

The Mid Shore Regional Council held a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting on September 10, 2009. The meeting was a special trip to Wallops Island and was conducted on a DCT bus on the way. Members in attendance were: Ellery Adams, Walter Chase, Senator Colburn, Maria D'Arcy, Delegate Jeanne Haddaway-Riccio, Robbie Hanson, Frank Narr, Gale Nashold and Carolyn Spicher. Talbot County Manager Andy Hollis attended via telephone carrying two proxies for council members. Mid Shore Regional Council staff present was: Scott Warner, Wenfei Uva and Terry Deighan. Economic Development Corporation Executive Director JOK Walsh was also present as well as many guests including: Melanie Anderson, Chris Jarboe and LeRoy Mattingly of PAX Naval Air Station, Mindie Burgoyne of DBED, Thomas Mattingly and Bob Schaller of St. Mary's County, Jim McCormick of Caroline County, Linda Prochaska, Special Assistant for Senator Mikulski. Guests' Kevin Deighan, Jan Falcey, Melissa Gray and bus driver Henry Wright.

### Action Items

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m., introductions were made and the first order of business was approval of the June 10, 2009 minutes. On a motion by Mr. Chase that was seconded by Carolyn Spicher the minutes were approved by unanimous consent. The second order of business was review of the treasurer's report.

### Old Business

The first item under Old Business was an update on MSRC becoming an EDA Economic Development District. Mr. Warner announced that everyone that the MSRC has communicated with has informed the MSRC that designation should be announced shortly and once the designation is complete the MSRC will work with Senator Mikulski and the other Maryland federal delegation, as well as the Governor regarding a press event, ideally, the event will take place at the Hyatt in Cambridge at the Joint Meeting with the TCCLES scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2009.

#### *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*

Secondly Mr. Warner brought the Council up to speed on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). He stated that the first CEDS meeting for the 2009 document update would be held next week, Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 12:30pm at the Talbot County Free Library in Easton. As mentioned at the June 10 quarterly meeting two projects that were added to CEDS document this year have been in initial discussion with EDA.

#### *Infrastructure Related to the Commercialization of Denton.*

Mr. Warner stated that this project is redevelopment from waterfront up to the town center and is a \$4.2 million project; needs \$546,935 to complete funding. MSRC has been working with the Denton Development Corporation's Ellis Davison and JOK Walsh, they prepared the Investment Summaries. Working with Mr. Warner, EDA Economic Development Representative Anne Cavalier has been reviewing and giving feedback on the Investment Summary. At the beginning of August Dr. Cavalier told Mr. Warner that she thought the material described the project well and within EDA funding parameters. She informed Mr. Warner to let the project managers know that they seemed ready to submit a grant when they deem appropriate. Mr. Warner communicated this with Mr. Walsh and Mr. Davison. Mr. Davison is currently working with a grant writer preparing the grant. Mr. Walsh added his thanks to the MSRC for all their hard work and is hopeful to receive the last bit of funding needed to complete this project.

### *Mistletoe Hall Project*

Mr. Warner stated that this project requires funds to develop an 85 acre technology park. Easton Economic Development Director Maureen Scott-Taylor has been working with Paige Bethke and him to update the Investment Summary. This project is ongoing at this time.

### *Maryland Broadband Cooperative*

Mr. Warner stated that the fiber connection is complete from Wallops Island across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and construction is now being done from the Bay Bridge to Parole to reach the fiber hotel. Construction should be complete by end of this calendar year and operational by end of first quarter of the coming calendar year. Engineering is underway from Elkton to Chesapeake College with connection to Ridgely Technology Park. Construction should also be complete by end of calendar year there as well and operational by end of first quarter of the coming calendar year. MDBC submitted a grant application in August for the Federal Stimulus package, NTIA (National Telecommunications & Information Administration) is the agency overseeing the grants. If completely accepted and awarded the MDBC would build out the fiber backbone throughout the regions of the state in a three year timeframe. The MDBC also submitted a broadband mapping grant application in August; it was the official State mapping application. Partners include the ESRGC, Towson University's Center for GIS, Maryland State Geographic Information Committee (MSGIC), Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), BEACON, DBED and the regional councils. This is a five year grant. MDBC is staying in contact with federal and state officials regarding this. The Rural Broadband Coordination Board Chairman for FY2010 is Allegany Commissioner Jim Stakem and MSRC Chairman Gale Nashold is the MSRC representative on the Coordination Board.

### *Business and Technology Parks*

Caroline County: Caroline Economic Development Corporation Executive Director JOK Walsh stated Phase 1 of the Park is complete and is available for tenants at this time.

Dorchester County: Mr. Warner announced that the application is under final review with EDA, Keasha Haythe, Jan Willis and he had been working through questions with EDA officials through last week and funding looks promising.

### *Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC)*

Mr. Warner announced that ESEC had completed two grant applications that if awarded would enable ESEC and the Shore Venture preparatory program to continue for another year, ESEC had already received several applications for the next Shore Venture session without actively promoting the class. He also announced that Executive Director Fred Smyth met with Chesapeake College President, the Chairman of Maryland Capital Enterprise, the President of Wor-Wic Community College, and the Executive Director of the Small Business Development Center to see if, and how we can make Shore Venture training a bigger, more encompassing program. ESEC is seeing a tripling of business owners needing consulting services from the brain capital assistance, including two non-profit organizations. A new area for this assistance. Mr. Smyth continues to work on the Denton Redevelopment Committee. Efforts are progressing slowly but the organization is moving ahead. The study/survey to determine needs and a wish list from the community is in process. ESEC is currently mentoring seven start ups. ESEC continues to work with Horn Point Labs to develop a 'series' of business opportunities at that facility. A business plan is in the works and grants will be applied for when the plan is approved.

Like so many people, ESEC loan recipients are struggling through this economy. To further assist them ESEC has started working with a couple of the businesses in regards to a federal program launched by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This program is a short term interest free program aimed to help profitable businesses weather the storm. ESEC has also started overseeing the Dorchester Revolving Loan Fund. The Loan Review Committee for the Dorchester Fund will meet for the second time Thursday, August 20. They are reviewing three loan applications totaling \$110,000. Should they all be approved for the full amount the

fund will become close to fully loaned. ESEC has one loan application in and three more working. They will just about deplete the ESEC funds available should they be approved. The Shore Venture graduates account for four of the above seven applications. A separate meeting with an organization that helps eco-business start up was fruitful. ESEC may jointly launch a two day program to train entrepreneurs with this. The thinking is to co-op with Dorchester County Chamber and Chesapeake College.

#### *MUST (Maryland Upper Shore Transit)*

Mr. Warner stated that on June 25 after being reviewed by the MSRC attorney the MUST RFP for transit advertising was forwarded to the MTA for final review before it is released, as stated at the March and June quarterly meetings the MUST program FY10 budget requests have been submitted. The MSRC should be notified within the next few weeks regarding FY10 funding. The Counties (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot) have committed to their obligations. Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)/New Freedom (public transportation funding) grants were reviewed by the state committee (John General serves on the committee) on March 26 and recommendations were forwarded to MTA officials. Two local grants were approved – both from DCT.

John General attended the Fort Meade Regional Growth Management Committee for Transportation meeting on March 24. Mr. General was appointed by Talbot County Council to represent the county, this committee meets monthly. The scheduling and asset allocation system advanced technology demonstration project final report is still being reviewed by the MTA. The next Maryland Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation meeting has not been scheduled yet. The CBRTCE's BRAC Impact on Eastern Shore Commuting Patterns Study final report was completed June 21, 2009. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) Building a Vision for Regional Transportation Committee's next step is to conduct a feasibility study on needs, opportunities and challenges for the future of our transportation system and policy. Topics of interest include: key stakeholders, data/research, efforts underway, geographic scope, funding opportunities, and best practices/structures from other like regions. This study will be used to help inform selection of the next steps in advancing proactive, sustainable transportation policy that best fits the Eastern Shore. Memo Diriker offered to have the GeoDASH Initiative Economic Development and Transportation Planner Sarah Bunch do a feasibility study (BEACON has a great deal of experience with transportation initiative studies).

#### *Agricultural Economic Development Specialist*

Wenfei Uva, Agricultural Economic Development Specialist was present and gave the following updates:

#### *Shore Gourmet Food Business Center*

Wenfei stated that MSRC received a \$100,000 grant from USDA Rural Development RBEG program to operate Shore Gourmet Food Business Center and promote Shore Gourmet products. On July 16, a Board of Directors meeting was held in the MSRC office. The members of Board of Directors Shore Gourmet Food Business Center are:

- Lin Spicer - Holly Lane Farms, Inc., Dorchester County
- Bobby Hutchison - Hutchison Brothers, Talbot County
- Brad Powers - Agribusiness Services consultant, Talbot County
- Kurt Fuchs - Assistant Director of Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc., Caroline County
- Carolyn Spicher - V.P. Centreville National Bank and farmer, Caroline County
- Gale Nashold, MSRC Chair, Caroline County

All Board of Directors attended the meeting. MSRC Wenfei Uva was appointed as the Executive Director for Shore Gourmet Food Business Center. An additional board member to represent Dorchester County and/or the seafood industry is being identified.

### *Shore Gourmet Markets*

Ms. Uva announced the Shore Gourmet Denton Market operated by Chesapeake Culinary Center was reopening on Second Street in Denton at the end of August. She is currently working with Talbot Property Group LLC/Easton Market Square in Easton and Hyatt in Cambridge to establish additional Shore Gourmet Easton Markets.

### *Food Business Development Consultation*

Ms. Uva is currently also providing business development consultation to agricultural and food businesses on the Eastern Shore region.

### *Developing Educational Tours to Promote Agri-tourism in the Region.*

Ms. Uva stated in celebration of the 2009 Buy Local Challenge Week (July 18-26<sup>th</sup>), the Mid-Shore Regional Council collaborated with Dockside Express Cruises and Tours and Chesapeake Culinary Center to host three agricultural tours in Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties on July 21, 22 and 23, 2009. The tours were promoted through Mid-Shore newspapers, publications and tourism office e-news. Although the Caroline and Dorchester County tours were canceled due to low registration, the Talbot Tour was held successfully on July 21 with more than 30 people participating, it focused on the Bay Country area. She also assisted Blades Orchard in Federalsburg to promote their "Picnic at the Orchard" event on July 26<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Buy Local Week. Over 100 people attended the event. She is working with the Easton Club East community, the Agriculture Four Season Summer tour was held on August 10<sup>th</sup> at Blades Orchard in Federalsburg. Two farms will participate in the Agricultural Four Season Fall Tours – September 25<sup>th</sup> at Tidewater Vineyard in Cordova and October 8<sup>th</sup> at S.B. Farms Bison Ranch in Hurlock.

### *Efforts to Promote Mid-Shore Agriculture*

Ms. Uva stated that using the funding MSRC received from the Maryland Agriculture Council, she collaborated with Shannon Dill of Talbot Cooperative Extension and developed a web-site to promote agriculture industries in the Mid-Shore Region. The new web-site [easternshoreagriculture.com](http://easternshoreagriculture.com) has a directory listing over 80 farms with local produce, vegetables, cheeses, wines, plants, meat and more from Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties. It also has a gallery of agricultural pictures of the area and agriculture statistics for the three counties. She is also collaborating with the Maryland Wineries Association to promote the launch of the Chesapeake Wine Trail – a partnership between wineries on the Eastern Shore, Maryland Wineries Association, county offices of tourism, regional councils, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. A launch event will be held on August 4<sup>th</sup> at Cassinelli Winery in Church Hill, Maryland. And a new Mid-Shore farmers market, Ridgely Farmer's Market, officially opened on June 12<sup>th</sup> and is open every Friday from 4 to 7pm.

### *GeoDASH Initiative*

Mr. Warner explained that the GeoDASH Initiative is a capacity building initiative between the MSRC, TCCLES, ESRGC and BEACON supported by DBED and EDA. On July 9 the GeoDASH Initiative team (Scott, Mike Pennington, Mike Scott, Memo Diriker, Jim Garrity and Sarah Bunch) had three meetings at the DBED offices in Baltimore. The first meeting was with DBED Deputy Secretary Dominick Murray and Director of Field Operations Helga Weschke to give them an overview and progress of the program.

A second meeting was held with representatives of several departments within DBED to explain the initiative. The goal was to bring awareness of this collaborative partnership and to lay the ground work for how the program can help them in the future. A great interaction took place. The final meeting was facilitated by Mindie Burgoyne between the GeoDASH team and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) representatives in regards to how this initiative could assist freight logistics. There had been previous meetings with this MDOT department and this meeting helped solidify understanding of the assistance that the GeoDASH Initiative can provide. On September 2 the GeoDASH Initiative team met with members of the Comptroller of Maryland's staff, Chief of Staff Len Foxwell and Special

Assistant to the Comptroller Sasha Miles, at their Annapolis office to give them an overview the program. Currently, GeoDASH is working with the Comptroller's office to dashboard certain data. This meeting helped to possibly further that collaboration.

#### New Business

None

#### Other matters

##### *Mid-Atlantic Power Pathway (MAPP) informational meeting follow-up*

At the June MSRC quarterly meeting the Council asked Mr. Warner to set up an informational meeting in which opposing points of view could be heard at the same time. Dr. Memo Diriker will facilitate the meeting at the request of the MSRC. Cathy Bassett of CM Bassett Consulting LLC who requested the presentation to the MSRC (as well as many other organizations, including the Caroline County Chamber of Commerce) will handle the Pepco Holdings/Delmarva Power side and Lin Spicer or Libby Nagel will arrange the opposing side. The MSRC has been in contact with the Caroline County Chamber of Commerce and they will host the meeting. The MSRC will arrange the facilitator and circulate the meeting information via its distribution lists.

##### *Regional Council FY10 funding*

Mr. Warner announced since the June 10 MSRC quarterly meeting there have been two budget cuts by the State of Maryland. A total of \$24,500 was cut from the State of Maryland to each regional council. On July 22 Board of Public works approved a cut in the amount of \$3,000, then on August 26 Board of Public works approved an additional \$21,500 cut. The Executive Director will be meeting with the MSRC Executive Board in the near future to explain the results of these cuts to the MSRC budget. On preliminary evaluation the MSRC will be able to survive the cuts without risking the operation of the Council. The MSRC has been very aggressive in informing different State officials at various agencies on the importance of the regional councils and the amount of financial leveraging they bring to the State. The other regional council Executive Directors have also been communicating with various officials regarding the budget reductions.

#### Member comments/requests

None

#### Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Chase, seconded by Ms. Spicher the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.