

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

March 7, 2018

Commission Members Present: Rob Thompson, Kate Gray, Jim Luff, Trae Hoffner, Aaron Bramble, Cindy Genther, and Bob Jacob

Commission Members Absent: Shreyas Suresh and Tracey Williams

Also in Attendance: Debbie Bowden, Senior Business Development Representative, Maryland Department of Commerce; and Commissioner William Short

Ms. Williams introduced Natalie Theriault and Noah Gonzalez, Washington College, Innovation Interns, and shared the current projects they have been working on for 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 February 7, 2018, meeting. On motion by Mr. Bramble and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the February 7, 2018, meeting.

Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the final report of the Economic Impact Study of Resource Based Industries in Maryland has been completed and is available online at <https://www.kentcounty.com/business/resources/demographics>. The Maryland Department of Commerce publishes the Brief Economic Facts for each county, the narrative is provided by the county. Kent County's narrative was updated to accentuate the business environment. Ms. Williams requested the Commission members review it and share recommendations for future updates.

Ms. Williams informed the Commission of logistical changes to the April 7th meeting which will be held at the hotDesks, Chestertown location. The meeting will also include a farm tour of Fairhill Farm, focusing on innovation in agriculture. Ms. Williams advised the Commission members to dress accordingly.

Ms. Williams and Mr. Luff visited Queen Anne's County to discuss the Economic Impact Study being performed on the 301 Corridor. Queen Anne's has already put the bid out, it was too late for Kent County to be included. Ms. Williams has been in contact with the Upper Shore Regional Council to discuss the possibility of funding a study on the Kent and Cecil County portions of the 301 Corridor study. Mr. Short recommended Ms. Williams attend a Commissioners' meeting to inform them of efforts to gain funding. Mr. Luff asked what the Commission wants to do regarding the Strategic Plan, recommending the Commission pinpoint a goal within the plan to work on accomplishing, starting with identifying the issues and opportunities along the Kent County portion of the 301 corridor.

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Ms. Genther asked if there was a completion date for the Queen Anne's study of the 301 Corridor. Ms. Bowden served on the proposal review committee and it is expected to be completed in June or July, the budget for the study is \$30,000. The proposal was refined, and no traffic studies are included. Ms. Bowden stated that the study is only addressing the opportunities and impact of expanded attention given to economic development in the northern towns in Queen Anne's County. Discussions surrounding the study focused on housing and the supporting services (i.e. gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants). The Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission has recommended the study be awarded to Sage Policy Group.

Ms. Gray asked if the Queen Anne's study would give Kent County any answers that a potential Kent County 301 Corridor study would. Ms. Bowden suggested the study will likely find that Millington, Sudlersville, and Church Hill have public sewer and water access, whereas Barclay does not. Ms. Bowden stated the study will not address the benefits of additional public sewer and water capacity. Ms. Gray suggested the Economic Development Commission remain in contact with Queen Anne's County regarding the study. Ms. Bowden believes the Queen Anne's report may be sufficient for Kent County's needs. Ms. Genther recommended inviting Galena to a future meeting to discuss development from their perspective on the 301 corridor.

Mr. Luff met with Amber Smucker, Owner, Mother Smucker Salsa. Ms. Smucker is operating out of her home in Rock Hall and is ready to take the next step towards growing her business by relocating to a bigger facility. The property and building currently owned by the Smucker's will require a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) and special exception to operate the business. The Commissioners and Planning, Housing, and Zoning have been assisting the Smuckers' through the process. Mr. Luff recommended the Commission write a letter of support for the ZTA public hearing. On motion by Mr. Jacob and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved a letter of support for the ZTA. Ms. Genther recused herself from the vote.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Ms. Genther and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 3:55 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at 3:00 p.m. at 903 Washington Avenue, Unit #4, Chestertown.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator