

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street, 3rd Floor

Chestertown, MD 21620

Audio recordings of the Economic Development Commission meetings can be found at <https://www.kentcounty.com/economic-development/board-meetings> click on the ‘Audio Recordings Tab’.

December 4, 2019

Commission Members Present: Jim Luff, Cindy Genther, 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 and Jamie Williams, Director, Economic Development

At 3:00 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2019 meeting. On motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the November 6, 2019 meeting.

Ms. Jones shared the following updates:

- The following were reviewed by the Board of Appeals in November, and prior to received favorable recommendations from the Planning Commissions:
 - The Board of Appeals granted approval of a buffer variance in order for a 44 square-foot bathroom and storage closet addition on the rear of an existing cottage and an 18 square-foot overhang.
 - The Board of Appeals granted approval of a buffer variance in order to demolish and reconfigure an existing 320 square-foot waterfront deck. The proposed 313 square-foot deck will consist of an approximate 8-foot by 27-foot covered deck and 8-foot by 13.5-foot sunroom.
- An administrative special exception and variance was held and granted Thursday, November 21 for installation of a solar array in the front yard of a waterfront parcel and the request for a variance from the front yard setback requirements.
- The Technical Advisory Committee recently reviewed a request for a setback variance for a manure storage building, site plan review for a proposed addition to an existing manufacturing business, and multiple lot line adjustments.
- The Planning Commission meeting for December will be held tomorrow with the following on the agenda:

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- The Planning Commission will send a recommendation to the County Commissions for the Town of Millington Annexation application. The proposed annexation is for a 125.67-acre property owned by L. Freeman Evans that is located on Millington Road (Tax Map 32, Parcel 2)
- The Planning Commission will send a recommendation to the Board of Appeals for the Richardson Fresh Ponds, LLC variance application, requesting a variance from requirements in the Kent County Land Use Ordinance, in order to construct six (6), 32-square-foot signs to advertise the sale, lease, and development potential of the subject property (Tax Map 31, Parcel 6), where only three (3) such signs would be permitted, and under certain conditions.

There was discussion about the zoning of the Millington Annexation and if the Town of Millington requested a waiver of the waiting period and Millington Elementary School being able to accommodate data centers. Data centers are not specifically addressed in the County's current ordinance. Ms. Genther asked if the Planning Commission would consider a data center a warehouse, as they store data. Jamie Williams shared that Commissioner Jacob and Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning have been working on this and it would be best to discuss at the January meeting when they are in attendance.

Tracey Williams with Liza Goetz, Agriculture Teacher, Kent County Public Schools and Carrie Douthit, Office Manager, Greenscapes and current apprentices Abby and Gage shared their experience with the Youth Apprenticeship program. Ms. Goetz shared she is working with the Maryland Department of Labor and the Economic Development Office to schedule a meeting in January to share information about the youth apprenticeship program with employers.

Jamie Williams shared the Transportation Resources webpage and demonstrated how to access the page the County's landing page. A preview of the Housing Resources webpage was shared, more work needs to be completed prior to the page being made public. Ms. Williams shared how to access the Business Incentives Brochures created for each of the town on the Economic Development, Incentives, webpage. Ms. Williams shared the 2019 Citation of Celebrations presented to Kent County businesses with the Maryland Department of Commerce to recognize significant anniversaries and we have started to work on the list for 2020.

On behalf of Commissioner Jacob Ms. Williams shared an overview of the Kirwan Commission. Full implementation is estimated to cost the State and Counties approximately \$4 billion annually within the next 10 years. If Kent County were to fully fund the recommendation by 2030 with a property tax increase, we would need to increase our property tax to \$1.408/\$100 of assessed value. An in-depth discussion followed, and Ms. Williams asked everyone should share information as it becomes available.

The Residential Sprinkler Tax Credit Legislation, Code Home Rule 6-2019 was introduced on December 3, 2019 at the County Commissioners' meeting. The public hearing will be held on January 7, 2020 at 6 p.m. Commission members requested that the towns be notified of the public hearing.

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Mr. Luff expressed the need to update the Economic Development Strategic Plan 2017. It was recommended that a section per month be reviewed. There was discussion about the County Commissioners officially adopting the plan. Ms. Gray asked about the possibility of a work session with the Commissioners to discuss the update to get direction and input. Ms. Williams will discuss with the Shelley Heller, County Administrator.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Mr. Bramble and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:07 pm. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 3:00 pm in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD
Director