

MSRC Board Meeting
Talbot County

The Mid Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a regularly scheduled meeting on November 12, 2008 at the Krystal Q Conference Center in Talbot County. Members in attendance were: Allen Nelson, Andy Hollis, Bill Brooks, Burton Wilson, Carolyn Spicher, Delegate Eckardt, Ellery Adams, Gale Nashold, Delegate Haddaway, Jeff Ghrist, Jerome Stanley, Senator Colburn, Robert Hanson and Walter Chase. Economic Development Directors in attendance were: Keasha Haythe, Paige Bethke and JOK Walsh. MSRC Staff present were: Scott Warner, Wenfei Uva and Terry Deighan. Guests in attendance included: Fred Smyth of ESEC, Jim McCormick of Caroline County, John General of CBRTCE, Dr. Michael Scott of ESRGC, Cynthia Pyron of Caroline County and Mindie Burgoyne of DBED.

Action Items

Mr. Adams gave the blessing, dinner was served and Chairman Nashold called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. at which time introductions were made. The MSRC welcomed Robert Hanson as a new Council Member.

The first order of business was approval of the September 17, 2008 minutes. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve that was seconded by Mr. Chase, and the minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

The second order of business was ratification of the May 21, 2008 Executive Board Minutes. Once again Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve as written, Mr. Stanley seconded the motion and the minutes were ratified by unanimous consent.

The next order of business was approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Nashold presented the report and asked if there were any questions. Being none Chairman Nashold announced the treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Old Business

Update on MSRC becoming an EDA Economic Development District (EDD):
Mr. Warner updated the Council on the status of our EDD, he stated that Mr. Calvin Edghill informed the MSRC that the EDD packet that was in a three ring binder was returned by the Washington office to the Philadelphia office to be arranged in another format. The good news is that the contents were not questioned. Mr. Edghill wants the final approval by the end of the year, hopefully by Thanksgiving.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDDS):
Mr. Warner stated the CEDDS Executive Committee will meet at the end of November or beginning of December to evaluate proposed projects based on the guidelines established in the CEDDS document. There are six projects to be evaluated.

Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MdBC):
Mr. Warner stated that the MdBC held its first Annual Membership meeting on Monday, November 10 in Annapolis. At that time per the MdBC Bylaws the Board of Directors was expanded from 5 to 11 members, the new Board of Directors consists of:

- Wayne Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
- Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
- John Dillman, Upper Shore Regional Council
- Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council
- Leanne Mazer, Tri-County Council for Western Maryland
- Danny Jobe, General Manager, Metro Cast Communications
- Virgil Shockley, President of Worcester County Commissioners
- Eric Wargotz, President of Queen Anne's County Board of Commissioners
- Geoffrey Oxnam, Director of Marketing & Communications, Easton Utilities
- Matt Diaz, Director, Allegany County Economic Development
- Thomas Tudor, Contract Administrator, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

He further stated that following the Annual Membership meeting the new Board of Directors held their first meeting and elected the officers. The slate of officers is:

- Chairman – Virgil Shockley
- Vice Chairman – Thomas Tudor
- Secretary – Danny Jobe
- Treasurer – Geoffrey Oxnam

Caroline County Technology Director and Caroline County's representative to the MdBC Jim McCormick gave his observation of the MdBC Annual Members meeting.

Business and Technology Parks:

Caroline County –

Caroline Technology Park Marketing Director Cynthia Pyron stated the construction has been completed on the park and it is ready to receive tenants. Also at this time Caroline County is awaiting funding from DBED for a spec. building.

Dorchester County –

Mr. Warner stated that the MSRC has been working closely with the Dorchester County Economic Development Office and EDA Economic Development Representative Anne Cavalier in preparing the pre-application for the Dorchester County Business and Technology Park EDA grant.

Dorchester County Economic Development Director Keasha Haythe stated the EDA documents are close to completion and should be submitted in the near future. Also, the county is continuing to work on water and sewer infrastructure on Bucktown Road and is hopeful to start construction in the spring.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC):

ESEC Executive Director Fred Smyth informed the Council that he, Scott Warner and the Chairman of ESEC Allen Nelson met with DBED Secretary David Edgerley in Baltimore on October 15 as Secretary Edgerley wanted to get an overview of ESEC and its activities. Also ESEC has been in discussion with Chesapeake College to make the Entrepreneurship School a joint venture, a sixth venue would be added at the college

for college students and college credits would be given to those completing the course, including the high school seniors taking the class.

The other five venues are:

- Caroline County – Denton
- Dorchester County – Cambridge
- Kent County – Chestertown
- Queen Anne's County – Centreville
- Talbot County – Easton

Also at this point Mr. Smyth has started meeting with the school districts to coordinate with them to pinpoint students for the classes.

MUST (Maryland Upper Shore Transit):

MUST Coordinator and Chesapeake Bay Region Technical Center of Excellence C.E.O. John General stated that the new schedule will be circulated this week through the following newspapers (a total distribution of 55,000): Bay Times, Record Observer, Dorchester Star, Kent News, Times-Record and the Sunday Star, also an additional 15,000 were printed and distributed to the providers. The New Freedom/JARC applications have been submitted to Mr. General and are in the review process. Unfortunately the bus advertising RFP has not been released as it is waiting for MTA final approval. Also the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association Annual Conference was held at the Hilton Garden Inn on Grasonville at which time Scott Warner and Mr. General participated on the Rural Public Transportation Panel. They gave an overview of the MUST program and its marketing efforts. Also the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's "Building a Vision for Regional Transportation" meeting was held at Chesapeake College on Friday, November 7, 2008, at which time Delmarva Community Transit and Queen Anne's County Ride were used to transport participants to the event. John announced that MUST received an Eastern Shore 2010 Achievement Award for regional transportation coordination. The award was a beautifully framed picture. Also the CBRTCE has received the BRAC Impact on Eastern Shore Commuting Patterns Study grant document whose completion date is January 31, 2009 may be extended. At this point in time MUST has received funding from all five counties (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot) through the MSRC. Also at this time MTA funds are in the process of being released, the State budget reductions slowed down the process. Grant funds were honored for FY09 at FY08 amounts. Mr. General also stated the Advance Technology project results should be compiled by the end of January for the final report. Jerome Stanley of DCT pointed out that the new schedules featured expanded services.

Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

Mr. Warner gave the Ag update as Wenfei Uva was on vacation. He stated Dr. Uva had been working on the following projects:

Promoting Mid-Shore Agriculture and Agri-tourism by supporting Farmers' Market Development in the Region:

Dr. Uva continued to support farmers markets in the region. The newest development is that some residents in Federalsburg are evaluating the possibility to establish a Federalsburg Market to promote local farmers and craftsmen and improve local residences' access to fresh farm products. The goal is also to involve the 4-H club in this project.

Dr. Uva continued to develop the Mid-Shore Agri-tourism Directory to promote local agriculture and tourism. The project received great support from Mid-Shore organizations and agencies in sponsoring to aid in the printing of the directory. 5,000 copies were printed and delivered to the MSRC office this week.

Dr. Uva continued working with local agriculture and resource based industry to develop educational tours with local communities and tourists. Due to the great response to the spring tour at Meadow View Farm in Cordova, a fall tour was held at J.M. Clayton Seafood Company on October 15th and October 22nd. A Star Democratic reporter joined the tour on October 22nd. Spring tours are planned in collaboration with Dockside Express Cruises and Tours in Tilghman.

Shore Gourmet:

Continued to work with different entities to establish Shore Gourmets Markets in the region. The Shore Gourmet Denton Market is scheduled to open on Saturday, November 1, 2008, and the grand opening will be on December 4, 2008.

Continued to search for funding for Shore Gourmet. Dr. Uva and Mr. Warner are working on a proposal to be submitted to U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development for funding to establish a Shore Gourmet Business Development Center.

Grape and Wine Industry Development:

Dr. Uva has been working with Talbot Extension Office, Maryland Wineries Association, Meadow View Farm and Cornell University, Wenfei is organizing a Vineyard Management Seminar on November 21st to evaluate the demand for vineyard management company services in the region.

Agricultural Business Development and Recruitment:

Dr. Uva continues to provide consultation to businesses and individuals on developing and evaluating their agricultural ventures.

Wenfei has also been assisting Kristen Robinson and Steve McHenry of MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation) in planning an Eastern Shore Rural Business Service Providers Networking Meeting in the Mid-Shore Region in early December.

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

Talbot County Economic Development Director Paige Bethke explained that this alliance will be holding an event entitled "Business Opportunities through Technology Transfer" on January 29, 2009 at Salisbury University. Some entities involved are EPA, USDA and NASA.

Eastern Shore BRAC impact study for the Eastern Shore Partnership:

Mr. Warner explained that the Eastern Shore Partnership made up of the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance, Upper Shore Regional Council, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore and the MSRC did not get awarded the grant money for the study.

Eastern Shore Business and Economic Development Dashboard Specialist position: Mr. Warner stated that the new Dashboard Specialist is James Garrity. Mr. Garrity has already started work on projects Memo Diriker and Mike Scott with input of DBED's Director of State Stat Data Systems Bob Sklar have approved, such as Economic Development Dashboard, Foster Care, Maryland Department of Energy and State Stat.

Economic Development and Transportation Planner position: Mr. Warner told Council Members that the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore received and signed the EDA grant and the position is currently being advertised. They have received 40 applications to date.

Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative update: ESRGC Director Mike Scott presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Council highlighting recent projects such as Dorchester County Flood vulnerability, MidShore impervious surface project and mapping support for Cambridge. Their philosophy is to create partnerships with businesses vs. fighting against them for work, this way an even greater network is created to pull from. Some current projects include the conversion of 1972 wetland maps of the Chesapeake Bay critical area pilot, Baltimore County and Talbot County.

New Business

Chairman Nashold stated tentative meeting dates for 2009 are as follows:

- Wednesday, March 18, 2009 – Caroline County
- Wednesday, June 10, 2009 – Dorchester County
- Wednesday, September 9, 2009 – Talbot County
- November / December 2009 – prior to the Joint Regional Councils' Meeting (Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore will host)

The next order of business was officer selection for 2009. At the October 24 MSRC Executive Board the members discussed and unanimously approved the proposed slate for the 2009 officers of the MSRC. It is in compliance with the MSRC Bylaws. The following 2009 Proposed Executive Board Members are:

- Chairman: Gale Nashold
- First Vice-Chairman: Ricky Travers (Dorchester)
- Second Vice-Chairman: Dirck Bartlett (Talbot)
- Third Vice-Chairman: Jeff Ghrist (Caroline)
- Secretary: Walter Chase
- Treasurer: Allen Nelson
- General Assembly: Addie Eckardt
- One-at-large Member: Kurt Fuchs

Chairman Nashold asked if there were any questions or suggestions, being none Senator Richard Colburn made a motion to accept the proposed slate, Mr. Chase seconded the motion and the slate was approved by unanimous consent.

Other matters

Carolyn Spicher gave a synopsis of a meeting hosted by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy regarding a study entitled "Economic Development Trends & Alternatives on the Eastern Shore". It was presented to the USRC and MSRC on October 23, 2008

at Chesapeake College by consultant Travis Hollingsworth. The presentation can be found on the ESLC web site <http://www.eslc.org/pages/EDPRESENT.php>.

Lastly, Mr. Warner informed the Council that the MSRC State funding for FY09 had been cut 30%, from \$140,000.00 to \$98,000.00 and is seeking guidance and suggestions on what should be done to at least get funding back up to \$140,000.00 for FY10. Mr. Warner reminded the Council that the State legislation that formed the MSRC requires an appropriation of at least \$200,000 in the State budget to support the Council. Senator Colburn suggested writing the Governor and copying DBED Secretary Edgerley as well as himself, Delegate Eckardt, Delegate Haddaway, and other legislators highlighting achievements to date and what funding would not be possible without the Council's EDD status. Delegate Eckardt suggested getting support letters as well from the counties and municipalities.

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

Chairman Nashold adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.