

Economic Development Advisory Board Kent County, Maryland

March 4, 2015

Board Members Present: Dan MacLeod, Robert Jacob, Thomas Beckett, Robert Ampula, Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, and Jim Luff

Board Members Absent: Zoe Schneider

Also in Attendance: Commissioner William Short, Ernest Crofoot, County Administrator, Scott Boone, Director, Information Technology, Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, Loretta Lodge, Executive Director, Kent County Chamber of Commerce, and F. John McQuaid, ESRGC, Broadband Implementation Coordinator

At 4:00 p.m. the meeting convened.

Mr. Luff called the meeting to order and welcomed Kate Gray to the Economic Development Advisory Board.

On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Genter the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the February 4, 2015, meeting.

Ms. Moredock shared that the Planning Commission held the public hearing on a Zoning Text Amendment to add a new category to the Special Exceptions sections in several zoning districts for a Rural Inn. Ms. Moredock shared that Bernadette Bowman, Director, Tourism Development testified in support of the amendment. The public hearing on CHR1-2015 Rural Inn Special Exception will be held on March 31, 2015 at 6 p.m. Ms. Moredock shared that the March Planning Commission meeting will be postponed due to expected inclement weather, therefore the plan review for Southern States for a 36,000 square feet building, will be held in April. Ms. Genter asked if future Planning Commission meetings could be advertised with an alternate date in case of inclement weather. Stating that postponing a project could delay a business from operation for a month or more. Ms. Moredock advised she would check the requirements and see if that were an option.

Mr. Crofoot shared that the County has received two inquiries about Medical Marijuana Cultivation Centers, one inquirer was upfront and the other is fact finding discretely. Mr. Crofoot shared that he is reviewing the regulations that have come out, which includes growing, dispensing or both. The regulations are still under review.

Mindie Burgoyne, Business Development Representative, Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development (DBED) joined the meeting and shared that some of the interested parties are hoping to take advantage of the manufacturing designation. Ms. Burgoyne stated it is unlikely they will be able to achieve that designation.

Ms. Burgoyne shared that DBED, TEDCO, and the economic development programs are being restructured as a result of proposals by the Augustine Commission to make Maryland more business friendly. Business attraction and marketing will be moved out of DBED and put in a non-profit public/private partnership. Venture capital and the bio-science department will be taken out of DBED and put with TEDCO. Mr. Crofoot asked where loan programs that are not high-tech or bio science will be placed. Ms. Burgoyne explained loan programs and tax credits. Ms. Genther asked about the Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zone (RISE Zone). Ms. Burgoyne indicated it is not ready to implement. Ms. Genther shared that research indicated that applications were being accepted. Ms. Williams shared that the RISE Zone is part of the strategic plan for Washington College and Joe Holt, Chief of Staff, Washington College will be presenting on April 1, 2015. Ms. Genther will contact Mr. Holt for additional details to share with the Board. Ms. Burgoyne also shared that ILSBio is considering a conditional loan with DBED.

Ms. Genther addressed the 2013 Economic Development Plan, and reviewed a few aspects of the Plan of Action section. Ms. Genther addressed the section "Attract new businesses with a marketing effort that will:" and shared that some aspects may be missing, as a result of attending a seminar that addressed trends in Agriculture and suggested inviting someone from the University of Maryland Extension Office to address the Board. Commissioner Short shared some examples of new agricultural related businesses currently developing within the County. The discussion included these new trends being incorporated in the local colleges and high school curriculum. Ms. Gray asked who the targeted audience was for the 2013 Economic Development Plan.

Mr. Beckett shared that financing youth is something to explore as banks are not lending money, and loans and grants are lacking. Mr. Ampula proposed putting together a small private venture capital loan program. SCORE previously offered a micro loan, and received no applications from Kent County businesses. Many different funding sources were discussed as possible options for Kent County Economic Development purposes. Mr. Crofoot shared the previous effort to reinstate the small business revolving loan fund in cooperation with the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center.

Mr. Luff, Mr. Crofoot, and Commissioner Short addressed the upcoming FY2016 budget cycle and the County's plan for Economic Development going forward. The April agenda will include a budget discussion, potential job description(s) for Economic Development, and other options to address Economic Development in the County; including outsourcing.

Ms. Williams quickly shared the Staff Report of the previous month's activities that have been handled through the Commissioner's Office. The County allocations for FY2015 were shared with the Board. Mr. Ampula shared that SCORE will not be requesting funds for FY2016 from Kent County. Ms. Williams advised of efforts made to fill the vacancy for a student representative that will be available when Ms. Schneider graduates from Washington College in May. The Board members were agreeable to appoint a high school student in addition to a college student, if interested candidates were identified.

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Mr. Luff asked if there were any nominations for the Vice Chair position. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Genter the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Jacob as Vice Chair.

Mr. Boone shared that Apex Wind Farm project and Apex is interested in the last mile broadband project and has offered funding to assist the County with the project. Mr. Boone also updated the Board on Wavevison's current position.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m., and the board agreed to meet again on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Deputy Clerk