



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Thursday, November 5 at 9:00 am
Draft Minutes

SMADC Members: Joan Bearden, Commissioner Gilbert Bowling, Erik de Guzman, Dan Donohue, Willie Goddard Amanda Hand, Bill Hitte, Delegate Michael Jackson, Linda Jones, Julie Oberg, Barbara Polito, Martin Proulx, Donna Sasscer, Deana Tice, Steve Wall, Lucille Walker, Mary Wood, Willie Goddard

Members Absent: Senator Jack Bailey, Lisa Barge, Catherine Cosgrove, Edward Goodman, Guy Kilpatric, Ronald Marney, Charles Rice, Kelly Swann, Steve Walter

Staff: Juliet Glass, John Hartline, Heather Hulsey, Susan McQuilkin, Cia Morey, Rachel Norris, Karyn Owens, Shelby Watson-Hampton

Guests: Gretchen Hardman, Governor's Office, Jaelon T. Moaney, Reg. Dir. for Anne Arundel/So. Md, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, Lindsay Stine, Regional Field Manager - Western & Capital Area Farm Bureau

Minutes

Delegate Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes from October 1, 2020. Dan Donohue seconded, all approved.

Director's Report

Director Watson-Hampton reported:

Virtual Conferences and Meetings – staff have been attending virtual meetings and utilizing current technology to stay current and support SMADC programs and outreach during COVID.

Grants and Fundraising Progress Plans – The \$1 million USDA grant announcement has not come through yet, due to slower processing during COVID.

An email/letter was sent to the counties (as proposed in the October board meeting), to remind county commissioners and council members that the SMADC budget was cut by the State for the Fiscal Year by 25% (\$225,000.00) and that the CRF funding stream will stop completely by 2025. Counties were urged to consider funding support to keep SMADC's vital regional mission and programs in place for the region's agricultural community. SMADC is working to secure

additional long-term funding resources and will launch a fundraising initiative in November 2020 during the nationally recognized fundraising ‘giving season’ which follows the Thanksgiving holiday. A fundraising webpage/portal is being developed to facilitate donations and payment options.

2020 Farm Holiday Guide – The official deadline has passed (October 30), however the application period is being extended for a few extra days, as many farms/businesses are struggling to finalize their sales/event options which are more complex this year due to COVID. There has been a surge of interest in the past 2 weeks with over 84 applications received from farms and ag. related businesses. The guide will be launched in a totally virtual format and available to view online at SMADC.com. A printed promotional rack card is being developed to advertise the guide which will be distributed to participating farm and retail venues around the region. Press release and social media promotion will follow.

Review of Nursery and Cut Flowers Industry Video – Director Watson-Hampton previewed the latest video in the RMC grant funded Farms in Focus series on Southern Maryland’s key agricultural sectors. The video reveals the technology, skill and artistry involved in raising plants and flowers through the experience of three Southern Maryland growers engaged in different cultivation, and business models. The video can be now viewed on YouTube and is promoted on all SMADC social media platforms.

Amish slaughterhouse and RAC – The new Amish slaughterhouse ownership/management team is making progress; LLC paperwork has been filed under the new name – The Westham Lane Butcher Shop, and USDA grant of inspection paperwork has been resubmitted. In the interim, several upgrades and improvements have been successfully completed in line with final USDA inspection requirements. The RAC project is also moving ahead with near daily planning calls and meetings with St. Mary’s County Government. A special meeting of the SMADC board took place ‘virtually’ on October 8, 2020, during which members voted to allocate an additional \$500,000 to cover cost overruns for site preparation plans, not originally included in the estimate. At this point SMADC has 1.7 million allocated to the RAC (original grant - \$1 million, \$500,000 additionally approved, and \$200,000 from the Governor’s budget for cold storage and distribution). St. Mary’s County Commissioners have also approved an additional \$1 million for the RAC which, together with SMADC’s contribution, will cover the total cost of site preparation and construction. We are working with St. Mary’s Dept. of Public Works to finalize the building floor plans; a bid package for construction is anticipated soon.

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

Other Business

Adjournment

Dan Donohue made a motion to adjourn. Delegate Michael Jackson seconded, all approved.