

**CECIL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
 AGRICULTURE, PRESERVATION and MINERALS (APM) SUBCOMMITTEE
 MEETING MINUTES (Pending subcommittee approval)
 August 14, 2008**

Member	Present
Diana Broomell	X
Shawn Day	X
Sandra Edwards	X
Phyllis Kilby	
Daniel Polite	X
Vic Priapi (Vice Chair)	
Owen Thorne (Chair)	X
John Bennett	X
Donna Deckard	
Robert Hodge	X
Rupert Rossetti	X

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Michael McGrath, AICP	Chief of Planning, DE Dept. of Agriculture
Dean Severson, AICP	Principal Planning & Rural Planning Analyst, Lancaster County
John Bunnell, Mayor	Town of Cecilton
Jim Gawthrop	York Builders

Call to Order – Thursday, August 14, 2008 at 6:33 p.m., Cecil College, North East Campus Administration Building, first floor conference room, 6:30 p.m.

Next regular meeting will be Tuesday, September 9, 2008 @ 6:30pm., Cecil College, North East Campus Administrative Building, first floor conference room. Tentative meeting date scheduled for Monday, August 25, 2008 @ 6:30 p.m.

Old Business - Invited guests to speak on keeping agriculture a viable part of the economy.

Guest Speaker - Michael H. McGrath, AICP, Chief of Planning, Delaware Department of Agriculture - (Document provided: Comments to the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan Ag Preservation Subcommittees. Mr. McGrath has worked for the State of Delaware for 25 years and prior to that, owned and operated a farm in New Castle County. While his focus has been primarily on farmland preservation, he also promotes the idea that farming is a key economic opportunity in the community and should be a key element in any jurisdiction.

He stated the one thought he would like to leave with us was: The Comprehensive Plans that overlook the key economic role of agriculture in the community, leave a big hole in the Comprehensive Plan. The interesting thing about agriculture is that it serves so many other functions as a land use in our community that it often times gets overlooked as a major business enterprise. Some of the key elements include:

1. Preservation of Agriculture Lands should be a key element in any jurisdiction’s planning efforts
2. Economic Development is the key to understanding on how the health and welfare of a community is tied to agricultural businesses
3. Simply making agriculture a profitable business will not protect agricultural lands against conversion to other uses.
4. Crucial to focus on diversification and intensification of agriculture. By supplying up and down the food chain in agriculture we can improve the economic condition and profitability of agriculture.
5. Make farmland preservation a priority. Not many things you can do with farmland in Cecil County

that can compete with \$30,000 an acre offers from developers. You can't protect all the land in Cecil County so it's going to be important to provide a way for the public to express their interest and demand for maintaining agricultural land which is where the demand for farmland preservation comes from. It's not coming from farmers as much as it is coming from the public. A way to preserve farmland in the past was through the purchase of development rights program. We need to look further than that because, historically, these programs have been under funded. We need to get smarter and creative on more ways and means to preserve farmland. There are a multitude of benefits that our communities derive from agriculture that have to be protected. Citizens are willing to pay to make changes in their lives in order to see those benefits continue.

Agriculture is a key economic activity in your county. While there is a comprehensive plan committee working on agriculture preservation, there is another working on economic development. And shame on the economic development committee if they're not taking a hard look at the role agriculture plays in the economic development of the county. The problem is that when I've mentioned this over the last 35 years to leaders, they think about farming and the direct job impact of farming itself. However, the farming we do today is relatively small and so you'll notice that almost every piece of campaign literature you've seen in the last 40 years says, "I'm in favor of more better jobs." Farming can't meet that political demand but by looking broader than that in the up and down supply chain of agriculture there is certainly lots of things that can meet those kinds of concerns for our political leaders in our community.

There is also other ways that our food system is being greatly expanded with bio technology, pharmaceutical grade plants that are being grown and what's on the horizon for bio technology we can expect more of these economic benefits to be broader. And like much of the technological revolution there will be certain areas in this country that are going to take advantage of the bio tech revolution. I would predict for those agricultural areas that have down sized will have bio technical opportunities, will capitalize on them and find themselves in the next 20 to 30 years in the same place as Silicon Valley found themselves more than 25 years ago. There are huge opportunities in bio technology. Right across in Newark, Delaware (University of Delaware) we have one of the principle bio technology labs in the world. Along with some of the high tech industry that's coming with the military relocation here in Maryland, there is going to be a lot of opportunity for bio technology and other expanded ways to work in our agricultural system.

Under the discussion of bio technology, I want to also discuss energy. While I am trained as an economist, I am not an expert in the field of ethanol. However, I can tell you ethanol made from corn was a bad bet to start with. However, there are plenty of bio fuel opportunities coming on the horizon and it's going to be essential that we have the land to produce it. One of the key problems with the ethanol is that there isn't enough land in this country to meet all the demand for food and fuel. But if we are going to have an impact on the future energy situation with our land, we can't afford to lose any of it. There isn't enough land in this country that's viable for producing those types of products and we can be just as dependent on foreign countries for bio fuels as we can for petroleum fuels.

Food production on a local level is also an important factor in making farmland preservation a priority. This is tied into the energy situation that's also tied into the worldwide security situation that we now confront. Back in the early 1970's there was a nationwide Teamster Strike. Today it wouldn't have much of an impact but back then it brought the trucking industry to a standstill. In four days, the grocery store shelves in the Northeast (New England) were empty. Many people then started to think about where their food came from. In fact, the first farmland preservation program started in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts because people realized they were highly dependent on different parts of the country for their food. While it really didn't fix the situation, it did create an interest in farmland preservation.

Other people in the 1970's like Bob Gray (White House) said we were running out of food. While he was wrong then, he may not be now. It just took a little longer for us to run out of food. What do I mean, "run out of food". When you go to the super market today in the produce section, almost none of that comes from Maryland or other surrounding states. Right in the middle of the height of sweet corn season, it would be difficult to find locally grown sweet corn or tomatoes. That's because they had found a way to grow it out in California and they could sell to the stores for less than it costs (even with shipping) than locally grown. However, they can't do that now because it takes too much money to transport.

The second thing I am worried about is security. A lot of our commodity crops go over seas. Argentina's President years ago made a statement that his number one priority was to become the number one exporter of soy beans in the world. And they are well on their way to doing that. They are converting in the Savannah Lands of Argentina 3,000 acres a week into land to grow soy beans. With the low cost down there and subsidized shipping, bankers are leaving Buenos Aries to buy land to grow soy beans. We cannot compete with that here. Interestingly enough the rail lines carrying the soy beans from the Savannah Lands to the coastal ports were built with American aid 25 years ago. Here's the point: if small insignificant countries who mainly herded goats 50 years ago are now dictating world policy because of the oil that is under their grasp, who's to say that in another 25 years we allow agriculture productivity to ship to other countries. Then it will be food, not oil that will be dictating world policy. We need to be very cognizant on bio security issues that we face as food becomes even more scarce as third world demands more food in places like China and India and our productivity capacity in this country shrinks. How does that affect Cecil County? I'm not sure but if you took a survey today in Cecil County, like they did in Delaware it would probably come out the same. A few years ago a poll showed that 75% of Delaware citizens said the most important reason they would like to see agriculture preserved was for local food. I'm pretty sure the number would be much higher today. So as a political reality and a local reality, you're going to see more citizens want to know where their food comes from - is it fresh, what price is it - you may find out it will be cheaper and better to raise locally than to ship from California or another country.

Guest Speaker - Dean Severson, AICP, Principal Agricultural and Rural Planning analyst, Lancaster County Planning Commission. Provided documents include: Keep Lancaster County Farming/Phase I Report, Blue Ribbon Commission for Agriculture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; Balance - The Growth Management Element (The Comprehensive Plan for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Executive Summary 2006); and township zoning ordinances from Ephrata, Leacock and West Cocalico Townships.

Mr. Severson was with the Lancaster Planning Commission in the late 80's and early 90's when he first started growth management. Goal was very basic: direct growth where it should go and keep it out of where it shouldn't go. Lancaster County was one of the first county's in Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania was one of the first states to adopt urban growth boundaries. There are 18 boroughs, the City of Lancaster, and the 41 suburban townships of Lancaster are the urban growth areas. These areas should have the necessary water/sewer infrastructure and roads to accommodate growth. It was a simple idea but it took a lot for the municipalities to buy in. Every municipality has its own local zoning and about 40 of the 60 have their own subdivision regulations. The problem with our initial goal was we ignored what was in the agricultural and rural areas. We identified this area as "all that other stuff that isn't urban". In our update of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan we identified the other elements. The areas now identified include agriculture, conservation, historic villages, and subdivisions. These are the areas we want to focus on. The overall idea for growth in the county was developed in the early 1990's and it was to have 75% of all of our residential development go into to those growth areas and 25% outside. The update to the Comprehensive Plan has helped to meet this goal and increased it 85% in and 15% outside. The 15% will hopefully include 1/3 going into villages and 2/3 into farms. All of the municipalities in

Lancaster have adopted effective agriculture zoning: one lot per 25 acres. In some areas we've recommended one lot per 50 acres. Most of the municipalities have adopted and we've done a pretty good job in working with the local municipalities.

Our role is to provide assistance and recommendations, draft ordinances and whatever we can do to help. We provide assistance, recommendations and draft ordinances to assist municipalities. In all we have 18 boroughs, 41 townships, and one city (Lancaster). Our job is challenging because we have to work with each of these areas to implement any type of growth management and we have very little if any power. It's all persuasion.

The Lancaster Agriculture Preserve Board is one of the first and most successful preservation boards in the US. It was originally implemented in the late 1970's by a Lancaster County Commissioner. It was a state and federally funded county agency to purchase development rights. Local municipalities are also putting money into farmland preservation as well. We are getting close to our 1,000th farm preserved and up to 70,000 total acres preserved. We also have the Lancaster Farmland Trust which is a nonprofit, nongovernmental agency formed to involve the Amish and Mennonites to get them involved in purchase of development rights since they won't take government funds. At the township level we are trying to implement transfer of development rights and we just came up with a TDR handbook.

There are a number of groups that are involved in land use management and preserving farms. The Lancaster Agriculture Preserve Board stresses they are not a land preservation board. They aren't there to preserve land for the sake of preserving land, but to preserve agriculture as an industry. Agriculture is an industry- it's dirty, loud, attracts flies, smelly - you probably don't want other uses next to it. There is that recognition by our township supervisors and they're in agreement to the point where we have the agriculture nuisance disclaimers written into our zoning ordinances. We have a very important ag support industry - ag lenders, vets, feed guys, - all of that industry is still there and we need to maintain it and this is one of our goals.

I brought along samples from three municipalities and a cover page for the counties website which has all of the counties zoning ordinances on the website to show what specific municipalities are doing in terms of zoning. I don't want to go into detail but you can see there are a variety and similarities of ordinances for ag zoning. In the Leacock Township Zoning Ordinance it includes a whole set of conditions for businesses near agricultural districts. One of the issues is the different ways to define agricultural businesses; what is agriculture and what is rural. Rural is a non-definable word that means everything to everybody. So we have found there are different philosophies and interpretations amongst the different towns we work with. Because of the large Amish population we have in the areas we work with we have a large demand for non farm businesses. They started out as businesses selling jams and jellies and now we are up to gazebos, welding and all the rest of it. Most of our towns in Lancaster County are saying they aren't going to have much of a problem with country stands especially if it could easily go into your existing home or barn. But we don't want to have retail sales where people are coming in and out all the time because then you have problems with tractor trailers coming out on these little country roads and other problems related with these types of businesses. So they have tried to regulate them in a number of ways - square footage, number of employees, making sure all items are inside the building - you'll see a whole variety of ways.

Comparing your agricultural ordinances to our ordinances - Not only are we recommending 1 lot to 25 acres quota, but to also limit the amount of lots that are created. We are also trying to limit the size of those house lots that are being created. The lot size limit is two acres or no more than the State Department of Environmental Protection will allow. Then you minimize the impact on the environmental

resources. We are taking a look at the fragmentation of farm resources in Lancaster County especially with the Amish. We are seeing our farms cut down into 60, 40 to 20 acre parcels and pretty soon it's not economical for anyone to farm those parcels anymore unless you're into the specialty products. We also have a minimum for the farms that are created. In Pennsylvania we have a State Farm Land Preferential Assessment for everyone who has 10 acres or more. It was a great idea when it was first established 20 years ago but what they are finding out now is that every doctor who has 10 acres is now a farmer. Now you have a bunch of 10 acre parcels. So we are trying to get minimum farm sizes up to 20 -25 or even 50 acres and we are hoping municipalities will buy into that.

Regarding uses, a lot of the elected officials agree you can't really classify agriculture. It gets really touchy. The question becomes what is ag and what is rural. People are saying that everything in the ag district are businesses that require lots of acreage. So everything else gets shoved into the ag district. If you need a 100 acre golf course with houses or land for a big airport, they would go into the ag. We're trying to say, let's not do that. Let's really try to classify what really should be going in the ag district to keep the ag use protected. One of the areas we had in Lancaster County is what we called big box churches. We have churches with 20, 30 or 50 acres and a lot of municipalities are putting maximum lot size limits for churches of 5 or 10 acres at the most in the ag district in order to reduce the amount of land that's being dedicated to a non-ag use.

The message I really want to put across is not only is it important to have the uses directed to the right places in your community for efficiency of infrastructure, but it's also important for the farmers as well. One of the things we found on the Ag Preserve Board Program and our land use program is to provide a certainty for farmers that there is going to be a future for being in this area 10 to 20 years from now. If the farmer starts seeing a variety of uses popping up all around them, there is no reason for any farmer to put money into his operation. You don't want to put a million dollars into a milking operation if you think your long term future is 5 to 10 years. So that's one of the largest goals that we have overall in our ag plan is to provide that sense of certainty that we're going to support you and we really want you to invest in ag and stay here as well as your family and future generations stay here.

Guest Speaker - John Bunnell, Mayor, Town of Cecilton. Provided document [Town of Cecilton Agricultural Business Model Zoning Ordinance Provisions](#).

Last night was our public hearing on our agricultural business zoning. We worked on this for six months which covers agritourism and agribusiness. I was pleased with the examples we were given by Pennsylvania and our language is pretty similar. The difference between the two are the maximum lot sizes. In Pennsylvania you have to have a certain amount of land to do it. We chose a different route by governing the percentage of crops you have to grow in order to exist as agricultural. If you don't want to grow anything on the land, then don't get zoned agriculture. If it's going to be a winery or a bed and breakfast, you grow herbs. If it's a mom and pop store and you want to be zoned agriculture, you have to grow a certain amount of crops. If you don't, you would be classified under the other zonings: Town Center, Zoning Commercial and residential. If you look in special exceptions in what is permitted, it gets pretty broad.

In the back of the document you can get a good picture of Cecilton and the proposed growth areas. The colored maps behind that are proposed land use where we are trying to create that green belt around the town. You'll see three alternatives because our planning and zoning hasn't selected one of them yet. There are three landowners that are adjacent to municipal boundaries and create a planned unit development where we can potentially take in some of those TDRs and PDRs and let them incorporate on land directly adjacent to the municipal boundaries. Then we would preserve the remaining lot of that land

in an easement. That's the carrot we have not gotten from the county. If we participate in the TDR Program, will you permanently eliminate the possibility of encroaching on our municipal boundaries? We haven't heard that yet. So this is a stab in the dark to do it ourselves and put it in our comprehensive plan and then ultimately get the urban growth boundary plan to reflect that and the county comprehensive plan. Nothing in here stipulates it has to be zoned agriculture but these large parcel farms have to have a carrot to get in there as well.

You also see a right to farm ordinance and they mandated the statement found on the last page of the right to farm ordinance. To qualify for the agribusiness zoning you can be any lot size you want as long as you meet the set back requirements and percentage of crops grown on the land.

Rupert Rossetti: Whichever of the 3 scenarios you approve, does that then become your urban growth boundary?

John Bunnell: I hope so. That's what our plan is. There are single family homes that are making attempts to come into our town boundary now. West on the end of the Davis Farm property there's a possibility of running water and sewer out there. They want to subdivide a piece of land so the son can build a house. It's just talk right now but we are trying to create a green belt on our own.

Sandra Edwards: Isn't this farm going into MALPF?

John Bunnell: They haven't gotten the check yet. I don't think the front section of the house is in preservation. It's the land to the north of town and west on Rt. 213.

Rupert Rossetti: The blue section on the map, is that the waste water treatment plant?

John Bunnell: Yes, and it will be cut in half for land use on the 28th of August.

Dean Severson: Have you done an analysis on how much development potential you have?

John Bunnell: Yes and no. They have done it for all of the scenarios but they haven't picked one of the scenarios. We were required to do that because of HB 1141 passed two years ago and due by October 2009 which is needs all of the comprehensive plans in the county being done which means the other municipalities are also completing simultaneously.

Diana Broomell: Now that there is a zoning designation (Agribusiness) that Vic Priapi can use to expand his business, will he change it from Highway Commercial to Agribusiness as he claimed he would?

John Bunnell: That was probably the original impetus along with a lot of discussion with surrounding farms. The town board wanted to take a direction of preservation and the ball started to roll with the intention of trying to start some type of agriculture designation like tourism to be very broad in scope. I couldn't tell you if Vic is going to rezone his property but they did charge him a transfer tax of \$10,000 because he changed to Highway Commercial and they aren't going to give him his money back. I told him to get a stay until he could rezone but Vic said after all the public hearings and all the negative feedback and all he was trying to do was grow flowers, he said he didn't want to have anything to do with the town, county or anybody else. He just wants a break and that's where it sits right now.

John Bennett: The Town of Vienna has a greenbelt around their town and they received State money for some of the preservation. Is that a similar situation of what you're trying to do?

John Bunnell: I haven't researched that end of it yet. I don't know if there is any money that is available. The only monetary help we received was incorporating the greenbelt into our comprehensive plan. We had a public hearing for an application for grant money through Sustainable Communities. It was almost \$7,000 to pay a planner to incorporate into our comprehensive plan. Hopefully we can get the county to do the same.

Michael McGrath: How would TDR's work on this? What's the possibility of encouraging developers to up that 3.5 PUD density in exchange for preserving some of the green area?

John Bunnell: I, personally, believe that is a wonderful idea. When the council of governments meet we have all the towns in one room. We never had a carrot up until 2 years ago. Before that we never had a problem with growth because we had more than we wanted. So we never had an incentive to participate in saving county land in order to bring it in to us. I understand the economics all too well. Even in the growth boundaries we had more than we could deal with. Now it's all backed off because of the economy.

Michael McGrath: If the PUD density were 5 or 5.5, it could put a tremendous amount of money into preserving some of that other land.

John Bunnell: The only other problem with your theory is politics and that's where a lot of it is getting held up. The County Commissioners and municipal officials aren't getting along real well and no one is going to make a change in their municipalities unless you can justify it and then gaining something that they can see right now.

Rupert Rossetti: I'm sitting here thinking about Perryville in terms of their annexation. The statement that they made: the reason we are annexing and keeping county densities is because the county can block us on annexations for five years if we change the density.

John Bunnell: And the County Commissioners did that to us. They voted to block the major change in zoning with the Priapi annexation and forced the referendum. The referendum passed so the county figured everybody in Cecilton really wanted the annexation. So they didn't block it and let the density change.

Rupert Rossetti: We're cutting off our noses if the towns can't change the density.

John Bunnell: I agree you need to work with the municipalities and give them that carrot. If they keep them from encroaching on the municipal boundaries, give them a buffer (greenbelt) around every town.

Michael McGrath: I think you can use another argument. I really take exception to Cecilton's line about density. I like history and as a planner I know that the historic centers of towns are at much higher densities than what we are developing now. So if people say it's out of character and they say we can't have these types of densities - it's baloney. Also, the most expensive real estate you have in your jurisdiction is the highest density. I can almost guarantee sight unseen. I'm talking about places like Chestertown and in Delaware it's down off the Strand on Second Street in New Castle. This is the most expensive real estate in Delaware and it's seven units per acre.

John Bunnell: Does Delaware have restrictions on annexations? One of the things that come to mind is we talked about the balance of agriculture. Everything to the southwest of Cecilton was the most pristine

agricultural land. Now, that farmland is all gone.

Michael McGrath: The municipalities in Delaware caused that. I asked the Mayor of Middletown how soon he was going to have another zip code within his town because one or more developments and he would have been in Maryland.

John Bunnell: On the other hand you get on the Maryland side you hear we do not want to turn into Middletown.

Michael McGrath: We used to say that about New Jersey.

John Bunnell: So keep the density low.

Michael McGrath: But that is the direct opposite. If you build at a higher density instead of a country club development then you would be half the size that you are today.

Sandra Edwards: You're talking about two different things. You're talking about municipalities being less rural.

Michael McGrath: Exactly, and here's the problem: we're annexing at rural densities. I don't have a plan with annexation at presentable densities which should start at 4 units per acre and go up from there.

From the time the first Europeans arrived in Delaware, (the oldest standing houses in Delaware were 1638) until 1984 we developed 125,000 acres of land with human development. From 1984 to 2005 we developed the same amount of land. That's the problem. We used as much land in a 20 year period then we did in the first 300 years in settlement. And almost every jurisdiction that I've looked at that has had a problem of sprawl you'll find some specific that is close to that. Historically we had growth on a very limited amount of land. But when cheap cars and cheap gas and cheap highways hit the fan and we found out about cheap land, things went nuts. That specific is what really represents the problem. We're just talking about where we were 30 years ago in terms of growth.

Key Points in the Discussion:

- ✓ Preservation of Agriculture Lands should be a key element in any jurisdiction's planning efforts.
- ✓ Economic Development is the key to understanding on how the health and welfare of a community is tied to agricultural businesses.
- ✓ Crucial to focus on diversification and intensification of agriculture. By supplying up and down the food chain in agriculture we can improve the economic condition and profitability of agriculture.
- ✓ Provide incentives to direct growth to the designated growth areas and disincentives to areas not slated for growth.
- ✓ Adopt ag zoning: 1 lot to 25 acres up to 1 lot to 50 acres.
- ✓ Limit lots sizes to limit impact to environmental resources.
- ✓ Provide certainty for farmers that there will be a future in farming 10 to 20 years from now.
- ✓ Lancaster and Delaware are less restrictive on health department regulations for ag related businesses. Statewide laws exempt agriculture from a lot of the land use laws at the local level. However, Maryland has health department regulations which often constrain new ag related businesses from developing.
- ✓ Draft goal – Annex at municipal densities and not at rural densities.

- ✓ Important for the county to provide incentives to direct growth in the right areas and disincentives in areas not slated for growth.
- ✓ Provide incentives and education to the public to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan
- ✓ Export Tax on timber leaving Cecil County
- ✓ Must have high quality soils for spray irrigation to work. Typical soils in Cecil County are not absorbent.
- ✓ Be creative in other ways to encourage the continuation of farming – ie. freezing the tax rate, provide support services for ag estate planning.
- ✓ Important that the Counties and Towns work together.

Other New Business: Chairman Thorne: I sent out an email this afternoon and I attached a copy to your pile. We can't meet on August 24 because the proposed scenarios will not be ready until a day or two before that. Since we need time to review them individually and also, a number of our subcommittee members cannot be there for that day, we need to push for a new date. We should meet before the 17th because we want to talk about these scenarios and see what came out of that meeting on July 31st. We need to see where they are going and make sure we have some input.

Robert Hodge: When are the scenarios going to be available?

Chairman Thorne: I spoke with ERM (Michael Bayer) again today and they are working on them. They say they have to run them by Eric (Sennstrom) before anybody can see them. So, who knows? We were told that within a week and a half of the scenarios being created on the 31st that they would send them out to us. That hasn't happened and ERM is still banging them around. He said he's got 3 done or close to done and there won't be any more than 4. But he couldn't give me a date. The chairs are meeting on Tuesday at 5 p.m. Do you want to meet after the chairs meet? We will schedule for Tuesday, September 9th.

Chairman Thorne shared with the committee that according to the consultants, we can continue to work on goals. The first 8 were provided so the consultants could include them in the scenarios but we still have a list of 27 plus the 4 from Shawn which we need to review. If anyone else has ideas for goals, forward them and they will be put on the list to review.

There was concern that the goals would not have an impact on the scenarios which would be reviewed. There was discussion that the goals adopted would be included in the Comprehensive Plan and that ultimately the adopted goals would shape policy. There was also concern that if the different subcommittees reject the different scenarios, we could end up with rejections of all four scenarios and then will have to go back and redo. However, others on the committee believed that we would have the option of a line item veto on the scenarios instead of rejecting as a whole and then compile what the majority of the over site committee agrees on.

Shawn Day: Michael McGrath brought up a very good point that soils should be a strong factor in ag preservation in the county. Charlie Hayes and I have drafted four goals which I will submit. Another goal which we I have been working on with many members of the subcommittee is there really is nothing in Cecil County that requires a big or small landowner to manage his forest land. There is no ordinance or county statute. In order to get the ag land assessment for forest plans a landowner has to have five acres of forest and have a Forest Stewardship Plan written by a MD Forest Service or a consulting practicing board to be approved by the MD Taxation and Assessments. It's a great incentive. Just to have sustainable forestry doesn't mean we have to have working saw mills and export all types of

timber resources. But sustainable forestry is the active scientific management of the wetlands. There are incentives and cost share programs we can look at to entice property owners to put their land into management. With that you open the door for ag preservation, for forest legacy, transfer of development rights for perpetual easements for that forest land to be protected. I would like to see what Dan, Charlie and Lindsie have come up with because some of our forests in the county may contain some of the better soils based on the trees that we have. We may have an opportunity to look at where the forest soils are to establish trees back in to fix the poor soil problem (nutrient loading or deficiencies). You may have some opportunities for some kind of land swapping. I'm going to be putting it together and hopefully I can get it done next week and get it to you as a draft for you to review. It's just one of those things that if the county had the venue to require or make it enticing with some funding they could find some other sources for active land management and stewardship, then you may actually see a little bit more sustainable forestry as an industry in the county. It's not going to create a sustainable forest products industry but what it is going to do is start the process to give the county the latitude to say that where we have our green infrastructure plan, we can put more emphasis into forest management because we want to create an improved wildlife habitat with growth corridors and migratory corridors. You have to have a mechanism. If you are going to have an infrastructure plan then you're going to be talking about sensitive areas and you've got to have some keys to limit the development density seen in those specific areas or at least give you the flexibility on the watershed levels to prioritize.

Shawn Day: Dan Polite is going to talk a lot about what I've just mentioned at the next meeting and we believe we can achieve some sustainable stuff without having an aggressive harvesting program. We also looked at that there is a lot of development to happen and this county is missing the boat because we could have sustainable forestry by having an export tax on the lumber that is leaving this county.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.