



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Thursday, April 6, 2023
APPROVED Minutes

SMADC Members: Joan Bearden, Steve Connelly, Dan Donohue, Willie Goddard, Edward Goodman, Kayla Griffith, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Barbara Polito, Elizabeth Robinson, Charles Sasscer III, Donna Sasscer, Russell Shlagel, Deana Tice, Caroline Trossbach, Lucille Walker Vice Chair, Steve Wall

Members Absent: Senator Jack Bailey, Lisa Barge, Eddie Bowling, Ronald Marney, Martin Proulx, Dan Rider, Brian Russell, Tresor Thomas, Mary Wood

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

Guests: Sierra Criste – Financial Programs Associate, MARBIDCO, Andrew Bowles – MDA Agriculture Inspector SOMD, Donnie Braun, Lindsay Stine - Maryland Farm Bureau Western & National Capital Area, Regional Field Manager, Tom Phillips – State Chemist, MDA.

Minutes

Vice Chair Lucille Walker called for a motion to approve the minutes from March, 2023. Bill Hitte made a motion to approve the minutes. Kayla Griffith seconded the motion. All approved.

Guest speakers

Lucille Walker with the Heritage Area presented on the National Heritage Area Feasibility Study and upcoming [National Heritage Area Launch](#) on May 25, 2023 at 12 noon at Piscataway Park, Accokeek. All are cordially invited to attend.

Tom Phillips, [State Chemist of the Maryland Department of Agriculture](#) presented on the mission and services of the department which regulates the sale and distribution of pesticides, animal feeds, pet foods, fertilizers, compost, soil conditioners and agricultural liming materials.

Director's Report

Staff Transitions – Tori DiVincenzo, SMADC Administrative & Grants Coordinator has left due to personal reasons. The position has been reviewed and is now advertised on the TCCSMD website and promoted through SMADC social media. We are seeking an individual with strong office administrative skills and expertise in grant reporting. Kelley Koeppen joined SMADC/MMM full time and will continue to work on the groundbreaking for eWic/eIncentives capabilities project for MMM.

Cottage Foods Workshop – The video recording of the recent workshop presentation and FAQ sheet of more than 40 questions posed by workshop attendees have been added to the SMADC.com Cottage Foods tutorials page. Staff, Susan McQuilkin will give a presentation on Cottage Foods to the MDA State Agriculture Commission on April 12. [SMADC's Tutorials page](#).

Acidified Food Workshop – The full day workshop was presented on March 20, simultaneously online and in person at the Prince George's County Soil Conservation District meeting room. Developed in partnership with Dr. Y. Martin Lo, training covered food safety, basics of thermal processing and regulation. The workshop is deliverable of a USDA FMPP grant. 10 students attended - 6 virtual, 4 in person. 5 identified as 'farmers/producers' (PG, AA, CA, Baltimore). Post-workshop surveys indicated participants affirm training will help to increase their value-added product inventory. SMADC training Reimbursement Scholarships towards half the cost of class (fee \$160/\$80 scholarship) are available for successful completers.

Buy Local Challenge Save the Date – 2023 BLC week is July 21 – July 30 (statewide in partnership with MDA). The BLC in person 'Celebration' will take place in St. Mary's County on Monday, July 31. Flat Iron Farm identified and confirmed (in 2021) as the St. Mary's County host farm has declined; staff are researching alternative agritourism venues.

SMADC Southern Maryland Ag Community and Leaders Round Table Discussion – SMADC will host the round table on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Charles County Soil Conservation District Office. The purpose is to facilitate regular open, friendly, and timely discussions on relevant topics and ideas in the local farming community.

SMADC Commission Protocol/Membership/Mission Working Document – the latest [working document](#) including updated Mission Statement was presented. Members provided input and questions regarding Commission size/cap and voting representation for Aquaculture and the 5 So.MD AMP's. **Action:** the draft working document with original document will be emailed to Commission members for further review and comment. Thoughts/edits are requested by email on or before Friday, April 28 in preparation for the May Commission meeting.

Staff Program Reports

Maryland Market Money – SMADC is now accepting applications for Maryland Market Money for the 2023 farmers market season and beyond. Applications are open for all farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs (or direct marketing farmers). Please share the application opportunity with regional stakeholders. <https://www.marylandmarketmoney.org/mmm-application>

SMADC is hosting a Farmer and Farmers Market Resource Fair on Monday, April 17th at the MD Farm Bureau office. The Resource Fair is open to all farmers and farmers market managers statewide interested in accepting Federal Nutrition Benefits, Benefit Matching Programs, Grant Opportunities, Cottage Food Guidelines, Technical Assistance, and more. <https://mailchi.mp/smadc/farmerfarmersmarketresourcefair>

SMADC is excited to announce that, after a recent meeting with Charles County Commissioners, Charles County has moved to award the Maryland Market Money program \$220,000 to address the need for food insecurity and the recent termination of SNAP Allotments in the county. \$200,000 will be dedicated directly to food purchasing incentives that support our community of neighbors and farmers. This opportunity will give the MMM program a chance to expand our work in Charles County.

Infrastructure Updates – Craig Sewell

Lothian Grain Elevator – an agreement between AAEDC and Purdue to purchase the Lothian Grain Elevator is now official and in the final stages following environmental and other local government reviews of the purchase details. The elevator will be able to receive this year’s grain harvest. Negotiations are underway with potential operators. Elected officials have asked SMADC to undertake an analysis of additional uses to further develop the 15-acre property as the elevator on its own is not sustainable, and value-added is vital to the long-term success and viability. Two projects are proposed to make the site financially viable, a composting facility and a flour mill utilizing locally produced wheat/grain. A business plan is in development.

RAC – the project is back on schedule and progressing following the successful review and approval of building plans by key county agencies (Fire Marshall, Dept. of Health, etc.) and a meeting with St. Mary’s County Government DPW. The 120-page architectural drawings are now finalized. We are awaiting a hopeful outcome of Senator Jack Bailey’s Bond Bill request for further RAC funding.

Lexicon Introduction – The Lexicon is a world-wide, US-based NGO that “builds movements that help people pay closer attention to how they eat, what they buy, and where their responsibility begins for creating a healthier, safer food system”. Craig Sewell has been involved with the group for approximately 8 months collaborating on the ‘Meat Operating System’ to address meat processing issues (from farm to marketplace) in cooperation with national retailers, consumers, and producers. An interactive website is in development; SMADC is honored to be one of three case studies that have been selected which demonstrate innovative solutions to problems facing food value chains. The Lexicon group will travel to SOMD for a 3-day photo shoot to document the story of Southern Maryland and how regional partners (Anne Arundel, St. Mary’s and Maryland Dept. of Agriculture) are working together to solve infrastructure issues.

Southern Maryland Farmer Mini Grant Round 10 – 28 applications were received requesting a total of \$52,729.99. A total of \$40,000 is available in funding. Following a review by the Mini Grant Review Committee 23 applications were recommended for approval by the Commission. **Following a brief discussion, Director Watson-Hampton called for a motion to approve the Mini Grants Round 10. Bill Hitte made a motion to accept the Mini Grant Review Committee’s recommendations as presented. Elizabeth Robinson seconded the motion. All approved.**

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

Adjournment

Joan Bearden made a motion to adjourn. Edward Goodman seconded the motion. All approved.

Next SMADC Meetings (first Thursday of the month):

Thursday, May 4, 2023

- Speaker: Melinda Coffman- USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Small Business Innovation Research (SBI) Program Coordinator
- Speaker: SOMD Farm Bureaus

Thursday, June 1, 2023

- Speaker: Margaret (Megan) Todd- Legal Research Associate, Presenting on Regulatory Decision Trees for Maryland Producers