



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

October 02, 2025

Approved Minutes

SMADC Members: Mary Wood, Delegate Gary Simmons, Joan Bearden, Dan Donohue, Edward Goodman, Bill Hitte, Elizabeth Robinson, Russell Shlagel, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Karl Shlagel, D'Real Graham, Shelley Garrett, Caroline Trossbach, Sydney Garner

Members Absent: Lucille Walker, Senator Jack Bailey, Delegate Brian Crosby, Senator Michael Jackson, Willie Goddard, Linda Jones, Brian Russell, Dan Rider, Jamie Tiralla, Commissioner 'BJ' Bowling, Daniel Mast, Steve Connelly, Jennifer David,

Staff: John Hartline, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Craig Sewell, Rachel Norris, Kelly Swann, Sabrina Dobbins, Terri Wright Gresholm

Guests: Sierra Criste (Marbidco); Justin Cheseldine-Gas, Lisa Quill, Megan Zalesak

Minutes

Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the minutes for September meeting. Joan Bearden made a motion to approve the minutes, and Dan Donohue seconded.

Director's Report

Strategic Plan Update: Shelby provided an update on the strategic planning work group's progress, outlining the refreshed mission statement and three organizational pillars—economic development, agricultural education, and industry promotion—and discussed the timeline for finalizing and implementing the new strategic plan with input from commission members. Shelby described the revised mission statement, which consolidates previous language and emphasizes supporting farms, farmers, and the future of agriculture through economic development, education, and industry promotion. The three pillars were defined to organize all existing and future programs. The plan is to present the final strategic plan to the commission in November, seek approval from the TCC Executive Board, and implement the new plan in January 2026, including a press release and website update.

Farm to School Grant: Shelby introduced the USDA Farm to School Grant opportunity, described the existing Charles County School Food Program. The program would involve regional farmers and require each county's AMP and school purchasing representatives to determine participating schools. Shelby outlined the need for letters of intent from school systems and farmers for the grant application. We would do it regionally for all 5 counties and we are asking for a \$250,000 grant which we would do for \$50,000 for each county.

County Funding Question: Strategic Plan Committee requested that SMADC request funds from the five southern Maryland counties. Shelby explained that the request aims to ensure long-term program funding and reduce reliance on uncertain state and grant funding. The proposal is to approach each county for a set annual contribution.



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Chairwoman Mary Wood called motion for SMADAC to approach the five Southern Maryland counties for a \$50,000 allocation to support the program and services we provide in their county. Joan Bearden made a motion to approve, and Dan Donohue seconded.

USDA BARC Letter: Shelby informed the commission about SMADC's participation in advocacy against the proposed relocation or closure of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, joining other organizations in submitting a letter of opposition to the USDA.

Nominating Committee Update: Edward Goodman reported on the nominating committee's progress in renewing commission member terms, filling vacancies, and encouraging nominations for chair and vice chair roles, Edward shared that most members up for renewal have responded, with a few stepping down and nominating replacements. The committee will continue outreach to finalize the roster and prepare for a vote in December. We would like to finalize the roster by January.

MAEF Trailer Sponsorship: The Workforce Development Team from TCCSMD has reached out to ask for help planning an AG event in Calvert County for students. They're doing a hands-on agricultural career fair on Monday, November 4th. They have asked that we help sponsor this event by sponsoring the MAEF Trailer. The cost is \$575.

Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to approve the MAEF trailer funding for that event. Joan Bearden made a motion to approve, and Dan Donohue seconded.

Staff Updates

Ag Programs Update

Mentor Match and Livestock Registry: Sabrina reported the conclusion of the Farm Lakes Mentor Match program and recruitment for new mentors. We are currently looking for new mentors for the next teams. We will be hosting a Mentor Match Workshop/Meet and Greet on October 28th from 5:30-7:30pm at the SMADC office. This is when new mentees will meet and match with mentors for this next year.

Livestock Breeder Registry: The Southern Maryland Livestock Breeders Registry is a new guide for livestock breeders in the Southern Maryland Region. This digital guide will provide a list of livestock breeders for the public and other breeders to freely access.

Equine Extra Guide: The Equine Extra Guide continues to be open to equine businesses including boarding/lesson, feed stores, hay suppliers, veterinarians, farriers and any other equine related businesses. Application closes November 3rd.

Creative Services:

On September 10th, The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission has launched a new mental health awareness initiative for the region's agricultural community to address farm stress and suicide risk. As part



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of this campaign, **free stickers** featuring the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** are being produced for placement in farm offices and tractor cabs to encourage producers to seek help. The design for the sticker was created by our **interns** as one of their project contributions, and interested parties can request them via info@smadc.com.

September 15th **SMADC** has opened the application process for the **2025 Southern Maryland Holiday Farm Guide**, which promotes local farms, producers, and businesses offering farm products and services during the holiday and winter season. The free guide helps connect consumers with a diverse range of local goods, from Christmas trees and décor to meats, seafood, and local beverages. The deadline for applications is **October 12, 2025**.

September 17 **SMADC** granted **\$16,000** to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (**MDA**) to support the ongoing **Maryland Market Money (MMM)** food access initiative. These funds were donated by private citizens over the last five years and represent a final, collaborative effort between **SMADC** and **MDA** following **MMM's** transition to **MDA** on July 1, 2025. The grant will help sustain the critical program, which provides a dollar-for-dollar match for federal nutrition benefits at farmers markets, supporting both food-insecure residents and local farmers.

Infrastructure Update

Amish:

Complete update/rewrite of HACCP Plan to comply with recent USDA/FSIS regulations for small meat processing plants. Implemented new safety regulations (Lock Out/Tag Out Policy). Celebrated 4 years under USDA inspection.

Stauffer's Butcher Barn

Total expenditures to date: \$142,000 from the \$200,000 direct grant, all for capital expenses. Additional requests have been made to MARBIDCO for larger equipment.

Part One of their two-part HACCP Plan has been submitted to the USDA/FSIS for review. Part Two is complete and awaiting review.

Initial USDA walkthrough for the physical location was performed on August 26 with USDA/FSIS Front Line Supervisor. Pronounced good-to-go once HACCP Plans are approved. Last hurdle is label approval which we are working on now.

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. Dan Donohue seconded the motion. All approved.



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Next SMADC Meeting: Thursday November 6, 2025