



**Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission**  
**Thursday, September 1, 2022**  
**APPROVED Minutes**

**SMADC Members:** Lisa Barge, Joan Bearden, Steve Connelly, Dan Donohue, Edward Goodman, Kayla Griffith, Bill Hitte, Martin Proulx, Dan Rider, Donna Sasscer, Lucille Walker Vice Chair and Mary Wood Chair

**Members Absent:** Senator Jack Bailey, Eddie Bowling, Willie Goddard, Linda Jones, Delegate Rachel Jones, Ronald Marney, Barbara Polito, Charles Rice, Brian Russell, Charles Sasscer III, Russell Shlagel, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Steve Wall

**Staff:** Cristina Berthelot, Tori DiVincenzo, Heather Hulsey, Susan McQuilkin, Rachel Norris, John Hartline, Craig Sewell, Kelly Swann, Shelby Watson-Hampton

**Guests:** Dr. Craig Beyrouthy, Dean of College of Agriculture for University of Maryland, Andrew Bowles MDA Ag. Inspector for Southern Maryland, Julie Oberg Calvert County EDC, Lisa Ledman St. Mary's County Agriculture Coordinator

**Minutes**

**Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the minutes of July 7, 2022, and an edit to the minutes of June 2, 2022. Lucille Walker made a motion to approve the minutes. Dan Donohue seconded the motion. All approved.**

**Director's Report**

**Vacant At Large Position** - Director Watson-Hampton encouraged members to consider nominees for the one remaining At Large position.

**Staff position filled** – Maryland Market Money Coordinator position has been filled.

Director Watson-Hampton has attended four meetings and conferences in the past few weeks advocating for and promoting SMADC.

**Guest Speaker – Dean Beyrouthy, Dean of College of Agriculture for University of Maryland** was introduced and presented to the Commission on the resources and opportunities for students considering a career in agriculture.

**Staff Program Reports**

**Maryland Market Money (MMM)**

Heather Hulsey reported, as of August 31, 2022, there are 50 participating farmers markets, farm stands and CSA's in 16 counties and 685 farmers or local food producers participating in MMM. This engagement has helped 5,607 of our Maryland neighbors who are experiencing food insecurity many of whom are children and seniors. Data reported so far for the 2022 season is: \$169,962 (including \$4600 + in Buy Local Bonus Bucks) has been disbursed to access points to be passed along to farmers, which also brings \$133,191 SNAP and \$108,977 FMNP (WIC & SENIOR) in MMM-related benefits revenue for farmers.

### **Buy Local Challenge Celebration and statewide BLC**

Susan McQuilkin reported the statewide BLC Buy Local Week promotion (July 22 – 31), celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buy Local Challenge originally starting in 2007. The event reached over 28,000 people in engagement across social media for the full month of July. Over 15,000 post cards advertising BLC week resources and BLC Celebration were distributed to consumers. The in-person Celebration event was held on Monday August 1<sup>st</sup> from 5 to 9 p.m., at Serenity Farm, in Charles County. The goal of the event is to showcase Maryland farmers and grow consumer awareness for those farmers and increase access to locally produced foods by fostering the relationship between the two. 51 farmers and producers participated with all ranges of products as well as 6 agriculture related organizations. 650 to 700 people attended the event. Sponsors contributed a total of \$4,700.00 helping to offset the cost to approximately \$27,000.

### **Southern Maryland Meats (SMM)**

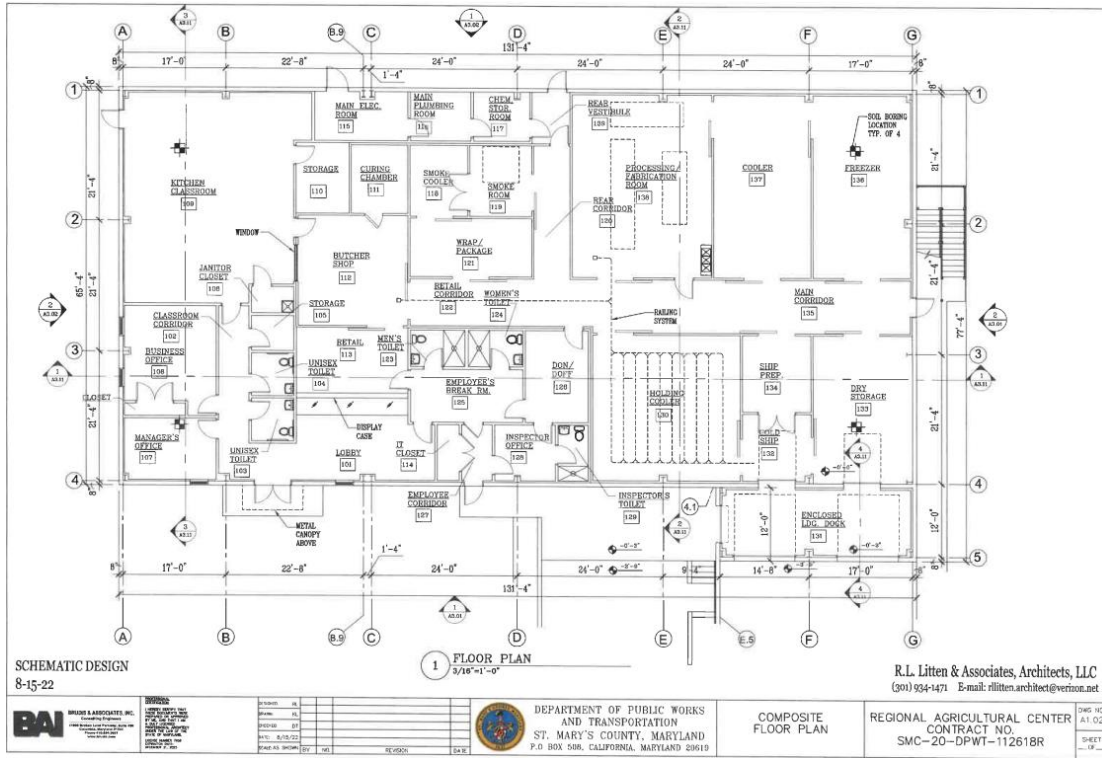
Director Watson-Hampton updated on the \$10 million MRDEF/Commerce Funds which Maryland Tri-county Councils have received for rural development projects to boost local economies. Southern Maryland Economic Development entities (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's) presented projects for funding consideration. Following a series of in-depth discussions four SMADC initiatives were presented and approved by the TCC Executive Board:

- **RAC contingency funding** – RAC build out estimates indicate a 6% cost escalation for labor and materials due to inflation - additional funding to meet overruns if not applied to construction will be applied to projects within the building.
- **Point of Sale software system** – for custom labelling (traceability and accountability) required by USDA food chain tracking for individual meat producers and processors and associated technology (printers, scales, wrap, pack etc.).
- **RAC Equipment purchases** – required for USDA processing and in house conveyance (scales, cutting room grinders, smokers, kettles, warming boxes, packaging equipment and more).
- **Tri-County Agricultural and Aquacultural Gap Identification Study** – analytical mapping and market analysis to support agriculture and aquaculture value chains in St. Mary's, Calvert, and Charles counties and review current and future infrastructure needs for agriculture and seafood industries.

**RAC**– Craig Sewell reported the RAC is still on schedule and presented the final architectural rendering of the RAC floor plan totaling 8,300 square feet. The current budget for the building is \$4,500,000 however with the likelihood of building costs increasing the final quote for the build is coming in around \$5,200,000, to include \$1 million buffer for cost overruns funded by the MRDEF. Any leftover 'buffer' funds will be allocated to cold storage on site.

The point-of-sale software database is a \$35,000 grant working with a company called *Food Token*. They work with small to mid-size to enhance marketing potential providing world class labeling technology incorporating QR codes to directly link consumers to the farmers' information. Lastly is equipment purchasing for the RAC, a \$350,000 grant to install state of the art self-cleaning and self-reporting

equipment which will satisfy information required by USDA in a quick accessible way. The data streams can be easily communicated from the equipment to the USDA which will also be cost effective in terms of labor.



**Southern Maryland Meats Junior Program** – there are 44 SMM Juniors signed up for this year’s project, up from 31, 3 years ago. There is a whole new set of kids raising meat. Participants received their T-shirts and stall cards in time for the upcoming fair season.

**Member Updates** – Members shared news and updates.

**Adjournment**

Mary Wood made a motion to adjourn. Dan Donohue so moved. Joan Bearden seconded the motion. All approved.

**Next SMADC Meetings (first Thursday of the month):**

Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>

Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>

Link to the full recording of the meeting is available:

[September- SMADC Commission Meeting-20220901\\_090210-Meeting Recording.mp4](https://www.verizon.com/recordings/September-SMADC-Commission-Meeting-20220901_090210-Meeting-Recording.mp4)