

# *Kent County Economic Development Commission*

*The County Commissioners of Kent County*

*400 High Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor*

*Chestertown, MD 21620*

**No audio recording, the meeting was held at an alternate location.**

**February 5, 2020**

Commission Members Present: Jim Luff, Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Rob Thompson, Tracey Williams, Aaron Bramble, Dick Story, and Brendan Jones

Commission Members Absent:

Also in Attendance: Stephanie Jones, Environmental Planner, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; Bob Jacob, County Commissioner; Jamie Williams, Director, Economic Development; Emily McCoy, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2020 meeting. On motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr. Bramble, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the January 8, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Jones shared the following Planning & Zoning updates:  
Planning Commission meeting held on January 2<sup>nd</sup>

- A setback variance to construct a waste management structure within the required 600-foot setback received a favorable recommendation to the Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals granted this variance.
- A concept/preliminary/final site plan was approved for an addition to an existing manufacturing building.
- A zoning text amendment put forward by the County Commissioners, to allow for the expansion of existing campgrounds in the Resource Conservation District received a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners. A public hearing with the County Commissioners will take place on February 18<sup>th</sup> and the review of the Critical Area Commission will follow.
- An amendment to the Kent County Growth Allocation Policy was reviewed by the Planning Commission and a favorable recommendation was sent to the County Commissioners. The growth allocation policy states the process as to how Critical Area designations can be changed to a more intense designation. The proposed policy amendment will allow for granting of growth allocation for tourism, heritage, and marine uses that will expand existing uses as of August 1, 1989 and not near a growth area. A public hearing with the County Commissioners will take place on February 18<sup>th</sup> and the review of the Critical Area Commission will follow.
- Bayshore Land Holdings, LLC received a favorable recommendation from the Planning Commission to the County Commissioners for a growth allocation application to allow them to expand the existing campground. This included the review of a site plan. Growth Allocation is required to be approved by the County Commissioners and the Critical Area Commission.

February 5, 2020

Page 2

EDC Minutes

#### Planning Commission meeting agenda for February 6<sup>th</sup>

- A house keeping zoning text amendment to follow up with a previously approved amendment to increase the size limit from 25,000 sf to 50,000 sf for structures for buying, processing, and sale of farm products related to agriculture in the Agricultural Zoning District as a special exception. A recommendation will be sent to the County Commissioners.
- A zoning text amendment to be reviewed with a recommendation sent to the County Commissioners for including “data processing centers” in the Agricultural Zoning District (AZD) as a special exception with certain specific conditions and in certain zoning districts (Village, Intense Village, Commercial, Employment Center, and Industrial) as a permitted use; providing for a process to allow for alternative compliance with specific design standards in certain zoning districts (Commercial, Employment Center, and Industrial); and providing parking requirements for data processing centers.
- The Animal Care Shelter of Kent County has applied for a concept site plan review.

Jamie Williams shared that staff are active members of the Kent County Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census. Information is being shared on social media pages to support the hiring of census takers in Kent County. The Housing Resource webpage has been delayed due to legislation priorities and departmental budget work.

The Sales Use and Tax Exemption for Data Center Equipment SB 397 has not been dropped in the House. The deadline for House Bills to be dropped is Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. The Senate hearing will be heard in the Budget and Taxation Committee on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. Commissioner Jacob shared that MACo will support the bill. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve writing a letter to support Senate Bill 397. On motion by Mr. Bramble and seconded by Mr. Story, the Commission unanimously approved writing a letter to support SB 397.

#### Additional legislation discussed included

- SB 540 – Member-Regulated Cooperatives – Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020) – no position was taken as the County Commissioners have not taken a position.
- HB 223 – End Ineffective Business Subsidies Act of 2020 – Bill is being heard on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. The department submitted a letter of opposition.
- HB 565 –Income Tax – Business and Economic Development Tax Credits- Termination – Bill is being heard at February 12th at 1pm. The department will write a letter of opposition.
- HB 45/SB 122 – Economic Development – Opportunity Zone Incentives – Alteration of the More Jobs for Marylanders and Opportunity Zone Enhancement Programs – Department submitted a letter of opposition.
- HB 603 – County Boards of Education – Establishing Career and Technical Education Schools – Authority - The Department and Commission abstained from taking a position on the bill without input from the school system.

February 5, 2020

Page 3

EDC Minutes

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve writing a letter to oppose House Bill 223 and House Bill 565. On motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved writing a letter to oppose HB 233 and HB 565.

Three quotes for appraisals were received for Millington Elementary School. Ms. Williams will submit to the Commissioners to determine if they want to move forward with an appraisal of the property.

On February 4, 2020, Ms. Williams with Mr. Luff and Mr. Story shared the update of the Economic Development Strategic Plan requested consideration of formal adoption once completed. The anticipated timeline is six months and a facilitator is being sourced. Five quotes for facilitation were obtained and the top two are being evaluated. Public input is desired at the beginning and end of the process.

Ms. Genter discussed the results of the Economic Outlook Survey and suggested that some of the points listed in the results be used to form objectives for the strategic plan. Ms. Genter shared Kent County's responses were aligned with the national responses.

Public comment included business attraction and the varied roles that fall under economic development. A business owner shared his experience of locating from Annapolis to Chestertown. Commissioner Jacob shared a positive increase in county income and new housing projects.

The Nominating Committee met earlier and discussed the upcoming expiration of terms. Residents who have expressed interest will be contacted to determine if they are still willing and able to serve.

The nominating committee nominated Jim Luff to continue as Chair, Aaron Bramble to serve as Vice Chair, and Kate Gray and Dick Story to remain on the nominating committee for the Calendar Year 2020. On a motion by Mr. Story, seconded by Mr. Thompson, the commission unanimously voted in favor of the nominations as presented.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Ms. Williams and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:08 pm. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 3:00 pm in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD  
Director