

*Economic Development Commission*  
*The County Commissioners of Kent County*  
*400 High Street*  
*Chestertown, MD 21620*

**February 1, 2017**

Board Members Present: Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Jim Luff, Bob Ampula, Dan MacLeod, Bob Jacob, Shreyas Suresh and Mary Ford

Board Members Absent: Aaron Bramble

Also in Attendance: William Short, County Commissioner

At 3:02 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2017 meeting. Mr. Luff shared a needed correction to the draft minutes. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Genter the Commission unanimously approved the minutes as amended from the January 4, 2017 meeting.

Judy Morgan, Director of Sales, ThinkBig, shared an update on the fiber project. Ms. Morgan shared the Chamber award designating ThinkBig as the new business of the year. ThinkBig will be pushing to get other customers signed up for service. Two businesses at Crestview Square are now online as well as the new Verizon Wireless location. They are fully ready for deployment as the equipment known as a Juniper is installed that allows them to operate at the desired speed. Currently there are about five hundred residents signed up to receive services. Ms. Morgan shared that businesses are more difficult to price out and they are working with FTS to get them priced accurately. Mr. Luff asked about the FTS vehicles seen on the Queen Anne's side of Route 213. Ms. Morgan shared that Queen Anne's County has emulated the same request for proposal as Kent County and FTS did respond and has been in discussions with Queen Anne's County. FTS plans to take fiber to Cape Charles/Norfolk area regardless of Queen Anne's County's decision. Queen Anne's County's decision will determine what product FTS puts in the ground.

Ms. Williams shared the progress of the proposed hotDesks location, sharing the lease is being reviewed with the property owners. More information about hotDesks is available at [www.hotdesks.org](http://www.hotdesks.org). Ms. Williams shared that revolution labs is another component of the hotDesks location and focuses on innovation and new product development. More information about Revolution Labs is available at [www.hotdesks.org/revolution-labs](http://www.hotdesks.org/revolution-labs). Another connection is the F3 (Farm-Fish-Food) program being developed by the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurial Center (ESEC) and supported by the county governments. The F3 program focuses on the commercialization of agritech, aquatech, envirotech based businesses. The F3 website is currently being developed and is available at [www.f3tech.org](http://www.f3tech.org). The County is partnering with ESEC. ESEC provides all the internal operations and equipment, and the County is responsible for the lease and utilities. The partnership is truly an Economic Development investment not a

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profit center for either entity. ThinkBig has agreed to provide the broadband service. Mr. Ampula discussed marketing the collaborative workspace and partnering with other entities. Membership is based on usage.

Ms. Williams mentioned that the FY2018 budget process is in process and shared the need for additional personnel to maintain the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, the Economic Development Business Directory, and the Commercial Property database. Mr. Ampula shared he would be in support of additional hours provided specific responsibilities were identified to quantify the number of hours requested.

Ms. Williams shared the two projects on the Planning Commission's agenda that relate to Economic Development. A minor subdivision and final site plan review for the Dollar General in Worton and a minor site plan review for Tolchester Marina. Ms. Genter suggested sending a letter of support for the Tolchester Marina project. The process of garnering a letter of recommendation from the EDC was discussed for projects processed through the Planning Commission. Mr. Ampula recommended that Kay MacIntosh, Economic Development & Marketing Coordinator be the point person for the Town of Chestertown and the other towns' point person would be the town managers. Mr. Luff requested he visit with Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, to determine what is required at the time a project is submitted. On motion by Mr. Jacob and seconded by Mr. Ampula the Commission unanimously approved providing a letter of support for the Tolchester Marina site plan.

Ms. Williams shared Commerce Zone Tax Credit legislation is progressing and is currently in Senator Hershey and Delegate Jacobs' offices and amendments are being made. Ms. Williams requested letters of support from the EDC. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Genter the Commission unanimously approved submitting letters of support for the Commerce Zone Tax Credit bills.

There will be a public hearing about Kent County Public Schools' (KCPS) consolidation recommendation at Kent County High School on February 27, 2017. Mr. Luff requested a position from the EDC on the school consolidation. On motion by Mr. Jacobs and seconded by Mr. Ampula the Commission unanimously approved supporting the recommendation of school consolidation by Dr. Karen Couch, Superintendent, KCPS.

Cindy Genter, Real Estate Broker, Rock Hall Properties, provided statistics for homes sales in 2016 in Kent County. Galena had the largest increase in 2015 and Rock Hall had the largest increase in 2016. The current inventory reduced from 12 months in 2015 to 9 months in 2016. A normal market is 6 months of inventory. Foreclosures are decreasing, while dollar volume, average sold price and median sold price have increased. Mr. Ampula asked about the Langford Creek proposed development. Mr. Short and Mr. Luff shared that the project is stalled. Ms. Genter shared that Waterman's Estates is 80% built out, Crosby Road has no homes and Robin's Way is 60% built out. There have been discussions of a model home to be built.

The EDC is meeting on February 2, 2017, to discuss the Economic Development Plan update at the Kent County Community Center in Worton at 1:00 p.m.

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Mr. Luff asked about the status of the innovation internships. Ms. Williams shared that the current count for the Sprint 2017 is three and will follow up with Andrea Lange, Washington College, and share the information.

Ms. Gray shared that NRL in Queen Anne's County has started a Maryland Manufacturing organization, [mdmfg.org](http://mdmfg.org). This organization has found a legal way to provide health insurance for employees through collaboration. The owners are Rich Coursey and Jim Smith.

Ms. Williams shared that the Comprehensive Plan work session is scheduled for tonight at 6:30 p.m. and the two topics of interest to the Commission are the Economy section and the community survey results.

Ms. Genther shared that Rock Hall has created a Working Waterfront Committee and provided some background on the process. Ms. Genther provided copies of the Draft Executive Summary of the Rock Hall Waterfront Plan, dated January 30, 2017.

Scott Burleson, Executive Director, Shore Medical Center at Chestertown shared the four major goals at Chestertown are: (1) recruitment of practitioners; (2) patient satisfaction; (3) efficiency; and (4) communication. The efforts made to meet these particular goals were shared with the Commission. Mr. Burleson shared that primary care physician attraction is very important in Chestertown. The basis of any health system is the primary care physicians. Mr. Burleson discussed the methods being used to recruit physicians. The Rural Health Care Commission includes four work groups. Mr. Burleson expressed concern about the infrequency of the meeting of the work groups.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Mr. Jacob, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams  
Coordinator