



**Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission**  
**Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**FINAL Minutes**

**SMADC Members:** Senator Jack Bailey, Joan Bearden, Steve Connelly, Dan Donohue, Edward Goodman, Kayla Griffith, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Barbara Polito, Martin Proulx, Dan Rider, Elizabeth Robinson, Charles Sasscer III, Donna Sasscer, Russell Shlagel, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Caroline Trossbach, Steve Wall, Lucille Walker Vice Chair and Mary Wood Chair

**Members Absent:** Eddie Bowling, Lisa Barge, Willie Goddard, Delegate Rachel Jones, Ronald Marney, Brian Russell

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

**Guests:** Gretchen Harman, Andrew Bowles; MDA Agricultural Inspector for Southern Maryland, Brandon Rosario; Destination Southern Maryland

**Minutes**

**Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the minutes from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes. Lucille Walker seconded the motion. All approved.**

**Guest speakers**

The 5 county Agriculture Marketing Professionals were invited to give a brief recap on their 2022 achievements; present at the meeting who provided county updates were Caroline Trossbach, Calvert County, Martin Proulx, Charles County and Donna Sasscer, St. Mary's County.

**Director's Report**

**SMADC 'Farmers Open House'** – Staff will hold an open house for the farming community on Monday January 23 from 12 noon to 5:30 p.m., offering SMADC resources, one-on-one meetings with staff, and assistance on relevant topics. Commission members are encouraged to attend. More information will be forthcoming.

**February Meeting Guest Speaker** – Colby Ferguson, Maryland Farm Bureau Director of Government & Public Relations will be our guest speaker for the February meeting speaking on the bills that will affect agriculture. Ongoing, Commission members were encouraged to recommend guest speakers for the 2023 meeting schedule.

**Legislative Representation on SMADC Board** – Senator Jack Bailey requested to address the board noting that there has been a significant turnover of longstanding representatives in the SOMD legislature that directly affects SMADC. Advocates for SMADC with significant power have left. He noted that five out of 13 members of the Budget and Tax committee now represent SMADC and recommended it was important for SMADC to have a meeting to educate new legislative representatives and delegates about SMADC and consider expanding the number of legislators on the SMADC board to 2 senators and 2 delegates (representing northern and southern counties of the 5-county region), which would enhance mutual efforts to work together. Director Watson-Hampton concurred with Senator Bailey’s recommendation.

**ACTION:** Chairwoman Mary Wood requested staff to email voting commission members with information on adding legislative representatives to increase the number of legislative representatives on the SMADC board to 2 senators and 2 delegates in total. Chairwoman Wood referred to precedent regarding this, as the SMADC board in years past has had additional legislative representatives as needed.

### **Staff Program Reports**

**Lothian Grain Elevator** – Craig Sewell reported that he is working with Anne Arundel County to brainstorm ideas on how to bring in extra income from the property to keep the grain elevator profitable for the long term.

**Grandma’s Hands’** – The project is made possible by a Maryland Heritage Areas Program grant awarded to SMADC in 2021, and features a documentary highlighting the origins, cultures, stories of recipes and food traditions and family relationships in Southern Maryland. Due to COVID related in-person interview and filming constraints the project has been on hold but is now back on track with filming beginning in February.

**RAC** – Craig Sewell presented the draft business plan for the RAC and gave a detailed review of its mission, the services that will be provided, and the potential expenses that could incur annually.  
**ACTION:** This draft business plan document will also be sent out to voting commission members for their records; per Chairwoman Wood instructions.

**Maryland Market Money** – Heather Hulsey thanked all who contributed and amplified our efforts during the ‘Holiday Giving Season’. She reported that the program received \$5,400 dollars for families experiencing food insecurity to purchase fresh, locally grown food which in turn means an additional \$5,400 back to Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs in the coming year.

**SMADC Community Fridge Project** – Heather Hulsey reported The SMADC Community Refrigerator Pilot Project launching in So.MD is a new SMADC food access program not part of the MMM program. The first refrigerator has been installed in La Plata at the Christ Church La Plata Food Pantry with a second planned at the Christ Church Wayside food pantry.

Staff Sophie Brauns is leading the project and has set up a mentorship with the Richmond, VA, Community Fridges Organization to learn best practices and helpful guidance. This is a newer type of food access effort happening nationwide, the main thing that sets us apart from other projects is that we will be purchasing local agricultural products from local So.MD farmers to stock the fridges. Fridges at locations near farmers markets will be ideal to create an additional revenue stream for farmers to sell their unsold products at the end of the market day. Additionally, in the off-season when farmers markets are few, we’ll be sourcing from hyper-local farms nearby. Commission members were asked to pass on the information to any farms who would be interested in learning more about selling their products for this project. Additionally, we are looking for old fridges that are still running strong that are unwanted or for

sale. To engage with the project or share ideas, please contact Sophie directly at [sbrauns@smadc.com](mailto:sbrauns@smadc.com). To find out more about the project visit the [RVA Community Fridge website](#)

**Cottage Foods Workshop** – Susan McQuilkin reported SMADC is working with the Maryland Department of Health to create a comprehensive Cottage Food workshop. The virtual presentation is scheduled for February 7, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. This training will provide an overview of Maryland’s Cottage food laws and regulations. Registration opened on January 3, 2023, with 84 participants signed up within the first few days.

**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, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

**Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**