



**Recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found on the Meeting Archive Tab.**

**June 14, 2023**

Commission Members Present: Tracey Williams, Richard Story, Sandy Scott, Paula Reeder, and David Bowman

Commission Members Absent: Aaron Bramble and Charlie Athey

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director; Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager; Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development; Commissioner Price; Shelley Heller, County Administrator

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

At 3:02 p.m., at the request of Mr. Story, a motion was made by Ms. Reeder, seconded by Ms. Scott, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2023, meeting.

Mr. Bowman was welcomed to his first meeting by the Commission members. He gave a brief introduction sharing he is the Chief Lending Officer and Vice President of The Peoples Bank.

Mr. Frank Hodgetts, CEO, Home Partnerships, Inc. provided an update on the Millington Senior Housing Project. He advised that the State did not approve of the first submission in April 2019, a property on Carville Road. A site plan of the current project was shared, that was submitted in December 2022, that addressed the concerns of the State that the project was separated by a State Road. The revised project is located on the property gifted to the Town of Millington by the County Commissioners. The ball fields will remain at the disposal of the Lions Club.

The Senior Housing Project will consist of seven or eight buildings including the Leasing Center and the Apex. There will be fifty-two single-story units, thirty-eight one-bedroom and fourteen two-bedroom apartments. The final application package will be submitted to the State by the end of June. Rent for these apartments will be affordable to low-income seniors at sixty percent of the area median income. Construction on the project is scheduled to begin in April 2024 which will be coordinated with the Town of Millington as they renovate the former Millington Elementary school building. Mr. Hodgetts advised that they have a path to acquire the funding necessary to start the construction. The entire site will allow access by anyone with any type of disability including hearing and vision. Leasing will begin approximately five months prior to the completion of the first group of buildings. The entry age for the apartments is sixty-two and older. Jamie Williams added that the school renovation project will provide services such as health care, a library, a food pantry, and other community services. Mr. Hodgetts advised there will also be meeting space for Veterans, workforce development, healthcare fairs, Medicaid

processes, etc. Ms. Williams advised that a letter of support was provided from the Economic and Tourism Development Office for the Millington Senior Project.

Ms. Wright advised she and Jamie attended a workshop hosted by Nancy LaJoice, Maryland Department of Commerce at Chesapeake College on Cannabis in the Workplace to discuss challenges and how businesses will handle public use of cannabis. She advised that we are still in the process of acquiring approval of Kent County's third enterprise zone in the Worton/Betterton areas. The State is reviewing the application.

Handouts were provided regarding the distribution of the micro-ag grants. Ms. Wright advised that the grants are reimbursement grants and applicants need to submit receipts to receive funding up to the amount awarded. Jamie Williams advised that each applicant was scored with specific criteria and then points were deducted for previous funding. There was discussion about requesting grant funding for other industries in future years, such as transportation, childcare, etc. The ETDC was encouraged to review the current criteria for recommendations moving forward. The ag grant was approved in the amount of \$15,000 for FY2024.

Ms. Boulden advised that Ms. Osborn is attending the Museums of Kent County monthly meetings. Economic and Tourism Development had the opportunity to host the June meeting of the Maryland Destination Marketing Organizations (MDMO) at Haven Harbour South. The MDMO consists of tourism representatives from twenty-three counties, Baltimore City and Ocean City. Ms. Boulden will be attending the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance meeting in late July. The Visitor Guide updates have been completed and the digital version is available on the County website.

Jamie Williams gave an overview of the County budget process and shared actions taken by the Commissioners to balance the budget. She advised the seasonal Shuttle was funded at \$16,050. Additional contributions were made by the Upper Shore Regional Council at \$10,000, the Town of Rock Hall at \$5,000, and the Town of Chestertown at \$5,000. The goal is to figure out how to make the shuttle service sustainable in future years.

Jamie Williams shared Ms. Boulden and Ms. Wright are working on their respective FY2024 Marketing Plans. Ms. Williams will focus on Affordable Housing and Transportation Awareness. She has met with Delmarva Community Transit and will be meeting regularly to discuss transportation matters.

Jamie Williams advised that Secretary Kevin Anderson from the Maryland Department of Commerce visited the County on June 12, 2023. He toured and had lunch at Modern Stone Age Kitchen, toured Washington College's Food Lab, LaMotte Chemical, and Washington College's Semans-Griswold Environmental Hall. At the Hall, a roundtable discussion was held with local business and county representatives regarding current needs. Following the roundtable, the Secretary enjoyed ice cream at Sugar Doodles and toured the Kent Cultural Alliance building. The Secretary was accompanied by Lori Ratzburg, Senior Director, and Nancy LaJoice, Senior Business Development Representative.

Ms. Williams advised that the Governor and his cabinet visited Kent County two weeks ago meeting at Dixon Valve & Coupling Company. Kent County Commission President Ron Fithian met with the Governor, the Governor held the monthly cabinet meeting, and then the group split and toured Sultana and Mineary's Dream Alliance.

Mr. Story gave an overview of the Kent County Commissioners Public Hearing regarding the proposed Zoning Text Amendment that would increase the allowable height from 45' to 60' of a building in the designated growth area of the 301 corridor on Industrial, Commercial, and Employment Center zoned parcels. Members of the EDTC were present and testified as individuals on behalf of the proposed amendment. He advised that the hearing was balanced and professional. He further advised that the record is open until Friday, June 16th.

Jamie Williams gave an update on ETDC membership, Mr. Story was reappointed to his second full term. David Bowman was appointed to his first full term and replaces Rob Thompson. Judy Gifford was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Tracey Williams upon her retirement.

Jamie Williams advised that considering the retirement of Tracey Williams, an educational representative on the ETDC, the Commission membership committee felt it was important to have a member of the educational sector present at the ETDC meetings whenever possible. Dan Divilio, Public Relations/Communications Specialist, Kent County Public Schools will attend meetings and serve as a liaison between the ETDC and the Public School system. As stated in the 2022 Strategic Plan the superintendent will be invited annually to update the Commission.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Reeder, seconded by Mr. Bowman, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:01 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD  
Director