

GICA Meeting Minutes
6/27/2024

Call to Order: 1:05 pm

I. Welcome and Introductions - Rachel Jones

A. Background of GICA - Established via Executive Order 01.01.2006.06 to:

- Promote the economic profitability of agriculture by ensuring that all appropriate agencies work collaboratively with local government and industry to plan, implement, oversee and evaluate agency initiatives;
- Promote a clear and consistent “business-friendly” climate by serving as a liaison between the Governor and local governments and industry organizations;
- Develop annual intergovernmental goals for services and functions of agricultural affairs;
- Develop and implement specific a consistent, systematic method for the coordination of agricultural economic development activities;
- Develop and implement specific and measurable actions to improve the economic and regulatory climate for agriculture in the State;
- Make recommendations for programs and policies, if appropriate, in order to ensure that the needs and goals of the State’s agricultural strategy are met and accomplished.

II. Overview of GICA Objectives & Discussion - Secretary Atticks

- GICA will be able to present case studies and work as a group to find solutions to the agricultural industry’s most pressing issues:
 - Deer management
 - Across the state, crop damage due to deer is a major issue creating a negative economic impact for commodity farmers in particular.
 - MDA doesn’t regulate deer, DNR does and have been working with us to connect farmers and hunters to address the problem.
 - Solar siting on farm land
 - The Governor’s goal is 100% clean energy by 2040
 - Agritourism
 - Food System Resilience
 - Farm labor/workforce issues

III. Establishment of subcommittees

- Agritourism
- Natural Resources & Environment
- Labor & Development
- The MDA designee on the FSRC give a GICA report to the FSRC and vice versa

IV. Agency Updates

MDE - Sec. Serena McIlwain

- Agritourism - Agrees that the current MDA/MDE/MDH Agritourism workgroup should be absorbed by GICA as a subcommittee
 - The current requirements for restrooms, etc. for agritourism businesses needs to be streamlined and MDE is happy to work with MDA to achieve that

MDEM - Sec. Russell Strickland

- The Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) is an advisory body to legislature that provides an annual report to the legislature and is housed in the Office of Resilience
- See's perfect overlap with GICA subcommittees to enhance the FSRC's work

DOL - Sec. Portia Wu

- Heat stress rule is about to be published with guidelines for outdoor workers during extreme temperatures
 - Publishing deeper guidance, breaks-rests-shade
 - Won't take effect until late summer
 - Steve Connelly has been involved
- Current workforce initiatives
 - The GICA today addressed the need for more apprenticeships in agriculture, industry sector grants, workforce partnerships. This is an opportunity that can be built on through GICA
 - Blueprint
 - Funded career counselors in every HS in the state. Labor can promote more agricultural career opportunities through the career counselors
 - H2A, H2B - DOL offers tools to help business owners navigate the process for H2A/B visas
 - A Maryland workforce conference will be held in September

DNR - Josh Kurtz

- Land conservation - MD recently met its goal of preserving 30% of land, almost ½ is ag land, the next goal is 40% by 2040
- Deer management - Current programs that DNR has built up
 - Deer Cooperator Permit has seen a 67% increase this year from 3 to 5 people. Requires extensive sharpshooter training.

- Deer Management Permit
 - 30,000 able to shoot, 10,000 were shot
 - Crossover with MDA connecting farmers and hunters
 - Helping write leases/agreements to take does
 - Promotion of the Venison Donation Program

Planning - Debbie Herr Cornwell

- MDP has a few initiatives relevant to agriculture:
 - Solar facility siting guidance webpage
 - Case studies on local govts handling solar
 - Agritourism/vaa
 - Future of sustainable farming and forestry in Maryland
 - Rural Economies workgroup - sustainable growth commission
 - Connecting with small commercial kitchens and producers

MEA - Pinsky

- There is currently a modeling study being done with a modeling group to determine what the makeup of energy types will be in order to meet the Governor's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. (I.e. 14.5% solar, 15% wind, etc.)
- Calvert Cliffs produces about 40% of our energy through nuclear
- The current solar goal set by the Clean Energy and Jobs Act is 14.5%. There are 3 types of solar projects:
 - Utility scale (optimal in helping to reach our energy goals faster)
 - Rooftop residential/commercial
 - Community solar
- MEA offers numerous grants to help fund renewable energy projects that farmers can take advantage of:
 - \$200k - \$5 mil grants for farmers for solar and geothermal projects

Dept. of Aging - LaTanya Clark

- Glad to join GICA to collaborate more to learn about resources and opportunities for seniors:
 - How can they connect seniors with grants for solar energy, community garden plots, etc.?
 - How can they ensure seniors know about various farmers markets and how to best utilize the FMNP program?
 - Interested in educating seniors who may be interested in apprenticeships or employment on farms.

V. Member Updates

Rural MD Council (RMC) - Glad to see GICA revived. They look forward to sharing the work of GICA with the rural ag community.

MARBIDCO - In response to the lack of veterinarians they will be launching an Animal Vet Loan program soon.

MD Farm Bureau - Young Farmers and Ranchers are very optimistic about seeing the agencies collaborate like this.

Tyler Majchrzak - On behalf of Horizon Farm Credit is glad to be a member of GICA. HFC just awarded fifteen \$10,000 grants to young farmers in MD, VA, WV, PA, and DE.

Ag Commission (MAC)

- State agencies can be difficult to navigate, GICA will help the industry do that more efficiently.
- Eager to share industry perspectives, case studies, proposals, and background from the MAC .

MAEF- Suzanne Richards

- MAEF focuses on ag education in schools, partnering with DOL for apprenticeship opportunities and utilization of Blueprint funding is an exciting opportunity.
- Collaborating with MDA on the upcoming July 16th Ag Education Summit
- Hosting two events soon:
 - Golf Tournament on 9/11
 - Annual Banquet on 11/7

Cheryl DeBerry

- Farm owner and former AMP, GICA member for many years, glad to see it revived.

Adjourned 2:23 pm

Attendees

State Agencies:

MDA- Sec. Kevin Atticks, Chair

MDA - Rachel Jones

MDA- Martin Proulx

MDA - Susan Kivioja

MDP - Deborah Herr Cornwell

MDE - Sec. Serena McIlwain

MDE - Suzanne Dorsey

MDE - Tyler Abott

Labor - Sec. Portia Wu

Aging - LaTanya Clark
MEA - Director Paul Pinsky
DNR - Sec. Josh Kurtz
MDEM - Sec. Russell Strickland
MDEM - Anna Sierra

Affiliate Members:

Ag Commission - Kelly Lewis and Harrison Palmer
MACP - Eddie Francheschi - AA Co Planning - Jennifer Dempsey designee
MARBIDCO - Stacy Kubofcik
Farm Bureau - Mitch Hopkins
RMC - Matt Teffeau
MAEF - Suzanne Richards

Public Member:

Tyler Majchrzak - Horizon Farm Credit
Cheryl DeBerry - Farm owner/ former AMP

Public Guests:

MD Grain Producers - Lindsay Thompson
DCA - Holly Porter