



**Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission**  
**Thursday, February 2, 2023**  
**FINAL Minutes**

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

**Members Absent:** Senator Jack Bailey, Lisa Barge, Eddie Bowling, Willie Goddard, Kayla Griffith, Rachel Jones, Ronald Marney, Dan Rider, Steve Wall

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

**Guests:** Sean Clougherty – Managing Editor, American Farm Publications/Delmarva Farmer, Guy Leonard – Lead Journalist, The County Times newspaper, Sierra Criste – Financial Programs Associate, MARBIDCO, Lindsay Stine – Maryland Farm Bureau Western & National Capital Area, Regional Field manager,

**Minutes**

**Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the minutes from January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes. Bill Hitte seconded the motion. All approved.**

**Guest speakers**

Colby Ferguson, Maryland Farm Bureau Director of Government & Public Relations, spoke on the current bills affecting agriculture.

**Director's Report**

**SMADC 'Farmers Open House'** – Staff held 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. There was a great turnout, over 30 guests attended. The staff is considering hosting bi-annual or quarterly farmers open houses.

**Equipment Grants** – Applications closed on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. At this time, 5 applications were received of which 4 met the grant criteria. There are \$100,000 in funds available for equipment purchases. The working group reviewed all applications and recommended the approval of equipment purchases for a total of \$93,238.00 in funding; one approval was granted with conditions that must be met.

**\*Note:** Russell Shlagel requested the minutes reflect that he recused himself on the vote for Farmer's Feeding Southern Maryland application due to a previous business relationship with the non-profit entity.

[Equipment Requests with recommendations](#)

**MOTION: Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the equipment grant funding recommendations as proposed by equipment grant working group. Deana Tice made a motion to approve the funding. Edward Goodman seconded the motion. All approved.**

**MOTION: Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the remaining funds from the equipment grant be reallocated on the budget to SMADC Scholarships and Sponsorships. Bill Hitte made a motion to approve the budget adjustment. Joan Bearden seconded the motion. All approved.**

**SMADC Procedures/Bylaws Question** - Chairwoman Wood and Director Watson-Hampton updated the Commission on their current project of outlining the Commission's role more clearly in an upcoming document. Director Watson-Hampton gave some background on the issue, stating, that as SMADC's structure is convoluted under the TCCSMD Chairwoman Wood, TCCSMD Executive Director John Hartline and SMADC Director have sought guidance/clarification with the Attorney General. William J. Chen, III, the Assistant Attorney General from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in the Maryland Department of Commerce, is the assigned AG for the TCCSMD. In a recent email concerning SMADC Bylaws, Chen advised that since SMADC is not an official legal entity, rather it is a committee of the TCCSMD, technically the Commission it may not need bylaws. However, for audit purposes and transparency, the AG recommends that SMADC adopt some official rules and regulations for SMADC governance.

It should be noted that while common language parlance over the years has referred to the SMADC "Board", we are in fact a "Commission" (as referred to by our origination documents) or a "Committee" as referred to by AG Chen. Why the term "Board" was adopted over the years is uncertain.

Chairwoman Wood and Director Shelby-Watson Hampton are in agreement that while the SMADC Commission follows the Bylaws of TCCSMD, it would be preferable to create a clear guiding document for the SMADC Commission. AG Chen has offered to assist in the creation of that and has provided a few examples of similar protocols drawn up for other folks in the past. We also have an example document from the TCC Workforce Department which was created a few years ago.

We are currently in the process of gathering information summarized from the various resources and guidance available to present for discussion to the SMADC voting members, the TCC Executive Director, TCC Exec Committee, and AG Chen, so we can agree on what is needed for the clarified and streamlined SMADC Commission official working protocols going forward. Our goal is to have this ready for discussion at the upcoming March meeting.

### **Staff Program Reports**

**Maryland Market** – SMADC, in partnership with the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs MarketLink program, is offering a Federal Nutrition Benefits (SNAP/EBT + eWIC) Best Practices Training to all Maryland farmers markets and direct marketing farmers on Thursday, February 23, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. [Register for the Training](#)

The 2023 Maryland Market Money (MMM) application is now open for farmers markets and direct marketing farmers in Maryland. MMM is a statewide food access program that feeds Marylanders and supports farmers. MMM removes economic barriers for Marylanders experiencing food insecurity, providing a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs.

New this year, applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis, year-round - no deadline to apply. Additionally, current participating MMM Access Points will be considered legacies, and do not have to complete this application every year moving forward. [Application link](#)

**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, over 270 people have registered to attend. The workshop caught the eye of WYPR news which interviewed Dr. Clifford Mitchell, Director Maryland Department of Health Environmental Health Bureau, and Susan. [Link to the interview here](#)

**Lothian Grain Elevator** – Craig Sewell reported that the elected officials are continuing research and discussion. They requested SMADC continue to look at options not only for the elevator but also the eleven acres that remain outside the chain link fence on the property; the purpose being to allow this property to be financially sustainable with multiple income streams.

**Grandma’s Hands’** – filming will begin on Friday, February 3, 2023 featuring a 98 year old woman from Charles County making her crackling bread recipe.

**RAC** – Craig Sewell reported we are three months into our six-month time frame for the final design to be completed. Maryland Department of the Environment plan approvals for water discharge related to processing requirements are in process. Adjustments to the loading dock have been made to accommodate cost overruns. Once the final design is completed with St. Mary’s we will move on to construction bids.

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

### **Adjournment**

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

Guest Speaker- Robert Cooper, Consultant for Maryland 4-H Foundation

**Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Guest Speaker- Tom Phillips, MDA State Chemist