



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Thursday, November 4, at 10 a.m.
Open Session Minutes

SMADC Members: Joan Bearden, Corinthia Briscoe, Dan Donohue, Edward Goodman, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Delegate Rachel Jones, Martin Proulx, Charlie Sasscer, Donna Sasscer, Deana Tice, Tresor Thomas, Steve Wall, Lucille Walker

Members Absent: Lisa Barge, Senator Jack Bailey, Eddie Bowling, Willie Goddard, Linda Jones, Guy Kilpatric, Ronald Marney, Hagner Mister, Julie Oberg, Barbara Polito, Charles Rice, Kelly Swann, Mary Wood

Staff: Cristina Berthelot, John Hartline, Heather Hulsey, Susan McQuilkin, Rachel Norris, Karyn Owens, Craig Sewell

Guests: Kellie Hinkle, Deputy Director - St. Mary's County Economic Development

Minutes

Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes from October 7, 2021. Deana Tice seconded the motion, all approved.

Lucille Walker, Vice Chair, welcomed the two new voting board members, Corinthia Brisco, At Large representative and Tresor Thomas, Calvert County Farmer representative who gave a short summary of their background and area of expertise. It was also noted that Erik de Guzman has resigned from his position as Charles County Farmer voting representative; he is closing his farm business and is moving out of state. The vacant position will be announced in due course.

Staff Announcements

Grandma's Hands Heritage Grant Project – Craig Sewell reported he has started onsite interviews with prospective candidates; video/filming will commence in early December.

EDA Build Back Better Challenge Regional Cluster Grant – Craig Sewell, reported EDA has received 529 applications nationwide, seven of which are from Maryland. Looking through the list of applicant projects only a few have an 'agricultural' focus. SMADC grant consultant Kathy Boisin is optimistic our application is competitive. Phase 1 award selection is scheduled to be announced in December.

RAC Update – Craig Sewell thanked board members for their support during the past 2 challenging years leading up to recent weeks. He announced that during the Executive Session, prior to the Open Meeting, voting members made a strategic decision regarding the RAC project status going forward based

on a new funding proposal received from St. Mary's County Economic Development following the recent St. Mary's Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) budget meeting, during which commissioners unanimously endorsed fully funding the RAC up to \$4.7 million. The budgeted \$4.7 million includes SMADC's \$1.5 million, of which \$500,000 remains encumbered and not yet dispersed. SMADC voting members in Executive Session accepted the proposal and have further authorized the negotiation of a new MOU with St. Mary's County Government, for the building of the RAC, to reflect the new financing proposal and to include more robust parameters for timelines, lease and maintenance agreements, and other key project deadlines and specifications. Lucille walker added special thanks to Senator Bailey for his leadership in guiding all parties to this successful outcome.

It was noted for the benefit of the members that SMADC's \$1 million dollars awarded to St. Mary's for the project is fully in their possession. Previous contractual agreements (to be renegotiated) slated RAC construction to begin in the summer of 2022, ground-breaking by fall of 2022, with completion during first quarter of 2023.

Southern Maryland Farmer Mini-Grant Round 9 – Karyn Owens reported a 9th round of Mini-Grants was launched on November 1, 2021. Applications are now being accepted and will close on January 1, 2022, with awards announced by mid-February 2022. Awards will be up to \$2,000 per applicant and is a one-to-one match by the farmer. A total of \$41,195 in funding is available.

SMADC End of Year Report FY'21 – Karyn Owens stated the End of Year Report is now published; digital copies were sent to the board via email. The report will be uploaded and available to view/download on the "About SMADC" page at SMADC.com.

Horse Extra Guide Re-launch & Holiday Farm Guide – Susan McQuilkin announced the Horse Extra guide has been re-launched in digital interactive format on the "Get our Guides" page at SMADC.com, to coincide with the Governor's announcement designating October as Maryland 'Horse Month'. The guide features horse businesses and related equine services region-wide. The Holiday Farm Guide is in the final stages of development; advertisements will feature in regional magazines and rack cards promoting the guide will be distributed around the region.

December Meeting Discussion – Lucille Walker asked for consideration to cancel the scheduled December 2nd meeting due to potential attendance conflicts (for staff and members) due to upcoming conferences (RMC, Farm Bureau, MACO and others). Following a discussion, it was decided to keep the meeting in place, based on timing constraints regarding the new RAC MOU development and SMADC and TCCSMD boards' review and approval by December 9 for presentation to the St. Mary's BOCC. If required, voting members will be alerted to any 'special' meetings which may be needed in the interim.

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

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