



# UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County  
Kent County  
Queen Anne's County

## Executive Board

Dr. Alan McCarthy  
Chair  
Cecil County Council  
Commissioner

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1st Vice Chair  
Kent County  
Commissioner

Robert Buckey  
2nd Vice Chair  
Queen Anne's County  
Commissioner

Joyce Bowsbey  
Cecil County  
Councilwoman

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Commissioner

William W. Pickrum  
Treasurer  
Kent County  
Commissioner

Representing the General  
Assembly:

Senator Stephen S. Hershey  
Delegate Jay A. Jacobs  
Delegate Steven J. Arentz  
Delegate Jeff Ghrist

Maryland General Assembly

Doris S. Mason  
Executive Director  
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## Full Council Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

**Date and Time:** Thursday, June 18, 2015, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

**Location:** Good Guy's Sports Bar  
219 Water Street  
Centreville, MD 21617

**Participants:** Dr. Alan McCarthy, Councilman of Cecil County; Robert Buckey, Queen Anne's County Commissioner; Joyce Bowsbey, Cecil County Councilwoman; Jim Moran, Commissioner of Queen Anne's County; Robert Buckey, Commissioner of Queen Anne's County; Joseph Zang, Mayor of Cecilton; Lottie Bowie, Partner, Loblolly Multimedia; Jean Fabi, Queen Anne's County; Mary O'Keefe, Community Liaison, Office of Congressman Andy Harris; Jamie Williams, Economic Development Coordinator, Kent County; Jamie Gilbert, Director for Econ. Dev., Queen Anne County; Linda Prochaska, Assistant, Office of U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski; Kimberly Kratovil, Field Representative, Office of U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin; Joanne Richart-Young, Cecil County; George Koste, Executive Director, MCE; Doris S. Mason, Executive Director; Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc.; Elizabeth Stackowitz, Intern, USRC

### Welcome/Purpose of Meeting

*Introductions and Vote on March Minutes Vote on By-law Amendments*

The Full Council Meeting was opened by Chairman McCarthy at 1:35 PM. Chairman McCarthy postponed voting on Minutes and Amendments to By-laws, Article IX, Attendance and Article XII, Internal and External Financial Independent Audits as a quorum had not yet been established.

At 1:49 pm the Full Council began to make introductions.

Executive Director Mason presented on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) at 1:52 pm, stating that the Upper Shore Regional Council is moving forward to do the groundwork to create a CEDS, a strategy which will position the region to qualify for federal funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's vast myriad of grants related to



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Economic development, (includes funding for capital campaigns, infrastructure, and programming), that support economic development in the Upper Shore Region. Projects shall address the special identified needs for the Upper Shore Region: 1) Workforce 2) Youth Retention/Aging Out, 3) High Speed Internet Access, 4) Small Business and Agribusiness, and 5) Transportation, and (6) Determine if there are others.

The Full Council was encouraged by Executive Director Mason to review the CEDS 2015-2015 New Project Submission Form and the CEDS 2015-2016 New Project Submission Criteria included in the packets. The Submission form is designed to provide information on potential CEDS plan Priority Projects in a simple, straightforward manner. Each individual project should have a separate form in order to be considered for this year's CEDS Plan Priority List.

Each project submitted for inclusion in the 2015-2016 CEDS Plan will receive a project ranking against all other projects based on the following information:

### **Project Benefits**

- 1) EDA Eligibility (for County in which proposed project is located)
- 2) Employment (percent of County's 24 month average workforce)
- 3) Ratio of EDA Share of Project Cost to Number of Jobs Created and/or Retained
- 4) Addresses EDA Investment Priorities such as a) Collaborative Regional Innovation; b) Public/Private Partnerships; c) National Strategic Priorities; d) Global Competitiveness; e) Environmentally-Sustainable Development; f) Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities.
- 5) Impact of Project on Region

### **Project Readiness**

- 1) Matching Funds
- 2) Engineering and Project Cost Estimates
- 3) Availability of Utilities
- 4) Ownership

### **Public and Private Commitment**

- 1) Member of USRC
- 2) Project Matches Community Goals
- 3) Private Sector Support
- 4) Private Sector Investment
- 5) Regional Cooperation

Executive Director Mason further shared a PowerPoint presentation on the CEDS. The USRC, the Planning Organization (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 303.2) will be responsible for: appointing the Strategy Committee (CEDS Committee) and compiling the work; developing and submitting to the EDA a CEDS that complies with 13C.F.R. §303.7 (federal code); making the CEDS available for review and comment by the public for a

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period of at least thirty (30) days prior to the submission of the CEDS to EDA, obtaining approval of the CEDS from the EDA, preparing Performance Reports, and Submitting a new CEDS to the EDA at least every 5 years, unless the EDA or the USRC determine that a new CEDS is required in the interim.

Executive Director Mason reminded the group that the CEDS Strategy Committee invitations had been sent out to them by the USRC via mail along with the CEDS Questionnaire, Submission Form, and Criteria. The information from the CEDS Development Review Process Questionnaire will be used for constructing the strategic planning retreat scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2015, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at the Donaldson Brown Center, 200 Ararat Farm Road, Port Deposit, and Maryland. The Full Council members and guests were encouraged to fill out the include Strategy Committee Application in the packets.

Executive Director Mason continued to share that the Strategy Committee is the entity identified by the USRC as responsible for developing, revising or replacing the CEDS. The Strategy Committee must represent the main economic interests of the region, and must include private sector representatives. The Strategy Committee also includes public officials, community leaders, and representatives of workforce development boards, representatives of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

The technical requirements for the CEDS plan include:

- 1) Background- the economic development situation of the region that paints a realistic picture of the current condition of the region
- 2) Analysis of Economic Development and Opportunities- an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses
- 3) CEDS Goals and Objectives- the CEDS must set forth goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems or capitalize on the resources of the region (solution-based)
- 4) Community and Private Sector Participation- Public and private partnerships are critical in the CEDS implementation
- 5) Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities- the CEDS must contain identified regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the goals of the objectives of the CEDS
- 6) CEDS Plan of Action- the plan of action, as described in the CEDS, implements the goals and objectives of the CEDS in the manner that:
  - Promotes economic development
  - Fosters effective transportation access
  - Enhances and protects the environment



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- Promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with applicable State and local workforce investment strategy
- Balances resources through sound management and physical development
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources

7) Performance Measures- the CEDS must contain a section that lists the performance measures and is used to evaluate USRC's successful development and implementation of the CEDS such as: number of jobs created after implementation of CEDS, number and types of investments undertaken in the region, number of jobs retained in the region, amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS, and changes in economic environment of the region.

Executive Director Mason stated that the priority projects should include: an outline of steps required to take each selected high-priority activity, a roster of key individuals and institutions responsible for implementing and supporting these steps, a reasonable estimate of the costs associated with implementing the activity, a list of the integrated funding sources and a realistic time frame for execution.

USRC's planning process/groundwork began in 2013 and will continue through 2018. Executive Director Mason shared a timeline of the planning process, which was included as a part of the PowerPoint available in the Full Council packets.

Chairman McCarthy shared that the jobs replacing the ones lost are minimum wage and less than 30 hours per week. Executive Director Mason stated that the true unemployment rate is not reflected and is being compiled once the long term unemployment individuals are dropped off of unemployment.

Linda Prochaska suggested viewing both the Mid-Shore and the Tri-County Council of the Lower Shore's CEDS plans online.

Executive Director Mason shared that she will present on the CEDS during the MACO meeting with the Mid and Lower Shore.

Linda Prochaska further shared that projects that were funded included a long-term infrastructure project on the hospital and also a roof on a building in the mid-shore, but projects can vary.

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Executive Director Mason shared that the USRC has conducted conference calls with the Economic Directors, Tourism Directors, Planning and Zoning and Water and Sewer Directors. She has plans to meet with Michael Dugan and Bruce England for a teleconference on workforce development needs.

Jean Fabi inquired as to whether or not the work already done with the USRC such as the SWOT analysis could be utilized. Executive Director Mason stated that it was done back in 2012 and 2013 and that a lot has occurred in the region since then and an update will allow us to identify concrete solutions.

Executive Director Mason shared that the USRC is partnering with the Mid and Lower Shore and that a USDA grant is pending to add both the Mid and Lower Shore to the *now* Eastern Shore Harvest Directory.

Executive Director Mason further stated that the USRC is in the process of responding to a EDA Planning Grant to work on the development of the CEDS in order to qualify for EDD EDA resources noting that 3 out of the 5 regions have tapped into the EDA resources and that now is the time to collaborate regionally in order to compete globally. Executive Director Mason mentioned that the upper shore region is strategically positioned near Baltimore and Philadelphia and is a rural area in which people love to live. Pulling the resources for the capital projects to help the region prosper and retain its youth can come out of the process.

## **2:20 – 2:25 PM**

*Chesapeake Wine Country/ShoreVines Project (and demonstration)*

Lotte Bowie, Partner, Loblolly Multimedia, LLC was introduced to present on the Chesapeake Wine Country/Shore Vines Project.

## **BREAK FOR ACTION ITEMS 2:25 PM – 2:30 PM**

Chairman McCarthy requested that the Full Council take a break for action items.

Executive Director introduced the recommended amendments from the April 23, 2015 Executive Board Meeting regarding (new addition to) Article IX (titled) Attendance:

### **Attendance**

*“All Executive Board members are expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings. More than 25% of unexcused absences by any member during any 12 month period may result in replacement of the member by the Executive Board. A member’s absence is unexcused if the member fails to notify USRC staff in advance of a meeting that the member will not be in attendance unless a Proxy is sent in his or her stead.”*



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Also introduced Article XII- Internal and External Independent Audits:

*“Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, an internal audit of the USRC’s financial records will be conducted by a fiscal employee of one of the three county governments of Cecil, Kent, or Queen Anne’s (starting in Kent County under the supervision of the County Administrator) and will rotate at the end of the FY to the next county. For fiscal years, in which the budget is in excess of \$500,000.00, an independent auditor, certified in the State of Maryland, shall be retained to audit the financial records of the Council at the end of the fiscal year, whose report and findings will be presented to the Council at the next quarterly meeting.”*

\*Commissioner Buckey made the motion to approve the amendments to the USRC By-laws as presented. Councilwoman Bowsbey seconded the motion. The amendments to the By-laws Articles IX and XII were approved unanimously.

Executive Director Mason presented the March Full Council Minutes for a vote.

\* A motion was made by Chairman McCarthy to approve the March Full Council Minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Moran. The vote to approve the March Full Council Minutes were passed unanimously.

## **2:30 PM – 3:20 PM**

*Continuation of Presentation on Chesapeake Wine Country and Shore Vines by Lotte Bowie, Loblolly Multimedia, LLC*

Ms. Bowie indicated that there has been significant wine industry growth. In Maryland, wine is a booming industry. Wineries have increased sales every year since 2001, jumping from \$6.1 million to \$26.1 million for FY 2013 (up 9% versus prior year).

The Eastern Shore is a growing source of grapes for Maryland Wines. There are more than 450 acres of grapevines planted in Maryland. Ms. Bowie shared that Jennie Schmidt, Former President, Maryland Grape Growers Association (“MGGA”) and Vineyard Management expert estimates planting 110 acres on Eastern Shore/Delmarva since 2009.

Over the last 5 years, the number of wineries on the Eastern Shore has doubled from 10 in (2009) to 20 (2014). 12 are on the Upper Shore, 5 are on Mid Shore and 3 are on Lower Shore. There are 14 Chesapeake Wine Trail members and more to come with The Vineyards at Dogwood, Far Eastern Shore Winery, and 3 Vineyards evolving to wineries.

There are several wine country businesses such as: Turkey Point Wine Tasting Shop,



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Chester River Wine and Cheese Shop, Maryland Wine Bar, Farmers Markets, Local Harvest/Agri-tourism, Liquor Stores (wine tastings), Spirits, Breweries and Sparkling Ciders.

There is a lot of competition with the Mid Atlantic Region. The Eastern Shore can compete to become the NAPPA Valley of the East Coast. The Chesapeake Wine Country helps to capture money from tourism, helps us to understand what we need to brand our region, to grow more and to go where we want to go as a region.

Chesapeake Wine Country allows the Upper Shore to brand our region. Branding our region is more critical than ever as the Upper Shore is a part of the 4 state – 6 wine trails Vintage Atlantic Region. The distinct asset in the trail is that there is a large open space territory to explore (2.5 hours of driving time/129 miles) which is in proximity to Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries north to south.

ChesapeakeWineCountry.com launched in Fall 2014. In 9 months, it is achieving a monthly level of 3500 sessions. Through social media and the website, ChesapeakeWineCountry.com is providing more tourism information.

The Chesapeake Wine Country is being promoted through display and rack cards, sponsoring 4 events, visitor center exhibitions, partnerships and conferences, and continuance of sponsorship of ESLC annual conference.

The Chesapeake Wine Country is developing an agri-tourism conference partnership with the MD Wineries Association and a proposal is in to Women in Ag: Farm to Vineyard Workshop.

The USRC/ESLC is investigating how to develop and sustain a wine growing metric system. The USRC is also encouraging farms owned by the next generation to diversify with grapes, as opposed to phasing out of farming because it is more profitable to grow grapes than corn and soy bean.

Ms. Bowie quoted Kevin Atticks, Founder, Grow & Fortify and Executive Director of MD Wineries Association and MD Distilling Guild, who indicated that “The Grape Growers Association conducted a study and we have determined that we’re in need of at least 1,135 tons of grapes to supply current demand. (as found on PowerPoint).

Joanne Richart-Young stated that there is a shortfall in Maryland grapes and there is also a demand for Maryland Grapes.



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Executive Director Mason and Ms. Bowie shared that the USRC has a monthly phone call with Mr. Atticks regarding the Chesapeake Wine Trail noting that Mr. Atticks has been so successful that the initiative will start with breweries and distilleries as well.

## **3:28 PM – 3:30 PM**

### *Open Forum*

Jamie Williams inquired about the possibility of working with a private company to provide a trolley from the top of the trail to the bottom. Executive Director Mason added that perhaps a private enterprise would get involved as a few have in other regions.

George Koste, Executive Director, Maryland Capital Enterprises, Inc. (MCE) provides small business loans to businesses located in MCE's Service Area: Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester, Talbot, Caroline, Queen Anne's and Kent counties of the Maryland's Eastern Shore and also Baltimore city, Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties.

MCE's goal is to support businesses that provide a service or product to the surrounding community, help businesses open their doors and provide them with business trainings and mentoring needed to succeed.

The first year of funding from the SBA will be for new loan awards. A considerable amount of the SBA loan is committed to Baltimore City.

MCE was also approved to oversee the distribution of Maryland's funds from the Small, Minority and Women-Owned Business Account, which receives 1.5 percent of video lottery terminal (VLT) revenue from Maryland casinos. MCE's allotment of \$1 million is distributed through its Casino Loan Fund. Small businesses located within 10 miles of Ocean Downs and Maryland Live casinos and those located elsewhere in the MCE's service area may be eligible for small business loans in the amount of \$5,000 to \$50,000.

50% the Casino funds will be targeted to small businesses located in MCE's service area and within a ten mile radius Maryland Live and Ocean Downs (see green areas on the maps below). Remaining 50% will be available to small businesses located throughout MCE's service areas.

Linda Prochaska shared that if we (the Upper Shore) can get federal funds through EDA than those federal funds will be prioritized locally.

The Full Council meeting was closed at 3:30 PM.

Next full council meeting will be held on August 14, Friday, noon til 1:00 p.m. at the Summer MACo meeting jointly with the other Regional Councils.