



## Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

November 6, 2025

### Approved Minutes

**SMADC Members:** Mary Wood, Joan Bearden, Dan Donohue, Willie Goddard, Edward Goodman, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Brian Russell, Elizabeth Robinson, Commissioner 'BJ' Bowling, D'Real Graham, Caroline Trossbach, Sydney Garner, Shelley Garrett

**Members Absent:** Lucille Walker, Senator Jack Bailey, Delegate Brian Crosby, Senator Michael Jackson, Delegate Gary Simmons, Dan Rider, Russell Shlagel, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Jamie Tiralla, Karl Shlagel, Steve Connelly, Jennifer David

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

**Guests:** Sierra Criste (Marbidco); Sophia Carpenter; Molly Meehan; Martin Proulx

### Minutes

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

**Nominating Committee Update:** Shelby provided updates on board member renewals, resignations, and upcoming nominations, including changes due to career moves and the need to fill leadership positions for the next term. See report attached.

### Director's Report

Shelby delivered a comprehensive director's report covering the USDA Farm to School grant application, food insecurity challenges, recent outreach efforts, and upcoming events.

USDA Farm to School Grant: It's ranging in projects from \$100,000 to half a million and they have a total of \$18,000,000 to spend. We've got approval from the Commission and from the TCC board to apply for this grant. Our team will work on the application which is due December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Food Insecurity: Shelby described increased demand at local food pantries due to federal SNAP benefit disruptions, highlighted state programs and tax credits for food donations, and reported on efforts to secure continued funding for Charles County food access initiatives.

Shelby attended a meeting at Prince George's County Farm Bureau, and they spoke about the annual conference that is being held on December 6-9, 2025. She would like to sponsor one young person from each county to attend the conference.

**Chairwoman Mary Wood called for a motion to allocate \$200 per county to send a young farmer to the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention. Bill Hitte made a motion to approve, and Dan Donohue seconded.**



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### Staff Updates

#### Ag Programs Update

Mentor Match and Livestock Registry: SMADC hosted our second mentor match workshop on Tuesday October 28<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm with light refreshments served. There are 9 mentees that have signed up, and we have 5 mentors signed up. Through this meeting, mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to network with each other to see who could match to start a mentorship. These teams will work together over the next year to share knowledge, resources and experiences to better the mentee's operation.

Veterans Farmer Workshop: SMADC is hosting a Veteran Farmer meetup/Workshop on Monday November 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 pm at the SMADC office in Hughesville, MD. We will also have a guest speaker from the Veteran Farmer Coalition. The goal of this workshop is to give farmers a chance to connect with fellow veterans in agriculture, share experiences, and learn about resources to support their farming journey.

Regulatory: SMADC is working with one Amish producer who attempted to sell his products in a retail store without proper "certification." I provided this producer with items that we need to accomplish before sales can be made in a retail store. He is discussing these requirements with his family and will touch base with me if he decides to move forward with these sales.

#### Creative Services:

End of Year Report for 2025 has been finalized and is currently in final review. We anticipate publishing the full report on SMADC.com by mid-November.

The popular 2025 Holiday Farm Guide is progressing through the design phase. We expect the online guide to be published and available for public access on Friday, November 14th.

Farmer Mini-Grant Program (Round 13 Launch): We have opened the 13th Round of the Mini-Grant Program, dedicating up to \$60,000 in matching funds to support farm start-up, diversification, and expansion projects. Individual awards of up to \$3,000 are available, with applications open from November 3rd to December 31st. <https://mailchi.mp/smadc.com/mini-grant-thirteen>

Southern Maryland Livestock Breeders Guide, which is new to SMADC, was announced yesterday. We are officially accepting applications, so if you would like to be listed or you know a livestock breeder who should be, please share the information. <https://www.cognitofrms.com/Smadc/SMADCLivestockBreederRegistry>



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**Infrastructure Update**

**SMM Jr. Program:** We have 42 juniors this year. We are now asking for their essays for this year, talking about their experiences with their animals and with the fair. They will receive a \$125 stipend for submitting the essay and participating in the program.

**Amish:** Assisting the Amish with USDA updates and new inspector process.

**Stauffer's Butcher Barn:** Final Inspection walkthrough with the USDA is scheduled for Monday Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>. They plan on doing a soft opening soon, but the grand opening is scheduled for mid-December.

**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.

**Next SMADC Meeting:** Thursday December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025