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April 7, 2021

Commission Members Present: Aaron Bramble, Tracey Williams, Dick Story, Jim Luff, Rob Thompson, Cindy Genther, and Kate Gray

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager and Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Economic & Tourism Development

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2021 meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Luff, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the March 3, 2021 meeting.

Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning provided an update of the department and projects. The Comprehensive Rezoning Update (CRU) Task Force held its first hybrid, in-person meeting that included in-person attendees from both the Task Force and members of the public on March 31, 2021. The Task Force commented positively on the graphics and formatting proposed with a few tweaks requested; content was deferred for later. The Task Force opted for increasing the number of meetings and setting a permanent schedule. The Task Force will now meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 6 p.m. On March 29, 2021, the Board of Appeals voted to approve the special exception for expansion of an existing sand and gravel pit located on Bradford Johnson Road on March 29, 2021.

Carla Gerber, GIS Specialist has been promoted to Deputy Director under the recent planning department restructuring. Carla has an exceptional level of expertise and experience based on her service to Kent County. Carla is a nationally certified professional planner.

Bryan Matthews, President, Kent County Chamber of Commerce, gave an update on the Chamber's recent activities. Sam Shoge was hired as the Executive Director about a year ago and recently Jen Rickart was hired as an Administrative Assistant. Sam focused on branding and updated the new look for the member directory that was recently published. In coordination with the Economic Development Department Private sector conference calls were held to communicate with the business community. Sam has hosted several Chamber Chats for members, which have been well attended and very informative. In coordination with the Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce the pre-legislative meeting was held virtually, and the post-legislative meeting is being scheduled. The Chamber board has five new board members, and they are evaluating the mission and vision of the Chamber. The Chamber is excited about the new Board composition, new leadership, and the future direction of the Kent County Chamber of Commerce.

Jamie Williams shared that she is working with the towns to schedule meetings to share work related to Economic Development. Nancy LaJoice, Commerce will share State incentives and Mr. Mackey will give a brief overview of the CRU process. Code Home Rule 4-2021 Economic & Tourism Development was approved at the Commissioners' meeting on April 6,

2020, effective in 45 days. The newly formed Economic & Tourism Development Commission will begin meeting in June 2021.

Ms. Wright shared that the team is in the process of creating a more streamlined application process for all grants moving forward. This will include an online application that will allow applicants to upload all necessary attachments directly to their online application. The grants will be open late April beginning with the Restaurant Relief grant. Submissions continue to come in for the Kent County Photo Contest. Economic & Tourism Development will be accepting entries through June 30, 2021. Job postings on social media continue to show great engagement and more businesses/employers reaching out directly to have their positions promoted on our social media pages.

Ms. Carter reported that the Visitors Guide is in the final stages of edits, will be forwarded for printing, and we are anticipating distribution by mid-May. Ms. Carter stated that Kent County will be featured during Maryland Public Television's Chesapeake Bay week. A 15-second video was compiled showcasing towns and will be featured until the end of June 2021. Ms. Carter reported on a new marketing campaign using truck advertising. A 26' box truck will be wrapped with an ad promoting visitation to Kent County. The truck will circulate in the Philadelphia and Wilmington, DE region.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Luff seconded by Ms. Gray and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director
Department of Economic & Tourism Development