



Recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found on the Meeting Archive Tab.

May 10, 2023

Commission Members Present: Tracey Williams, Aaron Bramble, Rob Thompson, Richard Story, Sandy Scott, Paula Reeder, and Charlie Athey

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager, Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development; Shelley Heller, County Administrator

At 3:01 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order.

At 3:03 p.m., at the request of Mr. Bramble, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Tracey Williams, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2023, meeting.

Jamie Williams advised that Planning, Housing, and Zoning, will not be attending the EDTC every month due to the department's focus on updating the Land Use Ordinance, quarterly updates will be provided during this time. The Planning Commission and Technical Advisory Committee meetings can be followed on the County's website, which provides agendas, minutes and documentation for projects.

Kim Montooth, Assistant Vice President, and Tara Blaine, Associate Relationship Manager, M&T Bank shared their desire to expand M&T's footprint and become more involved in the communities in Kent County. Mrs. Montooth provided three handouts explaining what M&T Bank is about. M&T offers a grant program for small non-profits.

Ms. Blaine provided a brief synopsis of their SBA lending program. M &T is recognized as a top ten lender nationwide. In the local Baltimore, Delaware, and Washington DC market, they are the number one SBA lender. M&T does not need to go to the SBA for approval of certain applications. They offer a variety of programs, including 7A and 504. Ms. Blaine advised that they are seeing great success through the SBA program for businesses start-ups or high-risk industries. She advised that they offer two variable rate options.

M&T is looking to assist businesses that may not be able to be helped at other institutions. M&T offers an express program whereby the candidate's application is reviewed and given approval within two days of submission and within another two business days, their loan is booked, and they have access to the funds. The express program is for requests of \$100K or less and is score driven and risk based. Ms. Montooth advised that M&T working to be extremely competitive in a rising rate environment. They have a few target industries that they are more interested in and are not interested in lending for real estate investment. The application process requires a minimum credit score of 675 and completion of an application.

Ms. Montooth advised that M&T hopes to expand their presence in Kent County, both physically and through client expansion. M&T is among the top 15 in the country with a strong deposit base. They do not invest in cryptocurrency and are more traditional and conservative. M&T recently gave a Financial Literacy class at the Chestertown Christian Academy and are happy to get involved in any way.

Ms. Boulden and Jamie Williams attended the monthly Maryland Destination Marketing Organization (MDMO) meeting, hosted by Queen Anne's County. Kent County will host the June meeting from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Maryland Office of Tourism contacted Kent County to host a group of prominent Canadian writers for an afternoon and overnight. Several Kent County businesses participated through donations and discounted services. Ms. Boulden advised that Visitor Guides have been delivered to the marinas and other businesses gearing up for summer.

Jamie Williams advised that Ms. Wright has completed notification to the Upper Shore Ag Grant applicants. Grantees are in the process of completing their grant agreements. These grants are reimbursable grants and awardees will need to submit receipts to be reimbursed. Ms. Wright is also working on the Upper Shore Regional Council Business Mentor Program, a page on the County's website has been added. Zane Carter and Anne Forrest have been instrumental in assisting with the webpage to include the online request for assistance from entrepreneurs and new business start-ups.

Jamie Williams advised that Mr. Hunter mentioned that as members of the ETDC and ambassadors for Economic and Tourism Development it would be helpful to promote and share social media posts to get the message out. The office is looking to provide more information, especially on affordable housing and transportation services. Mr. Hunter continues to work with Delmarva Community Transit (DCT), meeting with them monthly and is focused on the seasonal shuttle, getting it up and running for the launch date of May 26, 2023.

Mr. Bramble advised that the membership committee interviewed three candidates to fill the position of Rob Thompson which expired on March 31, 2023, and provided the ETDC with their recommendation for replacement. A motion was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Reeder to approve the recommendation for Mr. Thompson's replacement, the motion carried unanimously. This recommendation will be forwarded to the County Commissioners for approval.

Mr. Bramble advised that Tracey Williams will be retiring at the end of June and that the nominating committee has made a recommendation for a replacement to fulfill her current term. Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Athey, and passed unanimously to approve the recommendation of the nominating committee. This recommendation will be forwarded to the County Commissioners for approval.

Jamie Williams advised that Washington College is facilitating a group that has been meeting to discuss providing a makerspace business incubator at 800 High Street. A grant application with TEDCO (Maryland Technology Development Corporation) to complete a feasibility study is the next step. The study will review the proposed space at 800 High Street, as well as what is currently being offered through Chestertown hotDesks to determine how to integrate these programs in the best interest of the community. The goal is for students, businesses, and the community to collaborate. A draft letter supporting Washington College's application was provided for the ETDC's review. Open Works, a successful makerspace in Baltimore, is partnering with TEDCO to offer technical support for the study as well as

implementation. A motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Ms. Reeder, and passed unanimously to provide the letter of support.

A draft letter of support for Rock Hall's changes to the marine zoning districts was provided for review. Rock Hall currently has three marine districts: Marine Recreation, Marine Commercial, and Maritime Water Dependent. The proposed changes would combine the three current districts into two districts. The new zoning districts would allow for marinas in the area to expand in the future. Mr. Bramble advised that it is very similar to what he has discussed with Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, about the County's definition to include ancillary items such as lodging, food and beverage, which are not traditionally permitted uses within the marine zone. This zoning definition change would bring the Town's ordinance more in line with the County's ordinance, which currently has one marine district. A motion was made by Mr. Athey, seconded by Ms. Scott, and passed unanimously to provide a letter of support.

In public comments, Mayor Foster thanked the ETDC for their support of Washington College's makerspace application and advised that the Chestertown Town Council also sent a letter of support. He further spoke of the Town of Chestertown's proposal for a tax differential study. The Town voted to support the study and the study will move forward this coming fall with an anticipated completion date of February 2024.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Ms. Reeder, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 3:55 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD
Director