

RMC/RMF Joint Planning and Development Committee
July 31, 2014
Chesapeake Heritage Center, Chester
Meeting Minutes

Participants:

Mike Thielke, Chair, ESEC
Bill Barnes, Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council
Doris Mason, Upper Shore Regional Council
Lisa Purnell, USDA
Scott Warner, MidShore Regional Council
Dan Rider, DNR

RMC Staff:

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director
Kathy Vernacchio, Administrative and Communications Assistant

The meeting convened at approximately 10:00 am. Mr. Thielke welcomed participants who introduced themselves.

Mr. Thielke reviewed the background and purpose for the Committee. The committee is established under the RMC Bylaws Article VIII. "The Planning and Development Committee shall consist of several Council members appointed by the Chairperson with the approval of the Executive Board. The Planning and Development Committee shall periodically ascertain the strategic needs of the Council and shall identify the financial and other resources that may be needed to effectively sustain the operations of the Council. Any recommendations of the committee shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for approval." Since the Rural Maryland Foundation Board of Trustees recently reconvened, it made sense to create a joint committee so as to not duplicate efforts.

The Committee discussed initial topics and ideas for the Joint Committee to address. Topics covered included: housing and community development, workforce/economic development/manufacturing, financial literacy, youth, transportation, health and fracking. Other additional topics mentioned included: rural broadband, agriculture, infrastructure, energy and the elderly. Committee members are to identify broad topics and then generate ideas, strategies and projects in preparation for the next committee meeting.

Any ideas or strategies should follow the following:

- should generate accomplishments quickly
- should be important to funders
- should be important to rural Maryland and
- should have no one else working in the space.

Preliminary topics identified for further consideration:

- Broadband/internet connectivity
- Agriculture
- Youth

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- Energy
- Workforce/Economic Development
- Health

The Committee next discussed the annual rural conference addressing the questions of should the RMC participate in the 2015 Rural Action Assembly and should RMC initiate some other type of rural conference. General consensus, after discussion, was the RMC should host a rural conference separate from the MRHA. Goals for a rural conference should be: a review of best practices, RMC program discussion and highlight,; policy development and advocacy, and networking. It was the consensus of the committee to recommend to the RMC Executive Committee not to collaborate with MRHA on a joint conference. The recommendation also included the suggestion that if RMC and MRHA convened separate conferences, consideration be given to scheduling them in tandem in order to help facilitate the best attendance possible for both events.

There was a brief discussion of funding. The Committee discussed the idea of the Foundation serving as a fiscal agent for grass roots rural nonprofits that lack a 501(c)(3) status. There was general consensus of support for pursuing this strategy. In the future, it was also suggested that the Foundation contract a grant writer and look at developing an endowment.

There was discussion of developing a Strategic Plan to be completed by September 2015 after Labor Day which would be the date of the annual conference.

The Committee set the following schedule of meetings:

- September 11 to be held at the MidShore Regional Council offices from 10-12pm
- October 22 to be held at UMES Princess Anne from 10-12pm
- December 12 to be held at USDA NRCS in Annapolis from 10-12pm
- January 21 to be held at MDA in Annapolis
- March 5 to be held at MDA in Annapolis

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 pm.