

RURAL LEGACY BOARD
ANNUAL MEETING
JULY 24, 2023
MINUTES

The Chair, Joshua E. Kurtz, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), called the annual meeting of the Rural Legacy Board (RLB) to order at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, July 24, 2023 pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, Natural Resources Article 5-9A-05 to consider the recommendations of the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee (RLAC) for funding appropriated to the Rural Legacy Program by the Maryland Legislature for Fiscal Year 2024. The RLB will also consider the approval of a Rural Legacy Area boundary change. Secretary Kurtz advised that the meeting is being recorded and asked if there any objections to the recording of the meeting. Seeing none, Secretary Kurtz announced that the meeting is open to the public pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article 3-301. The Chair stated that there will be an opportunity on the agenda for public comment, and that written testimony may also be submitted to staff, Ms. Katrina Tucker at katrinal.tucker@maryland.gov. The Chair noted that there were no members of the public present at this time.

Ms. Katrina Tucker, Rural Legacy Program Administrator and staff in the Department of Natural Resources Land Acquisition and Planning Unit, called the roll, with Rebecca L. Flora, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) in attendance with Secretary Kurtz. Mr. Kevin M. Atticks, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), was not present at the opening of the meeting. The Director of Land Acquisition and Planning, Hilary Bell, along with Kamil Williams, Special Advisor to the Secretary, were also present. The Chair advised that the meeting could proceed as there was a quorum of the RLB present. The RLB then proceeded to the Agenda.

Secretary Kurtz announced that the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee (RLAC) met on June 20, 2023 via video conference at which the members determined its recommendations to the Rural Legacy Board for the FY24 application cycle. The Rural Legacy program received applications from 25 out of the 35 existing Rural Legacy Areas, requesting a total of \$85.702 million in funds. The program received \$33,424,164 in the FY24 budget and the RLAC recommends reallocating \$1,258,996.30 of unspent funds from prior years, bringing the total funding to be allocated in FY24 to \$34,683,160.30. Secretary Kurtz turned the meeting over to Rural Legacy staff for a presentation on the recommendations and noted that Secretary Atticks had joined the meeting, and advised Mr. Atticks that the meeting was being recorded.

A PowerPoint Presentation (PPT) prepared by staff was shared with the RLB, with Ms. Tucker going through each slide that displayed the recommendations from the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee (RLAC). This PPT noted that in FY24 there is a request for a boundary adjustment to expand the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area (RLA) by 246 acres (a 0.7% increase). If approved the RLA will be 34,160 acres. The expansion encompasses 6 undeveloped parcels under the same ownership and is directly across MD Route 235 from the Naval Air Station Patuxent River. Approximately 47.5% of the expansion is within St. Mary's County Air Installation Compatible Use Zone.

The PPT continued, detailing the reallocations of unspent funds from prior grant agreement for the Nanticoke, Long Green Valley, and Mid-Maryland Montgomery Rural Legacy Areas. Rural Legacy Staff as well as the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee have recommended that \$550,191 be reallocated from the Nanticoke RLA, \$700,000 from the Long Green Valley RLA, and \$8,805.30 from the Mid-Maryland Montgomery RLA, totaling \$1,258,996.30 in reallocations. This would bring total funding available for FY24 to \$34,683,160.30.

Ms. Tucker turned the meeting back over to the Chair, who again noted that no members of the public were present. The Chair called for the board members to review and discuss the recommendations from the RLAC. Secretary Flora asked in regard to the funding reallocations if it was known why the money wasn't spent when it was originally awarded. Ms. Tucker responded that in Mid-Maryland Montgomery the remaining amount of funds were too small to be able to complete any projects; in Long Green Valley there were challenges in finding willing landowners; and in Nanticoke the sponsor has been facing challenges with submitting projects to utilize the old funds.

Secretary Atticks asked whether voting would be on each grant award to the individual RLAs, or bundled into a single consent calendar, to which Chair Kurtz confirmed we are proposing to offer as a single consent calendar for the grant awards. Secretary Flora asked for more details about the configuration of the expansion to the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area, to which staff responded by advising that the shape of expansion area comprises multiple parcels owned by one willing landowner and the owners of the adjoining properties have not indicated willingness to be within the designated RLA. Secretary Flora also asked if there was a distribution target for grant awards in each region. Ms. Tucker explained that multiple funding scenarios were presented to the RLAC and the committee voted for a scenario with the intent to give funding to almost every Rural Legacy Sponsor that applied in order to allow as many Sponsors to be able to complete projects throughout the State. Secretary Flora opined if it would be better to focus a strategy towards funding in areas that are under more development pressure and suggested exploring such adjustments to the scoring methodology in the future for crafting funding scenarios.

The Chair asked if there were any more questions from members of the Board. After review, discussion, and consideration of the recommendations from the RLAC for funding reallocations, an RLA boundary adjustment, and funding of the FY 2024 Grant Awards, the Chair called for a vote on the boundary adjustment for the Mattapany RLA. On the motion of Secretary Atticks, and seconded by Secretary Flora, the RLB unanimously approved the adjustment to the boundary of the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area. Next the Chair called for a vote on the funding reallocations as recommended by the RLAC, which was unanimously approved on the motion of Secretary Flora, seconded by Secretary Atticks. The Chair then called for a vote on the RLAC's recommendations for FY24 funding of the grant awards. On the motion of Secretary Flora with a second by Secretary Atticks, the RLB unanimously approved the RLAC's recommendations for funding of the FY24

grant awards. The actions of the RLB will be forwarded to the Maryland Board of Public Works for approval and allocation of the grant awards.

The Chair asked if there were any more questions or comments. Hearing none, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:42 pm.