



Audio recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found on the Recordings Tab.

March 9, 2022

Commission Members Present: Sandy Scott, Aaron Bramble, Dick Story, Suzanne Einstein, Charlie Athey, and Tracey Williams

Commission Members Absent: Rob Thompson

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development; Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Shelley Heller, County Administrator.

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve minutes from the February 9, 2022, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Athey and seconded by Ms. Scott, the February 9, 2022, minutes were unanimously approved.

Rebecca Flora, Upper Shore Community Development Partners (USCDP) provided an overview of a Community Development Corporation. The USCDP is establishing a 501(c)3 in Chestertown to create a united voice for advocacy, grow the pool of resources for residents and businesses, expand community outreach, increase outcomes through partnerships, and share the capacity of qualified individuals across organizations in key areas. Proposed program areas include small business entrepreneurship, homeownership, resource centers, and real estate and economic development.

Mr. Mackey shared there are two zoning text amendments (ZTA) in the process to expand business uses in the Village district. Zeb Blyman of Zeb's Lawn and Land Service submitted a ZTA to add home and business services as a permitted use in the Village district. Kenah One Health Care Services submitted a ZTA to add a hospital, rehab facility, or other similar institution as a special exception in the Village district.

Great Oak Manor is under new ownership, and the new owners will continue to operate the Manor as a country inn. The new owners plan to shift the focus from hosting weddings to a venue where guests can focus on building connections, learning in small groups, and wellness. They plan to use the Manor for both single-day and multiple-day events with a maximum attendance of 40 people. Weddings that were already scheduled will be hosted as planned. A community utility-scale solar project is planned for property located at the southwestern corner of Still Pond Road and Still Pond Neck Road. The proposal is for a five-acre facility to generate 1 MW of electricity. The County Commissioners are reviewing the existing 10% rule and animal-related setbacks in AZD as part of two zoning text amendments. The discussion has focused on the balance of agricultural preservation goals and economic development goals. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 6 p.m. A conceptual application has been received for a private destination/residence club on property located at the southeast corner

of Skinners Neck Road and Kelly's Park Road. This would be a facility with three guest apartments and one unit for an on-site facility manager. The use is intended to provide lodging for boaters at Gray's Inn Creek Marina.

Ms. Williams shared FY2023 budget request mirrors the FY2022 budget except for some funds being reallocated. Additional funding is being requested for the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) Micro Ag Grant program. The Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund is being voted on in the General Assembly. Each regional council in Maryland would receive up to \$10,000,000. Ms. Williams will be meeting with the towns to discuss potential projects and the Department of Commerce is creating a website to push out information about the funding.

Ms. Carter shared marketing strategies are being coordinated with community partners, nonprofits, and business associations. Content is being provided to journalists and has been successful in getting Kent County featured in articles free of charge. The State Office of Tourism is looking to facilitate a tour to get their team to Kent County to market a team-building program. The staff has been reviewing proposals for a new Visitor Guide layout for 2023. Ms. Carter provided examples for the commission members to review. There is a potential to sell ad space in the Visitor Guide through the publisher to offset the cost.

Ms. Wright shared the USRC Micro Ag Grant Review Committee has begun scoring applications. Out of seventeen applications submitted, four were deemed ineligible. The committee is meeting on March 16, 2022, to score the remaining thirteen applications. Over \$118,000 total was requested with \$39,000 available. Staff is working on revising the creative for the Kent County Chamber of Commerce map and formatting the Strategic Plan for the website. A contact us page for the department webpage is being created and will include headshots and a link to staff's LinkedIn profiles.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Athey, seconded by Ms. Tracey Williams, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:14 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, April 13th, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director