



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Approved - Minutes

- SMADC Members:** Mary Wood, Lucille Walker, Joan Bearden, Dan Donohue, Willie Goddard, Edward Goodman, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Brian Russell, Elizabeth Robinson, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Jamie Tiralla, Commissioner 'BJ' Bowling, Steve Connelly, Jennifer David, Priscilla Leitch, Caroline Trossbach, Steve Wall, Sydney Garner, Shelley Garrett
- Members Absent:** Senator Jack Bailey, Delegate Brian Crosby, Senator Michael Jackson, Delegate Gary Simmons, Dan Rider, Charles Sasscer III
- Staff:** Cristina Berthelot, Sophia Brauns, John Hartline, Heather Hulsey, Rachel Norris, Kelly Swann, Craig Sewell, Shelby Watson Hampton, Sabrina Dobbins, Terri Wright Gresholm
- Guests:** Rachel Jones (MDA Director of Government Relations); Brandon Rosario (Maryland National Heritage Area); Sierra Criste (MARBIDCO)

Minutes

Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the minutes of May 2, 2024. Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes of May 2, 2024. Tresor Thomas seconded the motion. Mary Wood stated to change the date. All approved.

Director's Report

Staff Updates – We have new staff that has started. Administrative & Grants Coordinator, Terri Wright Gresholm, and the new Agricultural Programs Coordinator, Sabrina Dobbins (taking over Susan McQuilkin's position). Susan's Retirement Party is this afternoon at the Barns at New Market in Charlotte Hall, MD.

Buy Local Challenge Update – We are hosting the Buy Local Challenge Event. We read over six proposals and decide on Serinity Farms. The event will be held on Monday July 29th, from 5:00pm-8:00pm. We will be sending out the Save-The-Dates either tomorrow or no later than Monday.

SOMD Farm Bureau Retreat – The retreat was held in Calvert Library on May 15th & 16th. Both nights we had a great turnout and great discussions. A few items that were discussed were ways to work better together for the greater good of Southern Maryland Agriculture and Pushing Forward. We broke into groups to discuss the goals and the best way to communicate. What came out of this discussion was to create an email group called the "Go Team". The first members of the team are the 26 people that were in attendance. The "Go Team" are individuals that will be on call to work with helping promote and advocate for those who need assistance and connect with legislators. If you would like to be a part of the team, please email Shelby (swatsonhampton@smadc.com).

SMADC DRAFT BUDGET- TCCSMD Board Members will approve the budget for FY25. We do have a million dollars vs \$900k thanks to the legislation that passed. This will cover the cost of salaries, administrative fees and programmatic costs. Motion to approve- Dan Donohue and seconded by Jennifer David.

SPONSORSHIPS- Dan Donohue is requesting a donation to Alice Ferguson Foundation. They provide Environmental Education, and they have a barnyard where they are able to learn hands experience. The program is asking for \$1000. Motion to approve was made by Edward Goodman and second Brian Russell.

Southern Maryland Heritage Festival will be held in May 2025. The annual festival will showcase the rich culture and complex history of our region and feature historical tours, music, heritage, and cultural demonstrations and exhibits that highlight the trades and cultures that built Southern Maryland. We sponsored the Children's Education Trailer last year. They are asking for \$800 for sponsorship this year. Motion to approve- Dan Donohue and seconded by Jennifer David.

Rural Legacy Foundation Seeking Representative for their Board: The Rural Legacy Program seeking someone to fill the Business Representative vacancy on the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee. If anyone would like more information on this, please contact Katrina L. Tucker 443-926-3167 (cell) or email at KatrinaL.Tucker@maryland.gov.

MDA Survey Request- A survey has been distributed to economic development partners and businesses as part of a Strategic Planning exercise conducted by the Maryland Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce hopes to reach an audience that includes State employees, Regional Planning Agencies (e.g., Maryland's Tri-County Councils and Regional Planning Councils), Local government officials, organizations such as MEDCO/TEDCO, Chambers of Commerce, or even small, minority, veteran, or disabled business owners and major/large business owners around the state. If you have any questions, contact Martin Proulx at (443) 924-0329 (M) or email martin.proulx@maryland.gov

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MDOC2024>

MARBIDCO SMADC Grants- We wanted to provide you with the summary of how the Southern Maryland Revolving Loan Fund and Agricultural Equity Incentive Matching Funds programs are going. Attached is a pdf that provides a summary of where we are with the two programs. In the grant program sixteen projects totaling \$176,985 in all five counties were funded. There is a balance of \$43,015 in this program. This program really is a great and we would like to sponsor this program again this year. Staff votes to apply \$40,000 to this program. Motion to approve by Dan Donohue and seconded by Brian Russell.

Farmer Mini Grant Featured – A big thank you to the mini-grant Review Committee. We met for several hours last week to go over all the applications that were submitted. We had 30 applicants requesting a little over \$73,000, but we had \$60,000 of available funds. Three farms were denied due to ineligibility. Bill Hitte made a motion to accept the recommendations second by Brian Russell.

Staff Program Reports

MMM Team- The food access team has been super busy. Farmers markets reopen for their main season in May. \$37,543 was sent to MMM access points in May with \$14,716 of that going to Southern Maryland access points and with \$14,143 in incentives and \$23,400 in food access coordinator. The stipends will enable Farmers Market to build capacity by hiring a dedicated food access coordinator to manage the program. The Charles County food Access Project supported by our Charles County funds

from the Board of Commissioners is going strong. Farmers are going out to County food pantries and providing over 500 pounds of fresh food for schools and pantries. The team has met with the director of Charlotte Hall veterans' home and the Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs and we are proud to announce that they are moving forward towards assisting with the procurement of local agricultural goods to be part of the permanent nutritional offerings at the Charlotte Hall veterans home.

Marketing & BLC Event- Our latest creative initiative starting with the launch of the buy local guide the buy local guide is a project focusing on celebrating and promoting the diverse agricultural offerings in our region. The farmers market edition of the guide has been successfully launched featuring 41 Regional markets that feature Southern Maryland Farm vendors. This edition highlights our dedication to supporting local producers and building Community connections. We are at the final stages of creating the rack cards. These cards will play a key role in raising awareness about the buy local guide and encouraging Community engagement.

BLC-We are in progress of planning a spectacular event. We met with Serenity Farms last Friday and discussed logistics as well as speaking with Charles County Economic Development and Tourism. We also met with the health department which will be heavily involved with licenses and permits for our vendors. Shelby will review our estimated budget which is around \$31,000 with an estimated revenue of about \$12,300 which includes tickets sales and sponsorship. Admission \$5 per person (children 6 and under admitted free) with estimated attendance of 700 - 1000 people.

2024 Buy Local Week - The Statewide Buy Local Week (July 19 - July 31) It kicks off with Governor Moore's local Buy Local Cookout that will be on July 18th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. This cookout is annual continued tradition of selling Maryland Agriculture local restaurants that are supporting farmers and showcase those products. We will be having a market bag that is distributed to 29 of the Southern Maryland farmers market that will be given out during this week.

The Southern Maryland Junior Program kicked off two days ago. We have already received response from 15 young people who are raising livestock. The Smile Show June 22nd and 23rd at the St Mary's County Fair.

The documentary film Grandma's Hands was picked up by Maryland Public Television. We have agreed to a two-year contract which the first premier will be on Thanksgiving.

Regional Agricultural Center (RAC)

RAC 1.0- Craig met with the Project Managers, St. Mary's County Health department and a design team. There were 6 outstanding issues and 14 were solved during the meeting, two were remaining.

RAC 2.0 - The former McKay's grocery store that became a Shoppers Food Warehouse is now vacant in Charlotte Hall. It is 48,000sq ft area. It has great opportunities for food processing and storage. We are meeting with St. Mary's County to discuss moving forward.

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

Adjournment – Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joan Bearden made a motion to adjourn. Edward Goodman seconded the motion. All approved.

Next SMADC Meeting: Thursday July 11, 2024.