

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street

Chestertown, MD 21620

November 1, 2017

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

Commission Members Absent: Mary Ford

Also in Attendance: Trae Hoffner, Washington College Student; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning

At 3:03 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2017, meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Jacob, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the October 4, 2017, meeting.

Ms. Moredock shared the Planning Commission, Board of Appeals, and staff have been very busy with projects. The comment period is closed for the Comprehensive Plan update process. The Planning Commission received and considered thirty-four pages of comments. The Planning Commission will be reviewing the final draft at the November 2nd meeting. Russ Richardson and Michael Vargo's most recent correspondence is similar to previous comments that have been drafted in the Comprehensive Plan update. Language has been drafted and added to the economy section to expand regulatory flexibility in employment center and industrial areas. Ms. Moredock explained in detail the processes in which Mr. Richardson and Mr. Vargo's proposed changes would potentially take place. The County Commissioners have the authority to amend the Comprehensive Plan prior to approval.

Ms. Williams and Ms. Genter, in collaboration with Planning and Zoning has been active in identifying properties where specific businesses can operate. The goal is to catalog these properties and be proactive rather than reactive to these requests. The water and sewer process and the options to fund the infrastructure were discussed in detail. Ms. Moredock shared several other current projects and their status with the Commission members.

Mr. Bramble opened the discussion on alcohol beverage regulations and the challenge facing some business owners who hold a restaurant alcohol license. Kent County's alcohol beverage restaurant license states the average daily receipts from the sale of food shall be at least 60% of the average daily receipts of the business. The State regulation reads the average daily receipts from the sale of food that exceed the average daily receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages. Recommendations included removing the under 21 age restriction from the tavern license or creating other classes of licenses for distilleries, resorts, entertainment venues, etc. Ms. Williams offered voting on the food and alcohol split as an immediate action and continue discussing the other options with Rob Edler, Alcoholic Beverage Inspector. The Commission members agreed, and Mr. Bramble offered his assistance. On motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Jacob, the Commission unanimously approved the recommendation to send a

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favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners to propose legislation to remove Kent County's 60% requirement.

Ms. Williams shared the personal property tax on public utilities was adopted to allow the County to enter into a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with solar developers if desired. The County does not have personal property tax, therefore without adoption of CHR2-2017 Business Personal Property Taxes on Public Utilities the County would not be afforded that option.

The current Tidewater Trader ad in the Hunt Issue features the hotDesks Business Incubator and Coworking Space, the Commerce Zone Tax Credit, and the Fiber Project. Ms. Williams highlighted the STEM events being held in Kent County and the Written Off documentary screening.

Ms. Williams asked if anyone had an opportunity to review the draft marketing plan that was provided by Platinum PR. Ms. Gray expressed her concern with Work and Play by the Bay being similar to Live Work Play in QA. Ms. Genther shared a presentation has been created and has been used with potential business attraction prospects. Ms. Genther shared that information about the progress of Kent County Public Schools is desired to promote recent accomplishments. The presentation will be shared with the Commission members for discussion at the December meeting. A discussion ensued on the benefit or having a regular education updates; public, private, and higher education.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Genther, seconded by Ms. Gray, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:38 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator