

Economic Development Commission
The County Commissioners of Kent County
400 High Street
Chestertown, MD 21620

July 5, 2017

Commission Members Present: Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Jim Luff, Dan MacLeod, Rob Thompson, Mary Ford, Aaron Bramble, and Bob Jacob

Commission Members Absent: Shreyas Suresh

Also in Attendance: Shelley Heller, County Administrator

At 3:00 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2017, meeting and to approve an addendum to the May 3, 2017, meeting. At the May 3, 2017, meeting Mr. Ampula suggested that the Commission ensure that once the fiber project is completed, Scott Boone, Director, Information Technology be recognized for his leadership and work on the project expressing the desire to attach remuneration. On motion by Mr. Bramble and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the June 7, 2017, meeting and the addendum to the May 3, 2017 meeting minutes.

Mr. Luff made the announcement that Dan MacLeod is resigning from the Kent County Board of Education effective July 31, 2017, and accepted a position in Massachusetts. Mr. MacLeod has spoken with Dr. Karen Couch, Superintendent, Kent County Public Schools about a replacement member to serve on the Economic Development Commission. Ms. Williams shared that the bylaws do not specifically state that a representative from the Board of Education be a member of the Commission. She shared that in the six years she has been with the County that has been the practice. The Commission members agreed that with the importance of public education to the county's economic development efforts, that the practice be continued. Mr. Luff suggested a change in policy for the economic development commission recommendations. Ms. Heller shared that it should be formalized in the bylaws.

Pam Whyte, President, Chester River Wellness Alliance shared the organization's progress and the goals the organization would like to achieve. Ms. Whyte introduced Christina Stichcom, Owner, Airy Hill Stables; Trish Gruber, Owner, Chestertown Natural Foods; and Deborah Mizeur, Clinical Herbalist, and Co-Chair, Rural Healthcare Work Group. Ms. Whyte stated that the organization wants to make a contribution to education, health, empowerment, and the prosperity of the community. Health and wellness can be pillars of attraction for the community the same as the arts, the history, and the natural beauty. The Chester River Wellness Alliance is a non-profit organization of health and wellness providers, business owners, and individuals who are committed to promoting the services of health and wellness practitioners, educating and administrating to the health of the community, and promoting Chestertown and its surrounding area as a vibrant wellness destination. Ms. Mizeur validated everything that Ms. Whyte said about the need for this certain type of organization and aligning the various wellness practitioners. Ms. Mizeur shared that for the past year she has co-chaired the Rural Healthcare Work Group. The Rural Healthcare Group, in particular, is working to keep the open hospital in

Chestertown. She shared that the hospital is a small component of what affects people's health, stating that what happens on the outside of the hospital is actually what keeps people out of the hospital initially. This program will help educate the population and create a very high quality of life in Kent County, and potentially attract others, as we become a wellness destination. Ms. Stichcom then came up to share about projects and programs they envision. She mentioned a few programs that could be made available to veterans and children with adverse childhood experiences.

Ms. Whyte shared that the organization started in August of 2016, and they were certified as a non-profit in December. The first objective of the organization is to provide support for the providers and community outreach. She wants to partner with local businesses to create programs and wellness vacations. The funding required for Phase 1 is approximately \$10,000 and Phase 2 approximately \$66,000. Ms. Stichcom shared the organizations funding sources.

Ms. Williams asked the commission members for their thoughts on including their biographies on the Economic Development Commission's information webpage. Mr. Luff shared that his information had been provided previously. The members agreed that posting biographies on the website was a project worth undertaking.

Ms. Williams shared there are five new members to hotDesks since the opening of the Chestertown location on May 1, 2017. This is a network of four additional locations therefore more than just those five people are utilizing the space. The space has also hosted a meet up and several meetings this month.

Ms. Williams shared that additional funding was requested for marketing and some of that funding is being utilized for a formalized marketing plan. Platinum PR is the firm that is writing the plan. Ms. Williams shared an update to the Site Selection collaboration with the eastern shore counties, the Maryland's Eastern Shore intelligence report will be printed in March 2018.

The Commerce Zone Tax Credit was approved by the Commissioners and will be effective on July 20, 2017. The information will be added to the website and some additional outreach will take place. Ms. Heller asked about the maps for the priority funding areas. Ms. Williams shared that the maps were a part of the legislation. Ms. Gray asked how the Commerce Zone Tax Credit would work within the Enterprise Zone. Ms. Williams shared that the Enterprise Zone Credit must be utilized if available, and it is actually more beneficial to the property owner.

Mr. Luff requested an update on the Upper Shore Regional Council. Ms. Williams shared that Commissioner Robert Buckley is the Acting Director and interviews were conducted on Friday, June 30, 2017.

Mr. Jacob asked about the gas company that was looking at the property adjacent to Chesapeake CNC on Mary Morris Road. Ms. Williams and Ms. Genter shared there was interest and suggested reaching out to the Real Estate agent that has the property listed.

Mr. Luff shared that Senator Hershey mentioned a mushroom farm in Massey. He suggested that the farm would need housing for their employees due to the fact that they pick the mushrooms every day and not having the ability for housing significant loss. Mr. Luff said the county would need to show them an area to house their employees. Mr. Luff has reached out to Senator Hershey for additional details. Ms. Williams shared conversations with a mushroom company who has purchased land in Warwick, Cecil County; that required internet service to the farm. Mr. Boone was able to make some calls and connect them with the Maryland Broadband Cooperative.

There was in depth conversations about the 301 corridor and the Town of Millington extending water and sewer service to that area. Ms. Heller shared that extending service to additional customers is advantageous to jurisdictions as it spreads out the cost for the end users. Mr. Thompson asked if there has been an infrastructure study completed for the County. Ms. Genter suggested someone from Public Works attend a commission meeting to discuss the comprehensive water and sewer plan and how it relates to the 301 corridor.

There was a brief discussion regarding the economic development plan and the need to have fresh eyes review the document. Ms. Williams suggested asking Dick Story to review the plan. The commission agreed that Mr. Story's expertise would be valuable. Mr. Thompson being new to the Commission would review the document and make recommendations.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Mr. Jacob, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator