

Mid Shore Regional Council
Minutes
February 16, 2005

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Mid Shore Regional Council was held on February 16, 2005 at the Caroline Country Club in Denton Maryland. Members in attendance were: Jim Gring, Fred Smyth, Walter Chase, Gale Nashold, Charlie Cawley, Ellery Adams, Hilary Spence, Hope Harrington, Marty Gangemi, Mindie Burgoyne, Thomas Flowers, Roger Layton, Kevin Morse and Terry Deighan. Several guests were also present including; Shane Johnston, Betsey Krempasky, Dr. Michael Scott and David Houle.

Call to Order

Chairman Gangemi called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm after which those present stated their name and affiliation. Mr. Gangemi informed the Board he was in possession of proxy votes from Senator Colburn and Delegate Eckardt.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Harrington that was seconded by Ms. Spence the minutes of December 8, 2004 were approved by unanimous vote.

Treasurers report

On a motion by Ms. Harrington that was seconded by Ms. Spence the treasurer's report was approved by unanimous vote.

Reports

Broadband:

Mr. Morse stated that progress on the cooperative wireless network recommended by the Yankee Group has been stalled in anticipation that Bay Broadband will successfully raise the capital they need to deploy their 9 county system. Ms. Spence added that she had heard that Bay Broadband had obtained the funding necessary and is moving forward with their plans. Mr. Morse pointed out that Bay Broadband still only solves part of our problem. They will provide greater access to broadband yet their prices are similar to current rates and their wholesale prices are still in the \$200 per megabyte range compared to western shore wholesale prices of \$30 per megabyte.

Daycare and Work Ethic Task Force:

Mr. Morse informed Board members that two new task forces have been formed one to address the lack of affordable daycare and another to address the poor work ethic that many of our employers find frustrating. A gap analysis and survey will be conducted by Dr. Diriker. The goal is either verify or dispel the myth of work ethic problems and quantify the costs associated with workforce retention and lack of affordable health care. Dr. Tom added he feels Dorchester County has a severe problem in these areas and Father Chris would like to try and incorporate the Latino population more into the workforce possibly using this as a stepping stone.

Near Equity Fund:

Mr. Morse informed the Board the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center was going to be the recipient of \$100,000 from DBED's MEAF program for the Near Equity Fund. TEDCO is also going to be a new partner in this project by donating \$25,000.00 to the project. Once the fund is established it would be eligible for up to a million dollars a year in lending capital from USDA and up to \$5M per year from SBA.

Proposed changes in EDA and USDA funding programs:

Mr. Morse explained a proposal has been presented to congress that will eliminate the EDA, CDBG programs and create a new programmed called the Strengthening Americas Communities Initiative. This proposal is of great concern to Economic Development Districts across the nation because it limits the annual planning grant funds we receive from the EDA and the creative financing tools frequently used by our small towns and rural counties. The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is opposing this initiative. A special report by NADO that outlines all of the proposed changes was distributed to the Board.

New Business/Action Items

Election results and new officers

Mr. Gangemi announced the following election results for the Boards approval;

Chairman: Marty Gangemi

First vice Chair (Caroline County) Roger Layton

Second vice Chair (Dorchester) Dr. Thomas Flowers

Third vice Chair (Talbot County) Hope Harrington

Secretary: Hilary Spence

Treasurer: Mayor Cleveland Rippons

Ms. Harrington made a motion to accept the slate as presented, Ms. Spence seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by the Board.

By-law amendment

Mr. Morse informed the Board that the MSRC legal counsel recommended we modify ARTICLE VIII of our by-laws to enable the Executive Director to execute/sign agreements with other government agencies approved by the Board (a copy of these changes are attached as part of these minutes) This will expedite contract arrangements and eliminate a the time consuming process of obtaining multiple signatures on agreements. Ms. Harrington made a motion to accept the changes, Ms. Spence seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous consent.

Executive board scheduling change

Mr. Gangemi stated that the Executive Board would like to start meeting directly before the regular meetings starting in May. He requested approval of the scheduling change. There was no discussion from the Board and the meeting change request was approved by unanimous consent.

Regional storm water engineer

Mr. Morse explained to the Board that Caroline County has notified him of their interest in a Regional Stormwater Engineer. Mr. Cawley explained that the individual would work for all three counties and report to the MSRC board of directors. By sharing the expense, the counties would be able to meet the demand for a stormwater specialist and provide an attractive salary. Betsey Krempasky and Shane Johnston both were in favor of creating such a position and after a brief discussion among the Board members Ms. Harrington instructed Mr. Morse to address the individual councils and managers on the subject and to continue to investigate the need including the cost involved, duties and the reasoning behind creating the position.

MSRC's role in growth issues – Growth Impact Assessments

Mr. Cawley explained he has been working with Dr. Scott to assess what the towns and county will look like under the current build out potential in the existing comprehensive plans. The assessment will estimate costs for infrastructure and provide visual representations of the growth scenarios so citizens better understand what the county will look like as the population increases. He went on to explain that this is critical information the county needs to enter into agreements with the towns so the costs of services is defined and mechanisms are put in place so the cost burden is equitable and feasible. Mr. Cawley suggested the MSRC and the GIS coop could be contracted to provide similar assessments for the region. The board requested that Dr. Scott present what this assessment will look like at our next board meeting.

MSRC 3 year organizational assessment and strategic planning session

Mr. Morse reminded the Board Mr. Jim Youngquist will be conducting interviews on May 9-11 and if they have not yet scheduled a time to be interviewed they should do so. The results of the assessment will be presented at our May 11th board meeting in Cambridge.

Appointment to Board of Directors for MARBIDCO

Mr. Morse shared with the Board he has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the MARBIDCO Board of Directors which meets in Annapolis.

Pax River presentation at April meeting

Mr. Morse stated to the Board that representatives from the Pax River Naval Air Station have requested to be on our May agenda to discuss future growth and its impact on the Naval Air Station and surrounding communities. They want to work with county planners and elected officials to ensure new residents are aware of the flyover zones in an effort to pre-empt or reduce complaints and conflicts.

Member Matters

Ms. Spence announced she will be serving on the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) Board and will keep the MSRC Board informed of ongoing matters.

Adjourn

Ms. Spence made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Harrington seconded and it was approved unanimously.