunch works to develop economic development data and maps to enhance the return on economic and workforce development investments, and to enhance transportation planning in the MSRC and TCCLES regions through the use of interactive, real-time executive dashboards. Ms. Bunch brought along an interactive slide show to demonstrate how information is utilized by this methodology. Mr. Warner reminded everyone that this initiative is a partnership between MSRC, TCCLES, ESRGC, and BEACON supported by DBED and EDA. DBED is using this initiative to serve as a pilot project for the entire State. EDA is using this initiative as a pilot project for the entire East Coast/Nation.

New Business

None

Other matters

None

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

Mr. Nelson made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 p.m., Mr. Chase seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent.