

RMC Legislative Committee
December 4, 2014
Wye Education and Research Center
124 Wye Narrows Drive, Queenstown, Maryland
Minutes

Participants:

Josh Hastings
Bill Barnes
Kathy Beisner
Michelle Clark
Kathleen Deoudes
Kurt Fuchs
John Hartline
Penelope Keating
Wilbur Levengood
Steve McHenry
John McQuaid

Ed Modell
Linda Prohaska
Merle Rockwell
Matt Teffeau
Scott Warner
RMC Staff:
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director
Kathy Vernacchio, Administrative and
Communications Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 12:14 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Hastings review the minutes from the September 4, 2014 meeting and asked for a motion to approve. Bill Barnes moved to approve the minutes as presented; Scott Warner seconded; the minutes were approved.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

There was brief discussion of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund. Members were encouraged to contact the Governor-elect to express their support.

Review of Issues for Consideration

The participants discussed issues mentioned during previous Committee meetings including:

- the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
- the Bridge to Excellence education funding formula
- access to quality healthcare and healthcare workforce issues
- the stormwater management fee (aka rain tax)
- the Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT)
- ag land protection and ag viability
- broadband access
- restoration of Highway User Revenues
- MARBIDCO
- MAERDAF
- the regional councils
- renewable and alternative energy

A member of the Committee suggested we consider adding the issue of affordable forest harvest permits.

Facilitated Discussion

Ed Modell and Merle Rockwell, mediators with the Maryland Agricultural Conflict Resolution Center, were present to facilitate a discussion to prioritize the issues. Participants were then asked to designate their priorities amongst the previously discussed issues through a voting exercise. The results of the activity, in priority order, were:

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (20 votes)
Rural Health (11 votes)
Ag Viability (10 votes)
Broadband (8 votes)
MARBIDCO (7 votes)
Transportation
Ag Land Preservation
Energy
Communications

Other Items

Those present briefly discussed planning for the next upcoming Rural Conference.

There was some discussion regarding the transition of State government and ways the RMC can provide its support to legislative issues.

The closing of the Chester River Bridge was discussed; participants discussed the community impact.

The RMC has scheduled an Advocacy Day for February 19, 2015. Farm Bureau will hold its Advocacy Day on February 18, 2015. The Taste of the Eastern Shore reception is also on February 19, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.

Next meeting: January 12, 2015 from 12:00 Noon to 2:00 pm via conference call