

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on March 5, 2020. It was held in Talbot County at the Talbot County Senior Center in Easton.

MSRC members in attendance included: Walter Chase, Carolyn Spicher, Anthony Casey, Chuck Callahan, Lenny Pfeffer, Wilbur Levengood, James Redman, Bill Christopher, Dan Rider, Frank Divilio, Jerome Stanley, Joyce Harrod, Kurt Fuchs, and Andy Hollis. Guests in attendance included: Shore Gourmet Program Director Roxanne Wolf, Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director Beth Brewster, Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Nancy LaJoice, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Managers Erin Silva and Mary Buffington, Chesapeake College President Clifford Coppersmith, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) Executive Director Greg Padgham, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Melissa Kelly, Rural Maryland Council representatives Charlotte Davis (Executive Director) and Megan D'Arcy (Program Administrator), Maryland Department of Natural Resources Special Assistant to the Secretary Bunky Luffman, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism representatives Cassandra Vanhooser (Director) and Sam Shoge (Coordinator), Caroline County Economic Development Director Deb Bowden, Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaison Mike Arntz, Vets Helping Vets of Delmarva Secretary Stephanie Hallowell, Maryland Cooperative Extension Talbot County Educator Shannon Dill, Caroline Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tracey Snyder, and Maryland Highway Safety Office representatives Tim Kerns (Director) and Tina Williams (Outreach Program Manager of the Eastern Region). MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Action Items

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 5:27 p.m., at which time introductions were made. Chairman Chase was in possession of proxies from Senator Addie Eckardt, Delegate Chris Adams, and Delegate Johnny Mautz.

Approval of December 4, 2019 Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval of December 4, 2019 minutes. Mr. Stanley made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated all in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Ratification of revised CEDS document

Mr. Warner gave a brief overview of the work that the CEDS Committee and others put into the Mid Shore CEDS process this year.

The full CEDS Committee met on October 18, 2019. At the meeting the committee was reminded that the first CEDS document was submitted to EDA on October 16, 2002. They received updates of the 29 projects in the Action Plan. The GPRA Data Collection period FY19 (7/1/18 to 6/30/19) reported:

- 20 projects reported funding, jobs, and/or investment activity
- 225 estimated number of jobs created or retained

During the meeting the Committee reviewed and revised the CEDS Goals and Objectives and reviewed the progress status of CEDS Action Plan.

The CEDS Executive Committee met on December 9, 2019 to evaluate one proposed project. They also discussed the update/expansion of an existing project.

On January 3, 2020 the full CEDS Committee held another meeting at which they approved modifications to update Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1
- Goal 1, Objectives 2, 5, and 6
- Goal 4, Objective 9 (added this new Objective)
- Goal 6, Objective 2

One new project was unanimously approved for inclusion in the CEDS, Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe.

One project was approved to be updated/expanded, Woods Road & Medical Facility Infrastructure Improvements.

Four projects were moved from the Action Plan to Appendix F – Completed and Removed Projects

- Infrastructure Related to Commercialization of Denton
 - reason: Project completed
- Take the Helm (formerly Chesapeake Marine Trades Academy)
 - reason: Program is in its 4th year of operation
- Chicken (Avian) Feather Processing
 - reason: Champion no longer with us. USDA patent has been withdrawn
- Innovation Readiness Training (formerly Delmarva Technology Transfer Initiative (DT2i))
 - reason: Lack of interest and partnerships at this time

26 projects are included in the revised CEDS Action Plan.

Mr. Warner thanked the following organizations/people for their assistance in revising the CEDS document. He highlighted the sections each assisted.

- Chapter 1 – Analysis and Appendix E – Commuter Stats
 - ESRGC Project Manager Ryan Mello for updating the statistical sections
- Section 1.2 – Demographic, Socioeconomic and Labor Force Data
 - USWIB Executive Director Dan McDermott
- Appendix B – Tax Credits
 - Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Nancy LaJoyce

Mr. Warner then explained that on January 21, 2020 the MSRC received an email from the EDA announcing an update to the CEDS Content Guidelines recommending the inclusion of Opportunity Zones within the CEDS document. To act on this immediately, the MSRC did the following:

- Mr. Warner asked for assistance from the ESRGC
- ESRGC Project Manager Ryan Mello used EDA resources to research and create an Opportunity Zone section to this year's CEDS
- The MSRC inserted this new information as Section 1.12 – Opportunity Zones
- The MSRC sent an email to the CEDS Committee on February 13, 2020 explaining this addition

Provided with all this compiled information the MSRC revised the CEDS document updating all sections as needed

Additional updates that were made:

- Introduction
 - Including the EDA award of \$150,000 to assist with a statewide forestry industry Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS)
 - The summary since the inception of the Mid Shore CEDS now captures at total of 15 EDA awards, totaling \$13,611,700
- Appendix A – CEDS Committee

Mr. Warner stated that the revised document was e-mailed to everyone on March 3, 2020 with this meeting's agenda. The MSRC will submit the updated CEDS document to the EDA Philadelphia office once ratified and posted on the website for public comment for 30 days. The updated document can be viewed on the MSRC website www.midshore.org, click on "About", "Documents", then "Download CEDS".

Mr. Rider made a motion to ratify the CEDS document, Ms. Spicher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the current Treasurer's Report stating all expenditures and funding are on track. He asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Warner also stated that there is a second sheet in everyone's packets showing the status of the Rural Maryland Investment Prosperity Funds (RMPIF) monies. It details the disbursement of the funds as the MSRC approved. Hearing no questions, Chairman Chase said he would entertain a motion to accept the report. Ms. Spicher made a motion to accept, Mr. Pfeffer seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Authorizing Resolution to file an application with the MTA for a FY21 Statewide Coordination and Technical Assistance Grant (SCATA)

Mr. Warner stated that the MSRC received a letter dated January 24, 2020 from the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) regarding solicitation information for a Statewide Coordination and Technical Assistance Grant (SCATA).

- The solicitation encompasses the 12-month period for FY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021).
- The grant application submittal deadline is April 10, 2020 at 2:00pm.
- The MSRC has been applying for and administering this grant for many years to support the Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST) program.
- The grant request amount is \$40,000. (The same amount it has been since FY08.) These funds are matched by county funds (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot).
- The MTA process requires an authorizing resolution.

Mr. Warner informed the Council that the resolution is in their meeting packets. This is a standard resolution that the MTA has requested over the past several years when applying for this grant.

Mr. Pfeffer made a motion to approve the authorizing resolution; Ms. Spicher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Update/Progress Presentation

Annie's Project – farm management workshop

Chairman Chase introduced Shannon Dill, Maryland Cooperative Extension Educator, to provide an update.

Ms. Dill stated that Annie's Project is a national program designed to empower women in agriculture to manage information and learn about agriculture in a relaxed local network. The target audience is women with a passion for business, agriculture and involvement in the farm operation. However, the program is not just for women. Men also take the course.

Ms. Dill mentioned that because of the additional funding provided by the MSRC last year, and again this year, they are able to provide farm recordkeeping workshops that include QuickBooks and a farm tour.

Ms. Dill reviewed a handout she provided in the meeting packets.

- Planned and conducted a Women in Ag Farm tour which visited three farms and increased awareness in ag tourism, and hops production. The tour was held on September 4, 2019 and attended by 42 participants
- Recordkeeping and QuickBooks for Farm Businesses was held on January 6, 2020. Two classes were taught, a Beginning and an Advanced class. There were 34 participants.
- A Multi-State Conference was held. It included 3 keynote speakers, 15 breakouts, and 220 participants.
- Annie's Project Classes Statewide – 5 classes, 54 registrants, 11 FSA borrowers
 - Mid-Shore class – 4 participants, all 4 are FSA borrowers
- Wednesday Webinars – 2 per month (held all year), 40-80 registrants per webinar

Shore Gourmet/Chesapeake Culinary Center partnership

Chairman Chase introduced Beth Brewster, Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director, to provide a progress report on the activities of the Shore Gourmet and Chesapeake Culinary Center partnership.

Ms. Brewster utilized a PowerPoint Presentation to give the report. She was assisted by Roxanne Wolf, Shore Gourmet Development and Education Coordinator.

One of their big projects is to combat poverty and they are starting with feeding the children in Caroline County who are going home hungry on weekends and during the summer. They are doing this by utilizing seconds from farmers. This project also benefits cafeteria workers by providing them more payable hours during the summer months by having them process the foods. They also highlighted value-added food product development, one-sheet meals utilizing local foods, and researching the economic feasibility and agricultural viability of growing niche products to diversify local crops. Additionally, the Chesapeake Culinary Center has recently purchased a truck to

assist in getting food to a wider array of patrons. The commercial kitchen continues to be utilized by several people as they prepare food items for sale. With added funding they hope to be able to stretch beyond Caroline County to assist others in need in both Dorchester and Talbot Counties. The five main topics they hope to address are Education/Well Being, Prevention, Family Unit, Economic Development, and Food Equity/Hunger.

Ms. Brewster thanked the MSRC for the funding support provided through the RMPIF funds to support Shore Gourmet. Without this additional, stable funding several of the programs including working with farmers to diversify their businesses would not be able to be undertaken or sustained.

Maryland General Assembly

2020 Legislative session

Mr. Warner stated that the Governor maintained council funding at \$200,000 for each regional council in the FY2021 budget. This is the fifth year in a row the Governor has included the regional council funding level at the historical legislative intention. The regional councils are thankful for the Governor's support.

Mr. Warner then introduced Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Director Charlotte Davis to provide an update on the legislative session.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) is a key step forward in addressing disparities in the State's rural areas. RMPIF supports Rural Maryland Council's activities, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), the state's five regional councils, regional infrastructure projects, rural entrepreneurship development, and rural health care organizations.

In the Governor's proposed FY2021 budget the RMC/RMPIF is funded at \$6,160,751, which is level funding from last year.

MAERDAF provides grants to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education. Also eligible are rural community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance. MAERDAF's goal is to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges to meet a multitude of rural development challenges and to help them establish new public/private partnerships for leveraging non-state sources of funding. MAERDAF receives funding through RMPIF as well as a separate line item totaling \$167,000, which is level funding from last year.

Ms. Davis then addressed the Broadband legislative and funding initiatives:

- \$9,180,000 was included in the FY2021 Capital Budget for the Local Government Infrastructure Fund.
- SB790/HB1508 clarifying resource-sharing agreements with the Department of IT and waiving fees for access to state rights-of-way.
- SB540/HB999 allowing Choptank Electric to become member-regulated.

Other Legislation Issues Ms. Davis highlighted were:

- Kirwan education funding
 - It was sent out of the House of Delegates yesterday

- Significantly increasing state funding for education including pre-kindergarten, career and technology education, and teachers pay
- The RMC is working with partners to get agricultural education included in the bill
- First three years are paid for
- Some disagreement with the larger counties on local mandated funding
- HB1628 – decreases sales tax to 5% but applies a sales tax to services
- HB1354 applies a sales tax to certain services such as dog walking, boat repair, lobbying, etc.
- The Senate voted out the Operating budget today
- Next week is the Capital budget

Rural Maryland Day in Annapolis

Rural Maryland day was held on February 4. Ten teams of RMC members met with several State of Maryland Senators and Delegates. Many of the team members were MAERDAF and RMPIF grant recipients. They thanked the legislators for their support while highlighting their funded projects and programs. The teams also expressed the RMC's FY21 budget priorities as well.

Rural Maryland Day concluded with the RMC's joint luncheon with the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts in the President's Conference Center West in the Miller Senate Building.

"Taste of the Eastern Shore" legislative reception

Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) Executive Director Greg Padgham was introduced. The Taste of the Eastern Shore is hosted by the TCCLES in partnership with the MSRC and Upper Shore Regional Council. TCCLES is the creator and organizer of the event. The event was held on February 14 at Graduate Annapolis Hotel. It was the reception's 18th year. 575 people attended, including representation from 87 members of the General Assembly. Mr. Padgham thanked the MSRC for their partnership.

Presentation

Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) Director Tim Kerns provided a presentation on Zero Deaths Maryland. The MHSO mission is dedicated to saving lives and preventing injuries by reducing motor vehicle crashes through the administration of a comprehensive network of traffic safety programs. The presentation emphasized many traffic-related issues that cause crashes. He also highlighted the Maryland Strategic Safety Plan 2021-2025 objective to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2030. Attending the meeting with Dr. Kerns was Outreach Program Manager of the Eastern Shore Region Tina Williams. He encouraged everyone to reach out to them as they would be happy to partner with any and all organizations to promote Zero Deaths Maryland.

Member comments/requests

Mr. Warner shared that he learned this morning that Sam Shoge will be leaving his current position as the Coordinator of the Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism at the end of March to become the Executive Director for the Kent County Chamber of Commerce. He thanked Mr. Shoge for his partnership with the MSRC. Mr. Warner specifically thanked him for his participation on the Delmarva

Index Advisory Committee and hopes Mr. Shoge will continue to be engaged in the project. Everyone wished Mr. Shoge well.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m., by unanimous consent.