

RMC/RMF Joint Planning and Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 21, 2015
Via Conference Call
Minutes

Participants: Mike Thielke, Bill Barnes, Susan Harrison, Dan Rider, Doris Mason, Kathy Vernacchio, Charlotte Davis

The meeting convened at approximately 10:05 pm.

Mike Thielke welcomed Susan Harrison to the meeting. He mentioned during the last several meetings a list of six priority issues were established. During the October 22, 2014, members of the Committee were asked to take ownership of one of the priority issues. Committee members were to provide direction and leadership to the Committee in that specific area so that potential projects/action items could be presented to the RMC Executive Board and the RMF Board of Trustees for vetting. Chosen projects/action items would be added to work plans for the year or for as much as three years. He offered Ms. Harrison the list for consideration:

1. Broadband - Scott
2. Agriculture - Lisa
3. Youth - Doris
4. Energy - Dan
5. Workforce/Economic Development - Bill
6. Health - Charlotte

Bill Barnes brought the Committee up-to-date on Workforce and Economic Development. One idea is to use a bus to create a mobile training platform to bring manufacturing technology concepts to rural areas of the state. The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center with the Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA); various groups and elected officials were asked to provide letters of support. The EDA grant is a three-year grant that requires matching funds. Several foundations have committed to providing funds.

The focus of the project is to generate new companies and products that can be manufactured in Maryland. The project would work to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem and build new components of the manufacturing system. It would provide training on 3D printing, additive manufacturing, and the Internet of Things. Additionally there would be training on innovation concepts so that manufacturers would learn to build a pipeline of new products and services that create avenues for future revenue. Grant awards should be announced the middle of February. If EDA funding is not awarded, alternate funding will be identified.

Dan Rider discussed energy, specifically wood energy. Mr. Rider suggested solar and wind energy are already well represented. The RMC might promote wood energy through legislative advocacy. Mr. Thielke suggested the Planning and Development Committee might work with the Legislative Committee to advance this effort.

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) will be announcing a \$150,000 grant program to promote wood energy in schools, hospitals and commercial class buildings. The MEA grant will provide funds to entities who are likely candidates to converting their existing energy systems to wood. The RMC could play a role promoting that effort, possibly collaborating with MEA by pursuing grant funding to match the funds available through MEA. There was some discussion regarding the lack of federal funds available; Maryland does not qualify since it there are no National forests. Possible local environmental foundation sources might be Town Creek Foundation in Easton and Good Earth Foundation in Chestertown. While there are no facilities in Maryland, there are facilities up north and as close as Pennsylvania to view the technology in action.

Mr. Rider said the Center for Agro-Ecology has been interested in this program. He offered to reach out to the Center to see if they would be interested in partnering with the RMC/RMF. There was a suggestion that

- MEA fund initial feasibility study,
- Foundations fund the engineering study for a biomass program. This would give the foundations the tangible outcomes they require.

To facilitate the RMC's and RMF's participation in this endeavor, we would should:

- Create a White Paper
- Engage partners – MEA and Center for Agro-Ecology
- Find a grant writer
- Identify philanthropic organizations that would provide funding
- Fund feasibility studies

Doris Mason told the group she has met with Stewart Bruce of Washington College regarding the youth study dashboard. Charlotte and Doris have been working to schedule a conference call with Craig Schroeder to discuss next steps. She has met with various community leaders to facilitate continuing dialog. The project is on hold until the conference call with Craig Schroeder happens.

Although Scott Warner was not available to report on broadband, Doris Mason was able report on his efforts. Mr. Warner had held a meeting on broadband last week and there was a follow up meeting happening in Dorchester. At the MidShore Regional Council meeting, there were a number of ideas put forth; one of those was the possibility of a unique public/private partnership with some of the smaller Eastern Shore ISPs to provide last mile service.

Charlotte Davis told the Committee she has been looking into the USDA Summer Food Service Program. She contacted the Maryland Department of Education who is administrator for the program here in Maryland. The application deadline is May 31, 2015. We would have to provide them with more information. They would like to know which counties we want to serve, we would have to undergo training, arrange for meals to be prepared and delivered, have the end user sponsors in place, and promote the program. The RMC does not have capacity to deliver these services directly. During preliminary discussions, there was the impression that the RMC could apply for the USDA grant and

provide funds to partners who would administer the program at their location. There needs to be clarification and more investigation.

Mike Thielke observed that the Planning and Development Committee work seems to be evolving from a strategic committee to more of an implementation committee. There was some discussion around this observation and the members of the Committee agreed there should be formal recommendation to the RMC and the RMF that working committees be created to move particular issues or projects forward. Committee members agreed to put together a formal recommendation of activities to the RMC and the RMF. Committee members also agree that projects do not need to be completed in the span of one year rather they need to show forward progress so we can report that progress to the Maryland General Assembly.

Susan Harrison will work with Lisa Purnell on the agriculture priority. Ms. Harrison also offered to engage the Maryland Farm Bureau. She suggested Colby Ferguson would be a great addition to the Planning and Development Committee.

The December 12, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Bill Barnes moved to approve the minutes as written, Mike Thielke seconded. The minutes were approved.

Next meeting: April 16, 2015 at 10:00 am at MDA offices in Annapolis