

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

October 4, 2017

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

Commission Members Absent: Tracey Williams

Also in Attendance: Trae Hoffner, Washington College Student

At 3:03 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Ms. Williams shared that Brian Moore and Leslie Sea, WCTR will join the meeting and share information about the radio station and related business entities. Mr. Moore and Ms. Sea will share their perspectives on doing business in Kent County from the perspective of business owners.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 6, 2017, meeting. On motion by Mr. Bramble and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the September 6, 2017, meeting.

Ms. Williams shared that the marketing plan was shared for review and requested feedback. The Economic Development Strategic Plan 2017 identifies the need to develop a marketing and communications plan. The Emsi software data is now available to Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties and the Upper Shore Regional Council. The data from Emsi was used in the Economic Development Strategic Plan 2017. Ms. Williams attended the monthly SCORE Chapter meeting this morning and gave an Economic Development update. An Economy Overview was shared with the SCORE Chapter mentors this morning as well as the Commission members; there is some information that needs to be further explored. This information is also available to SCORE mentors when assisting local businesses. A location quotient is available with the software and measures the saturation of a business in our community compared to the national average.

Mr. Luff asked if the Commission was going to further explore the data before sharing the Strategic Plan. Ms. Williams recommended proceeding with the Strategic Plan as it stands and use comments and additional information to further improve the plan. The Commission members agreed.

Ms. Williams reiterated the need to review the alcoholic beverage regulations and processes from the standpoint of ease of doing business in Kent County. Ms. Williams stated the state and local laws are difficult to follow. After spending four years in the Commissioners' Office, Ms. Williams stated she would have to go back and review the regulations to answer questions. The topic was brought up at a recent Commissioners' meeting with the District 36 delegation.

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Interviews are being scheduled with three Washington College students for the Innovation Internships for economic development. April Bitter, Project Manager, Information Technology, has been a tremendous help with payables and finance related functions for Economic Development.

Ms. Williams shared she attended the Hope in Tomorrow! Hope in Recovery! Opioid Forum held in Rock Hall. The Opioid Task Force, comprised of many different agencies within the County and State are scheduling these forums.

Mr. Moore and Ms. Sea thanked the Economic Development Commission for being one of the first to embrace them as a new business in Kent County. Mr. Moore stated the first challenge was public awareness. The radio station has existed in Kent County since 1963. Marketing is their specialty and they took this opportunity as the first mission. WCTR is a community-based radio station serving Kent and Queen Anne's County. Several phases of the business have been interjected, Hometown Multimedia, LLC. is the marketing arm; providing social media management, radio commercials, web design, on-hold programming, for local businesses and organizations, etc. The newest addition is www.radiomiddletown.com, providing a need in that community where there was a void. Ms. Williams and Bernadette Bowman, Director, Tourism Development, have been guests on a regular basis keeping them and the listening audience aware of what is happening in Kent County. Mr. Moore shared the desire to be plugged into the community as much as possible. Ms. Sea shared that the radio station is no longer just an AM station, they have FM102.3 and 96.1 and stream online. Ms. Sea shared the economic climate is sometimes difficult as most businesses are seasonal. Businesses working together and supporting one another will build the economy and grow the economic base. Ms. Sea shared a few programs running on WCTR and Mr. Moore shared some of the events they provided live remotes (i.e. Kent County Fair, the United Way Event, Chester Gras, Pirates and Wenches). Mr. Moore shared the challenge is external advertising and asked for personal promotion, word of mouth. There exists a curious mindset that people out of town are more important than people in town. Ms. Sea suggested that residents may feel that they don't matter if we ignore them. Mr. Moore asked what WCTR could do in the community. Mr. Suresh shared there is an effort at Washington College to launch a radio station. Ms. Sea shared their experience with the Innovation Internship program.

Mr. Luff attended a presentation of the DLLR meeting about the work opportunity tax credit, Workforce Development & Adult Learning Tax Credit program. The program is a federal program and the program is currently a year behind. The representative shared the concerns at DLLR were poor IT, poor records, poor computers. Target groups include; veterans, ex-felons, disabled, SNAP (Disconnected youth are teenagers and young adults who are between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school.). Mr. Luff shared that the Maryland Department of Transportation was in and shared the Chestertown Bypass is not at the top of the list for projects for Kent County. The Delegation asked questions about the bypass and the projects in Kent County. Mr. Luff attended the first of the Kent County Pubic School Facility Strategic Plan, Community Meetings being held to formulate a six-year plan. There is an online survey if you are unable to attend any of the meetings. Ms. Williams previously shared the survey on Facebook and will send a direct link to the Commission members. Mr. Luff attended

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the second meeting to discuss the needs for a Betterton Economic Development Plan. The Maryland Rural Development Corporation has received grant funding to assist Betterton in developing a plan. Mr. Luff attended a meeting about the Maryland Apprenticeship Program.

Ms. Genther shared that the Greater Rock Hall Business Association (GRHBA) meetings are held the last Tuesday of the month. The GRHBA is currently working on their yearly membership drive. Ms. Genther attended the Chamber Economic Development Committee Meeting and the Chamber wanted to engage in activities to support what is already being done to improve their members business. Ms. Genther recommended a healthcare consortium for Chamber members. The value of membership would be greatly improved if they were able to create Healthcare consortium.

The final Economic Development Strategic Plan 2017 was emailed to all Commission members. The Commission agreed the plan is ready to release the plan and present to the County Commissioners. Ms. Williams will submit for the agenda on the October 17, 2017, Commissioners' meeting. Ms. Genther encouraged as many Commission members as possible to attend.

Mr. Bramble completed the Maryland's Open Meeting Act requirement and is the designated certified member for the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Bramble's certificate of completion was forwarded to the Commissioners' office for their records.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Jacob, seconded by Ms. Gray, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:14 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator