

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture
Monday, June 25, 2012, 10am-12pm
Minutes

Attendees:

GICA Members: Rodney Glofelty, Jim Steele, Cheryl DeBerry, Dan Rosen (for Secretary Hall), Faith Elliott Rossing, Gail Webb Owings, Pam Saul, Sarah O'Herron, Robin Frazier, Emily Wilson (for Secretary Griffin), Earl Hance, Robin Henderson (for Secretary Sharfstein), Tom Hartsock. Staff: Joanna Kille.

Guests: Kurt Fuchs, Les Knapp, Rachel Melvin, Mary Ellen Setting, Graham Peffo, John Leocha, Shane Robinson, Carol West, Kristen Robinson, Lynne Hoot, Eugene Kim, Brian Lang, Jay Sakai, John Leocha, Mae Johnson, Karen Fedor

All meeting materials/presentations can be found at
http://www.mda.maryland.gov/boards_comms/gica.php#mtgmats

The meeting was called to order at 10am. The October, 2011 minutes were approved.

The Grocery Gap and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI)

Brian Lang and Eugene Kim from The Food Trust in Philadelphia, did a presentation on some of their initiatives. HFFI provides access to financing, new or expanded stores. The rates of obesity are increasing (BMI – obesity if above 30%). We need to change the way people eat. There are few or no places to purchase healthy foods in certain areas of the county. 23.5 million people live in food deserts in the U.S. The Pennsylvania fresh food financing initiative has provided \$30 million in grants/loans for investments in underserved areas. The Food Trust is looking at research to see if there has been an improvement. The challenge is getting a sample size. CDC-Maryland has a transformation grant. Healthy Food Financing program has 125 million. Community Development bank awarded HFFI to Howard Park for development of Shoprite. In February, 2012, the Food Trust launched a task force in Maryland to discuss solutions to food deserts.

Overview of SB 236 – the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012

MDE and MDP representatives Jay Sakai and John Leocha, respectively, did a presentation on the implementation of SB 236 the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012.

Tier I – Existing public sewerage

Tier II – Public sewerage; planned septic systems shall be viewed as interim.

Tier III – Septic Systems

Tier IV – Preservation and conservation areas. No major subdivisions, only minor.

A key thing is that TDRs can remain. The bill allows for a maximum of 15 lots in a Tier IV receiving area. If the county does not have a TDR program, a farm can be a receiving area for

TDRs if identified as such. Rights can be transferred from Tier IV to Tiers I, II, III, but cannot be transferred from I, II, or III into IV. Only rights from Tier IV can be transferred within Tier IV.

Cheryl DeBerry said that Garrett County does not have an issue with growth but is struggling to make changes to mesh state goals with the county goals. The presenters talked about the cost and environmental impact issues addressed in the bill. There was significant debate in the General Assembly and in the end decisions are left to local planning and zoning officials. Part of process is discussing the issue of large lot developments in rural areas. This is fine but the analysis needs to consider the cost of fire and other services.

For stormwater management, there is already a cost to the local community in environmental degradation. All impacts of development. Counties will also decide this issue. Some counties have different processes. A property has to perc before a plan is approved. The State is trying to make as simple as possible. Dan Rosen said the problem with the smart growth effort is that after 10 years, studies have show there is still too much development still going on. There is too much state funding for suburban sprawl.

Agricultural Mediation/Education/Outreach Efforts

Mae Johnson, MDA's Agriculture Mediation coordinator updated commission members on a new partnership with the Maryland Retailers Association. Karen Fedor updated everyone about Agricultural Education efforts. She reported that agriculture education is a Career and Technology Education focus and not part of the curriculum. There are ongoing general concerns that there is a lack of interest in and knowledge of agriculture in the public schools. A motion was put forward asking the Secretary of Agriculture to meet with the incoming State Superintendent of Schools.

Announcements/Next Meeting

Buddy Hance talked about the ice cream trail – participants include Chucky Fry, Bobby Priegel and Brooms Blooms. The commission members discussed the issue of “sustainability” and concern about terminology being used and issues with a publication at the University of Maryland. Commission members agreed to revisit the issue at the next meeting. Other members raised an issue involving the IRS and a dairy farmer in Maryland pertaining to bank deposits. It is important it is for farmers to understand the issue. Secretary Hance said he would schedule a meeting with the new Superintendant of Schools and report back to the group at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm/