



UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Executive Board

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Diana Broomell
1st Vice Chair
Cecil County
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Commissioner

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Kent County
Commissioner

Senator Steven Hershey
Delegate Michael Smigiel
Delegate Delegate Jay Jacobs
Delegate Steven J. Arentz
Maryland General Assembly

Doris S. Mason
Executive Director
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Date and Time: Thursday, January 30, 2014 @ 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Location: 122 N. Cross St., Chestertown, MD 21620 (2nd floor board room)

Participants:

David Dunmyer, Chair, Queen Anne's County Commissioners; Diana Broomell, 1st Vice Chair, Cecil County Council; Dr. Alan J. McCarthy, Cecil County Commissioner; Alex Shull, proxy to Delegate Michael Smigiel, Jr., representing the Maryland General Assembly (conferenced-in); Doris Mason, Executive Director; Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant (conferenced-in); and a citizen.

Time Item

1:30-1:35 **Welcome/Review of Meeting Purpose
And Exec. Board Engagement discussion**

After a quorum was established, Chair Dunmyer welcomed all participants and requested introductions. After the introductions, Chair Dunmyer encouraged Board members to continue to engage with the USRC, so that the required Administrative decisions could be made regarding the Council.

Budget/Fiscal

1:35-1:50

Executive Director Mason presented the FY 2014 Budget and reviewed the itemized entries, current balances, DBED drawdowns and other received allocations; Dr. McCarthy inquired regarding the cost of the copier and how it would be monitored. He also asked about the change in budget from FY 2013 to FY 2014 with regards to the contract amounts. Executive Director Mason said that it was the first time that the USRC has leased a copier, but that it is working out very well, thus far, further noting how useful the machine has been for printing things on-site without having to use out-side sources to print. She further noted that she could provide a listing of all outstanding contracts and the current payouts, as requested, as they were not itemized on the budget presented, but are available. She discussed the need to outsource certain services, which would be discussed later in the meeting. All present agreed that an audit would be a good idea as per Executive Director Mason's recommendation. Alex Shull withheld her vote stating that she did not feel comfortable making a vote at that time without a further discussion with the Delegate. Chair Dunmyer proposed to approve the budget as presented and that any adjustments to the budget could be revisited pending the audit, but that there was no reason to further delay approval.

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1:50-2:30

Project Updates (per Strat. Plan) Shorevines.com

Executive Director Mason stated that the Shorevines.com (Goal 5) was a part of USRC's tri-county effort to provide viable agricultural alternatives to landowners and to increase wine-quality grape production. She noted that in Kent County there is a Vineyard Management Company, which the USRC helped begin by accessing a Federal USDA grant. Further stating how USRC coordinates regional efforts between Queen Anne's, Kent, and Cecil Counties to support and educate vineyard owners who want to begin a winery also. Financial projections along with a wealth of additional information and links to vineyard operations and winery production can be found and downloaded at the USRC's ShoreVines.com. She mentioned that many of the marketing videos and social media initiatives for Shorevines.com were the result of collaborative work done by the USRC with Loblolly (one of the USRC contractors).

2:30-3:00

Chesapeake Wine Country Trail

Executive Director Mason discussed the plans for the Chesapeake Wine Country Independence Trail, which will market vineyards and wineries on the entire Eastern Shore of Maryland and draw more attraction to the area. The trail will begin in Cecil County at the Maryland/Pennsylvania border then continue south through Kent, Queen Anne's Talbot, Dorchester, and the remainder of the Shore. Presently, the Upper Shore has over 2/3 of all wineries on the Shore.

Upper Shore Harvest Directory (Goal 5)

Executive Director Mason discussed the funding which was obtained by the USRC for marketing the agri-businesses in the region that presented a collaborative opportunity for over 127 of the agri-businesses to be presented in the Harvest Directory (which she presented to the Board in the form of a brochure). Dr. McCarthy discussed his concerns regarding the cost of the brochures and questioned whether the agri-businesses should donate some of the proceeds to print and design the brochure. He recommended that the USRC to develop alternatives for fundraising. 1st Vice Chair Broomell added that it was a part of the USRC's mission to assist in the regional economic development and that the Directory was a part of that effort. Executive Director Mason stated that the USRC had received grant funds via MAERDAF for the project and is collaborating with the Washington College's GIS Department. Proxy to Delegate Smigiel added that the GIS Department was an excellent program. Executive Director Mason stated that she thought that fundraising was a great idea, and that she would look into ways to fundraise for the Agri-businesses. Councilwoman Broomell recommended that the Upper Shore Regional Council contact Cecil College regarding internship involvement.

Spring Social Media Workshops

Executive Director Mason directed the Board to view the advertisement for the upcoming Social Media Workshops in their packets. The USRC will host presenter Mindie Burgoyne, Regional Business Representative for MD DBED, in Kent County on March 6, 2014, in Cecil County on March 17, 2014

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and Queen Anne's County on March 27, 2014. The workshop is free to agricultural businesses and other small businesses from Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's counties as part of the Upper Shore Harvest Directory's mission to provide support for the growth of local businesses. Various business support partners such as SCORE, SBDC, and MD Capital Enterprises will be present to provide consultations.

App. Development

Executive Director Mason noted that due to the evolution of telecommunications, the USRC is working with the Washington College's GIS Department to build a smart phone APP, which will provide a search of the local Upper Shore agri-businesses by products, by businesses name or by map. The APP will be available for unveiling during the 10 Anniversary Executive Board Retreat on April 24, 2014.

New Businesses

April Executive Retreat (Goal 7)

Executive Director Mason introduced the Consultant for the Executive Retreat; Ummu Bradley Thomas (teleconferenced-in). Ummu Bradley Thomas discussed the proposed retreat agenda, which was presented during the meeting. The Executive Retreat is scheduled on April 24, 2014, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm and the guest speakers are still being confirmed. Ummu Bradley Thomas discussed the importance of filling out and returning the questionnaire as it requests feedback on the USRC's actions and activities pre-retreat during 2013. Additionally, the Retreat will reflect on the progress of the USRC in celebration of its 10th year Anniversary. 1st Vice Chair Broomell asked Executive Director Mason to state the top three achievements of the USRC in 2013 and she stated 1) the Harvest Directory; 2) Shorevines.com; and 3) the Strategic Plan. 1st Vice Chair Broomell indicated that she believed that the Strategic Plan was one of USRC's top accomplishments in 2013.

Rural MD Prosperity Investment Fund (Goal 7)

Executive Director Mason discussed the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund, which follows USRC's goals # 3 –Planning for Growth and Development and Goal #7- USRC is meeting its goals and opportunities. The Rural MD Prosperity Investment Fund and that the proposed amount to be slated to the USRC (if granted) would triple the current budget. The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund would provide funding in five targeted areas: 1) Increase Entrepreneurship; 2) Improve Infrastructure; 3) Enhance Regional Planning; 4) Target Community Development; and 5) Regional Healthcare.

Regional Youth Tech. Incub. (Goal 6)

Executive Director Mason discussed the regional youth tech incubator, which will establish a mentor network to enhance youth career opportunities and provide space for the Tech Start-ups etcetera. Additionally young adults are being polled to create retention enhancement strategies. The similar youth initiatives campaign is being planned and managed through Washington College. USRC has supported other initiatives through Startup Maryland.

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Bylaw Review/Revisions (Goal 7)

Executive Director Mason discussed the proposed revisions to the Bylaws. The changes were presented for the Board's review.

MEETING CLOSED TO Non Board Members

- Personnel: Evaluation Tool for Executive Director; Temp. Office Asst.

New Business/Open Forum

R.E.A.D.Y Program

Executive Director Mason toured the R.E.A.D.Y. program currently being operated in Howard County. Chair Dunmyer and Executive Director Mason would like to see the program duplicated in the Upper Shore to address run-off rain and youth employment/workforce needs. R.E.A.D.Y. is designed to meet the environmental and employment goals of Howard County, the Alliance, and PATH. PATH has worked with Howard County government to fund employment of your adults, aged 16-26, in building rain gardens throughout the county. This will help alleviate the flow of toxic storm water runoff polluting our streams, rivers, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Summary of Action Steps/Closing

The actions steps were summarized by Executive Director Mason. The meeting was closed by Chair Dunmyer.