



Department of Economic and Tourism Development

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April 13, 2022

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

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; Bob Jacob, County Commissioner; and Dawson Hunter, Housing and Transportation Coordinator, Local Management Board.

At 3:01 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve minutes from the March 9, 2022, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr Thompson, the March 9, 2022, minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Mackey shared the Technical Advisory Committee met and reviewed seven items on its agenda. Most were residential projects; however, there were two commercial projects related to local, small businesses in Kent County. An application was submitted by Russel Vandemark and Sara L. Campbell Vandemark of Vandemark Ventures Metal Fabricators for a special exception for a cottage industry to allow a welding business to operate on Still Pond Road. An application was submitted by Steven Green of Green's Septic & Excavation, LLC for a zoning text amendment to add septic tank maintenance and excavation as a special exception to the Village district. The application will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for public hearing and a recommendation. Then, it will be presented to the County Commissioners for public hearing and consideration for adoption.

The Comprehensive Rezoning Task Force met last month and discussed graphics for each zoning district chapter, selected zoning district consolidations, and a revised, every-other-month meeting schedule. The Task Force will meet again to discuss the last remaining specific text changes requested by members of the public on Wednesday, May 25, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. In response to an inquiry, the Board of Appeals will meet on Monday, April 18, at 5 PM to review the proposed community solar array located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Still Pond Neck Road and Still Pond Road.

Mr. Hunter requested a letter of support for a shuttle service running through Rock Hall, Tolchester and Chestertown in collaboration with Delmarva Craft. The shuttle service would run from May-October and would operate on weekends. Rick Carter, Delmarva Craft, is seeking funding from the County Commissioners which could allow for additional service days. The service will provide data to be used to determine service needs regarding public transit. On motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Athey, the Commission unanimously approved a letter of support for the Rock Hall, Tolchester, Chestertown shuttle.

Nina Fleegle, Executive Director, Main Street Historic Chestertown, shared Main Street is a national organization based out of Chicago. Chestertown became a member in 2008 and fell dormant in 2011. In 2017, the program was resurrected. Main Street funding comes from grants, donations, and the town of Chestertown. The focus of Main Street Chestertown is tourism and marketing, street scape, events, and economic vitality. Main Street also facilitates special projects and acts as the fiduciary agent for Chestertown.

Meg Parry, Manager, Main Street Rock Hall, shared Pirates and Wenches plans are moving along and is planned for the second weekend in August. Main Street Rock Hall is applying for a Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) grant for \$20,000 to promote the Main Street district and events. Main Street Rock Hall meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. at Java Rock. Ms. Parry requested a letter of support for the grant application. On a motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Commission unanimously approved a letter of support for Main Street Rock Hall's application for the DHDC grant.

Ms. Williams shared staff has been working on updating the Visitors Guide for 2022 and looking at a redesign for 2023. The 2022 Visitors Guide goal is to have 15,000 printed before Memorial Day weekend with all work being done in house. A score card has been created to score metrics outlined in the 2022 Strategic Plan for example newsletter progress. Since January 1, 2022, the Tourism Newsletter subscribers has grown 41% and the Economic Development Newsletter subscribers has grown 33%. This growth has exceeded the 30% annual growth goal for both newsletters.

Ms. Carter shared the Maryland Office of Tourism is deciding how to distribute \$2 million in funds from an EDA grant among the 25 DMOs. Writers are being hosted in Kent County through MATPRA the partnership brings journalists to the area to showcase Kent County. Ms. Carter shared a copy of the Washington Post which had an ad and an editorial highlighting Kent County. Photographer Jay Fleming will be in Kent County on April 20, 2022 to take photos to be used for ads for the County.

Ms. Wright shared the selection process has been completed for the Upper Shore Regional Council Micro Ag Grant. Seventeen applications were received and eight applicants were awarded funds with an additional \$13,519 received from the Upper Shore Regional Council. The 2022 Strategic Plan formatting has been finalized and placed on the website.

Ms. Boulden attended the Kent County High School (KCHS) College and Career Fair. The fair was open to all students at KCHS and open to the public. Economic and Tourism Development shared a table with Connie Dean, Career Technology Liaison for Kent and Queen Anne's County. Kent County tote bags and waterproof cell phone holders were used as give aways and information was provided on county job openings as well as information on internships and apprenticeships.

Mr. Athey completed an unexpired term of a previous member. On motion by Mr. Bramble and seconded by Mr. Story, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend Mr. Athey for appointment by the County Commissioners to his first full term.

Ms. Scott completed her first term on the commission. On motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Story, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend Ms. Scott for appointment by the County Commissioners to a second full term.

Ms. Einstein has completed two full terms on the Commission. A list of interested candidates will be reviewed and three will be interviewed by the membership committee to select someone for recommendation for appointment by the County Commission to replace Mrs. Einstein. Ms. Einstein will continue to be a resource for the Economic and Tourism Development staff and commission.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Bramble, seconded by Mr. Thompson, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:32. p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director