



Wednesday, October 23, 2024
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Wasmer Conference Room, IDEA Factory
4462 Stadium Dr., College Park, MD, 20740

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members in Attendance

1. Kevin Anderson Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce
2. Robert Braun, Ph.D. Space Exploration Sector Head, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory
3. Georgie Brophy Board Member, Maryland Space Business Roundtable
4. Mark Chang Delegate, Anne Arundel County
5. Alison Flatau, PhD Chair, Department of Aerospace Engineering, University of Maryland College Park
6. Ryan Gerard President, Goddard Contractors Association
7. Charles Ichoku, PhD Professor, Director of GESTAR II, University of Maryland Baltimore County
8. Barbara Lam CFO/VP, Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA)
9. Jennifer Lotz, PhD Director, Space Telescope Science Institute
10. Makenzie Lystrup, PhD Director, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
11. Dale Moore, EdD President, Southern Maryland Navy Alliance
12. Alonzo Washington Senator, Prince George's County (representing the Senate)

Department of Commerce Attendees

1. Ulyana Desiderio, PhD Senior Director, Office of Strategic Industries and Entrepreneurship
2. Colter Menke Aerospace Program Manager
3. Sarah Sheppard Director, Education & Workforce

General Public Attendees

1. Brandon Eden Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab
2. Dennis Feerick Maryland Space Business Roundtable (via phone)
3. Kajal Pancholi Maryland Aerospace Alliance
4. Phillina Tookes NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Welcome and Introductions

Secretary Anderson introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the first MATC meeting and provided some information about the importance of aerospace to the economy of Maryland. He gave an overview of the commission and mentioned the importance of its placement in the Department of Commerce. He let the commissioners know that the MATC was created to promote innovation in the fields of space exploration and commercial aerospace opportunities, including the integration of space, aeronautics, and aviation industries into the economy of the State.

Introduction of Commissioners

Secretary Anderson invited the commissioners to introduce themselves and share a little about their background. The Commissioners went around the table and introduced themselves.

Secretary Anderson also pointed out the members of the Maryland Department of Commerce staff in the room who may be assisting with the commission

Welcome Remarks

Senator Washington provided the background for the commission and his thoughts about the creation of an organization focused on strengthening the Maryland aerospace industry after a discussion with Georgie Brophy. He noted that although Maryland is home to national and international scientific research, it is not well known for the work that's taking place here. He also mentioned other states that appear to market their aerospace industries more effectively than Maryland does, including Texas, California and Colorado. Senator Washington provided four primary goals for the MATC:

1. Develop a database of aerospace industry assets in the state
2. Enhance the diversity of workers in the aerospace industry in Maryland
3. Consider establishing an aerospace economic zone within the state to include NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
4. Create policy initiatives to grow the aerospace industry in the state for the legislature to consider.

General Discussion

Dr. Lystrup noted that NASA Goddard is in crisis due to funding shortages and because the aerospace ecosystem is so interconnected, the difficulties it is facing affect many other organizations represented in the room. She also clarified that it's not necessarily due to budget appropriation but the way in which funds are allocated.

Dr. Moore mentioned the funding problems extend onto the Department of Defense as well and the commission should work to identify areas for growth across the industry and capture the opportunities to help resolve those challenges.

Dr. Braun noted that the state may be missing incentives for the creation of small businesses. He mentioned a few individuals/groups who have developed technologies in conjunction with JHU APL but have been unable to find traction within the state for the establishment of their company. He said Maryland could do more to retain businesses and people in the state.

Secretary Anderson noted that the Maryland Department of Commerce has developed a new strategic plan which will be released soon and could address some of these concerns. He mentioned that the

state unemployment numbers are low, some of the lowest in the nation, but there remains a need to better train unemployed citizens and students for jobs within the aerospace industry.

Ms. Brophy mentioned that there is a lot happening in the aerospace industry to support the growth of the aerospace industry in the state. She said the state should reinforce the available incentives to be located in Maryland and highlight assets Maryland has that other states are lacking. She also noted that awareness of Maryland in relation to the aerospace industry nationally and internationally is not high. Companies would like to be located in Maryland but end up choosing other states because they are more well known for their aerospace industries.

Dr. Lystrup reinforced Ms. Brophy's points by noting that Maryland has two major aerospace assets, Goddard Space Flight Center and The Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Lab (in addition to the other organizations at the table). She said Maryland needs to capitalize on that and build their capabilities.

Mr. Gerard mentioned that there is a general consensus in the Goddard Contractor's Association (GCA) that the aerospace landscape needs help. He said the contractor environment can be challenging for highly specialized businesses. Senator Washington asked that the commissioners shape the commission to best effect change

Mr. Gerard asked to clarify whether the commission supports service and commercial businesses. GCA general terminology generally regards service, commercial and contractor businesses differently. Secretary Anderson confirmed the commission was established to support all Maryland aerospace businesses with the additional goal of making the state's economy more equitable. Mr. Gerard mentioned that Goddard outperforms other states in equity in business contracts. Dr. Lystrup and Dr. Moore noted that much of the funding at Goddard and NAVAIR goes out of state. Dr. Moore identified housing and cost of living as major challenges in retaining businesses and employees in Maryland. Other leading aerospace states tend to be more affordable in those regards.

Secretary Anderson noted that the Maryland Department of Commerce has access to data pertaining to the economics and population movements of Maryland citizens from 2014 to 2019 and that this information could be distributed to the commissioners upon request. Mr. Gerard mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic altered the map of the Maryland workforce and where the workforce is located. Dr. Lystrup noted that there is currently no mandate in the NASA enterprise to require everyone to work on the NASA campuses, so not everyone who works on projects at NASA Goddard comes to the office each day which affects the local economy.

Dr. Flatau mentioned that only computer science and aerospace student populations have grown within the University of Maryland College Park engineering departments and the university is looking toward electric vehicles for future growth. She noted that Maryland has an opportunity to lead the nation in this sector. She also noted that Maryland needs a broader, more diverse technology zone.

Summary of Aerospace Workforce Development Meetings Hosted by Lieutenant Governor Miller

Ms. Brophy provided a summary of aerospace roundtable discussions hosted by LG Miller on February 13 and May 29, 2024. There's a lot of competition within the aerospace industry for the qualified workforce. Some service contracts do not allow for less experienced or entry- to mid-level candidates and the speed for hiring can be very slow. Four-year degrees are not always required and the industry needs to help ensure higher education is preparing the workforce for cutting edge careers. Both students and faculty need to be made aware of opportunities in the aerospace industry in the state. Opportunities need to be developed for the handoff from education to career which can include apprenticeships and internships.

Dr. Moore noted that the Southern Maryland 2030 program has been very successful and was awarded funding for three years but needs additional funding to continue. Ms. Lam said there has been a lot of investment in the life sciences in the state and she has seen a lot of participation in that industry with students in Baltimore City, but not the same engagement in the aerospace industry. She mentioned the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) is very close to large STEM schools but there is no clear connection to bring those students into the aerospace industry.

Dr. Lotz mentioned that space exploration is a great multiplier, most people see images taken from or of space but those images are not necessarily leveraged to bring opportunities to the organizations who are responsible for the pictures (NASA, STScI). Maryland could do a better job of letting people know where the pictures come from and which organizations are responsible for them. In that way Maryland can make a big impact with a small amount of resources.

Dr. Lystrup mentioned that people may not realize the ecosystem at NASA Goddard is in Maryland and they may not know that there are more career opportunities than just astronomers. Careers at NASA and the aerospace industry have a great service aspect to them. Dr. Moore noted a key phrase that Dr. Lystrup said "Making the world better. . . in Maryland" could make a good catch phrase for the commission and reinforced that people do not understand the technology that exists in order to capture the images such as the ones taken by Hubble and the James Webb Space telescopes.

Senator Washington noted the need to ensure Community Colleges are included in the workforce development efforts. He also clarified that the idea of creating aerospace zones is to help make sure Maryland is known nationally.

Call for Public Comments

None made.

Meeting Summary and Adjournment

Secretary Anderson summarized high points of the discussion from the meeting and called for motions to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.