



Sustainable Forestry Council

580 Taylor Avenue – E-1 • Annapolis, Maryland 21401 • 410-260-8531

April 9, 2019

580 Taylor Ave., E-1 Conference Room

1-800-450-5996

9am – 12pm

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kim Finch, co-chair
MNCPPC,
Prince George's Co.
Planning Dept.
Upper Marlboro, MD
20772

Kenneth Roberts
Verso Corporation
Westernport, MD 21562

Alberto Goetzl, chair
Dream Catcher Farm,
LLC
Adamstown, MD 21710

Bryan Seipp
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Elizabeth Hill
Dorchester Forestry Bd.
Linkwood, MD 21835

Donnelle Keech
The Nature Conservancy
Cumberland, MD 21502

Bill Rees
Catonsville Tree Canopy
Committee
Catonsville, MD 21228

SFC members:

Al Goetzl
Gary Allen
Bryan Seipp
Kim Finch
Bill Rees
Beth Hill
Donnelle Keech
Ken Roberts

DNR Staff:

Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary of DNR
Nita Settina, Acting Assistant Secretary, DNR Lands
Don VanHassent
Daniel Rider
Anne Hairston-Strang

Action Items:

- Dan contact MD Clean Energy Center, assign Greenbrier State Park boiler pilot
- Anne coordinate DNR Woody Biomass Roundtable
- Gary send press release on Chesapeake Climate Action Network (done)
- Gary provide language for certificates for Eric Sprague, Don Outen, and Connie Hoge; Anne arrange for plaques and certificates for founding member recognition
- Biomass subcommittee meet to plan Roundtable (Gary, Beth, Donnelle, and Bryan, staffed by Dan Rider)

Al Goetzl, Chair, opened the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) meeting at 9am. He asked for any revisions to the December and February meeting minutes. Beth Hill moved to accept the minutes, Gary Allen seconded it, and all approved.

Al welcomed Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, the recently approved DNR Secretary. Secretary Haddaway-Riccio commented on the importance of forestry and her interest in finding opportunities to make Maryland better. Don VanHassent, State Forester, reviewed the outcomes of forestry-related legislation in the just-completed 2019 Maryland Legislative Session. Bills that passed included use of county Forest Conservation Act fee-in-lieu funds (HB272/SB234), Task Force (now a technical report) on Forest Conservation (SB729/HB735), and bills to establish 2 forestry fellowships. Bills that did not advance included definition of forest for no-net-loss (HB120/SB203), use of ORVs for game retrieval (HB728), solar energy blueprint to protect natural resources (HB532/SB744), and prohibition of clearcutting > ½ acre for a solar farm (HB851). The SFC asked about the budget bill,

and Don replied that the budget had passed with essentially level funding for the Forest Service, with a positive note of 5 contractual conversions, which are not new positions but should help retain qualified staff.

Al asked what appropriate actions SFC should be pursuing regarding recommendations on legislative and budget bills. Discussion included responses at the request of DNR, SFC proactively offering comments for DNR to consider and advance, and a Legislative Advisory Group that would meet more frequently than the entire Council during session. Gary noted that the Clean Energy Jobs Act had passed, and members discussed the possibilities of woody biomass in that kind of effort, the complexities of the biomass issue, and the need for a diversity of viewpoints in a discussion on the topic.

Dan Rider, Forest Stewardship and Utilization Program Manager for MD Forest Service, gave a summary of his recent invited presentation and tour in Austria and Germany on woody biomass. Dan noted similarities between Maryland and the area, including climate, population density, forest cover types, and land ownership patterns. He described a very different level of adoption of woody biomass as part of aggressive renewable energy goals by 2050, including district heating and combined heat and power, with socioeconomic innovations including cooperatives (like rural electric cooperatives), mandatory Forestry Assistance supported by taxes, a Forest Practices Act, and strong cultural norms for tending the land. He described well-tended native forests that were the outcome, and forest management being common even on small parcels, often the landowners themselves with tractors and chainsaws.

Beth identified a need to champion forests, keep existing forest industry jobs, and expand consideration in the renewable energy portfolio to not just biomass but also better planning for the solar and wind installations, some of which are displacing forests. Discussion included lack of incentives for biomass that are supplied to wind and solar, need for a market for forest residues, and options for pilot approaches. Ken Roberts asked whether wood heating would be legal in new developments, and the existing barriers in some counties were discussed, along with potential partnerships with a developer for a pilot.

Al Goetzl moved that DNR organize a roundtable with SFC on Wood Biomass Energy in Maryland in 2019 that brings in a range of stakeholders and addresses role in caring for forests and climate change. Donnelle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The Maryland Clean Energy Center was suggested as a partner in convening the event and Dan Rider volunteered to contact them. Other suggestions included The Nature Conservancy, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, MD Energy Administration, MD Dept. of Environment, and Chesapeake Climate Action Network members. SFC members identified needs for technical presentations on emissions, life-cycle analysis, and interaction with land use and forests. Nita suggested that the replacement boiler project at Greenbrier State Park might serve as a trial, and grant funding possibilities were discussed.

Dan Rider described Rural Maryland Council's grant types and possibilities to support needed planning for reinvestment in forest industry. MD Forests Association, Association of Forest Industries, and MD Forestry Foundation are among the partners working on multiple proposals. Other areas with forest industry revitalization planning were identified, including Maine and Vermont, as well as efforts for combined heat and power in the regional utilities.

Al asked about the status of the Harry R. Hughes Agroecology Center's Forestry Literacy project presented at an earlier meeting, and members were informed that the Hughes Center Board approved the project, but status was uncertain with the departure of the Executive Director for MDE.

Future meeting dates were reviewed:

5/30 – invited to MD/DE Society of American Foresters meeting on urban wood utilization

7/11 – Sustainable Growth Policies (ideas included updates from Jason Dubow/MDP, Ben Alexandro/LCV, and a rep for solar blueprint planning)

10/15-17- Forest Products Markets for Sustainable Forest Management

12/13- TBA

Outreach meetings for Maryland’s Forest Action Plan were shared with SFC members, and the link to the survey to gather comments from a variety of stakeholders.

Gary updated the SFC on the forestry fellowship progress. He noted the tremendous positive effect of the fellowship on recruitment for the Forestry Boards and Natural Resources Career Camp. He explained that the second fellowship in the recently passed bill would bring similar energy to urban and community forestry efforts and partnerships with local governments, the Sustainable Maryland program, and University of Maryland (Environmental Finance Center and Discovery Days, as presently have for Agriculture).

Updates were provided on the recognition efforts for Kirk Rodgers. Recognition for other founding SFC members was discussed.

Al Goetzl adjourned the meeting at 11:53am.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang
Maryland Forest Service