



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Thursday, May 6 at 9:30 am
Minutes

SMADC Members: Lisa Barge, Joan Bearden, Dan Donohue, Edward Goodman, Amanda Hand, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Guy Kilpatric, Ronald Marney, Barbara Polito, Martin Proulx, Charles Rice, Kelly Swann, Charlie Sasscer Jr., Donna Sasscer, Deana Tice, Lucille Walker, Steve Wall

Members Absent: Senator Jack Bailey, Lisa Barge, Eddie Bowling, Catherine Cosgrove, Erik de Guzman, Willie Goddard, Senator Michael Jackson, Ronald Marney, Hagner Mister, Julie Oberg, Steve Walter, Mary Wood

Staff: Juliet Glass, John Hartline, Heather Hulse, Susan McQuilkin, Cia Morey, Rachel Norris, Karyn Owens, Craig Sewell, 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, Kellie Hinkle, St. Mary's County Economic Development, Sharon Blugis - Community Affairs Outreach Manager – Comptroller's Office, Alan Brody – Comptroller's Office, Comptroller Peter Franchot

Minutes

Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes from April 1, 2021. Edward Goodman seconded the motion, all approved.

Director's Report

Director Watson-Hampton reminded members that the start time for the meeting is later than usual to accommodate special guest Comptroller of Maryland Peter Franchot who will join the meeting at 10:30 a.m. for approximately half an hour to learn more about SMADC, hear questions, concerns and discuss challenges regarding agricultural issues in the state. Board members were requested to prepare questions ahead and share in the meeting chat.

SMADC Budget Announcement – Director Watson-Hampton reviewed the SMADC Grants Summary spreadsheet with an update of recently submitted grant applications. She remarked that this season is particularly competitive for grant funding across the board.

- **Hoffman Grant:** MMM program – request \$94,000 was declined, however SMADC was encouraged to apply for the next grant round cycle.
- **USDA NIFA GusNIP:** MMM program – request \$100,000 (SMADC match \$175,000) – Applied, grant award announcement pending.
- **USDA NIFA Beginner Farmer Rancher Dev. Program:** Maryland FarmLINK – request \$60,000 (SMADC match \$23,733) – Applied, grant award announcement pending.
- **USDA Rural Business Development Grant:** RAC equipment – request \$59,617 – Applied, grant award announcement pending.
- **Maryland Heritage Area Authority:** Marketing project – request \$24,500 617 (SMADC match \$24,500) – Applied, grant award announcement pending.
- **Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle:** MMM – request \$24,500 – Applied, grant award announcement pending.

Staff Reports

MMM Program Update – Heather Hulsey reported over \$193,000 in incentive funds have been distributed to 30 markets and farm stands (which benefits farmers) since September 2020. It is anticipated that over 40 markets around the state will participate in the program this year, and specifically in Southern Maryland 3 markets in Calvert County and one market in Charles County. MMM was also awarded unrestricted funds for marketing and promotion; \$20,000 from Amerigroup and \$15,000 from Whole Foods. MMM has also been invited to apply for additional funding from Anthem Healthcare, the parent corporation of Amerigroup. Technical support and training are now being offered to MMM markets as they open for the 2021 season.

SMADC Farmers’ Market Guide – The new online 'So. Maryland, So Good: Buy Local Guide', previously known as the Southern Maryland Farmers Market Guide, was recently launched with an expanded directory of regional farmers markets, farm stands and on-farm stores. The online Buy Local Guide lists more than 30 farmers markets in the five-county area (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s and St. Mary’s), as well as 22 Southern Maryland farm stands and stores with regular in-person business hours, open seasonally or year-round, plus 10 markets in the Metro DC area. The guide provides market details – season openings, business hours, location maps, websites, and social media links, plus information on virtual farmers markets, online order and payment options and identifies markets that accept Federal Nutrition Benefits.

Westham Butcher Shop and Local Meat Processing – Craig Sewell reported that as of Tuesday this week the first carcass to be processed under USDA inspection in Southern Maryland was stamped with the official USDA stamp at the Westham Butcher Shop. An email has been sent to all SMM livestock producer members to alert them that the Amish are now processing under inspection weekly Tuesday through Thursday (for slaughter only); appointments are available to schedule by phone. Although a soft opening, to allow the Westham team to settle into the rigors of USDA protocols, a press release will follow for the public launch with full details in the near future. Step one of a 2 to 3 step process is now complete, meanwhile we are working with a local butcher shop in Calvert to elevate their operation to USDA processing standards to accommodate USDA inspected carcasses from the Amish to be further processed. The USDA inspectors have been extremely helpful and have remarked that the Westham Butcher Shop is among the best facilities that they have worked with recently.

RAC – Craig Sewell reported that weekly meetings take place for status updates with the St. Mary’s County team. He also meets with the design team and consultants. A rendering of the first draft of the design building layout was presented on screen, showing Route 6 and the transfer station and the building footprint. The location/layout is well suited allowing for expansion of both cold storage and meat processing, and two entryways to insure separation of product for cold storage and meat. The design consultant has up to three months to produce a final design plan; we are aggressively encouraging this process to be expedited.

SMADC/TCC is close to securing a refrigerated truck for transportation of ¼ cut carcasses from the Westham Butcher shop to further processing/butcher, and delivery to destination grocery stores, etc.

Staff Farewell – Director Watson-Hampton informed that staff member Juliet Glass will be leaving SMADC and the MMM Program at the end of the week. She thanked Juliet for her hard work and dedication getting the MMM program off the ground. Juliet thanked SMADC for taking on the program and will be working within the food insecurity access arena and looks forward to working with SMADC.

Comptroller Visit

Director Watson-Hampton welcomed Comptroller Franchot and introduced Vice-Chair Lucille Walker. Director Watson-Hampton briefly summarized SMADC’s mission and identified the five-county region. She presented a snap-shot of So. Maryland’s diverse agricultural profile illustrated by the SMADC video “Why We Farm” episode from the Farms in Focus Series. Following the video, the Director acknowledged the Comptroller’s dedicated support for Maryland agriculture and commended him for his visits to farms and value-added producers around the state during his tenure. Board members shared insights and concerns. The Comptroller concluded the ‘listening session’ with assurances of his ongoing support for the state’s agricultural community.

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

Adjournment

Joan Bearden made a motion to adjourn. Dan Donohue seconded, all approved.