

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

June 1, 2016

Board Members Present: Bob Jacob, Cindy Genter, Bob Ampula, Kate Gray, Aaron Bramble and Jim Luff

Board Members Absent: Dan MacLeod and Shreyas Suresh

Also in Attendance: Doris Mason, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council; Lois Haggerty, RBI Mentor, Maryland Technology Development Corporation; Nina Fleegle, Chair, Young Professionals of Kent County; and Paula Reeder, Real Estate Agent

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2016 meeting. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Genter, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the May 4, 2016 meeting.

Ms. Williams shared that the Enterprise Zone application was submitted on April 15, 2016. Commerce requested additional information that was submitted as an addendum to the original application. There were a few questions on the mapping that we were able to resolve quickly working with Carla Gerber, GIS Specialist, Planning, Housing, and Zoning. Emiko Kawagoshi, Tax Specialist, Tax Incentives, Maryland Department of Commerce, toured the town with Kay MacIntosh, Economic Development & Marketing Coordinator, Chestertown Arts and Entertainment District / Chestertown Main Street, and Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams and Ms. MacIntosh pointed out the properties that have proposed projects in the pipeline and other sites that have received recent inquiries. Ms. Genter asked about preparing a press release for the Enterprise Zone designation. Ms. Williams shared that Commerce would be issuing a press release at the time of approval.

Ms. Williams shared an update on the FY2017 budget process. The Massey to Chestertown Railroad Rehabilitation project, TIGER grant application being submitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation has been delayed due to engineering challenges. The \$100,000 commitment by the Commissioners', to the project, has been removed from the County's FY2017 budget and will be requested in the County's FY2018 budget. There is also a commitment of \$500,000 from the Maryland Department of Commerce and they have moved the funding to FY2018. The \$10,000 for the update to the Economic Development plan was removed from the budget. The funding for the fall Innovation Internship for Economic Development has been taken out of the budget. Mr. Ampula asked if the Commission could be of assistance in getting the internship reinstated in the Economic Development budget. After a brief discussion the Commission agreed to send a request to the Commissioners to reinstate the internship and add the spring and summer semesters. Mr. Luff will draft a letter after some additional information is provided by Ms. Williams and Ms. Fleegle.

The Rural Maryland Council grant information for the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) was shared. Ms. Williams shared that she would like to submit a grant application with Queen Anne's County for small marketing grants in the amount of \$30,000; each County would receive \$15,000 to promote local businesses. Ms. Williams negotiated packages with WCTR and the Tidewater Trader to have the most impact for businesses. Jean Fabi, Business and Economic Development Liaison, Queen Anne's County shared she would like to submit a grant application with Kent County to do an agricultural niche symposium. QuickBooks sessions were discussed as beneficial components for the symposium. Mr. Ampula shared that the SCORE QuickBooks training sessions were well attended and there was some discussion among the SCORE mentors to stratify the training to entry level, advanced, and reports available through QuickBooks. The grants are required to be regional in scope.

Ms. Williams shared that an email was sent out to the non-profits in our business directory for the MAERDAF and RMPIF grants. In the non-profit category we received ten notifications of bad email addresses. The need for an intern to update and maintain these records is imperative to getting information out to businesses and organizations to increase economic activity in our community.

Ms. Williams shared that the Customer Relationship Management software, ZOHO, is working out well and that she will do a short presentation for the Commission members at the August meeting. The software will allow us to track activities and share information about businesses and organizations. The software is currently being shared with Bernadette Bowman, Director, Tourism Development, Ms. MacIntosh, Ms. Mason, and Tammy Edwards, Sr. Business Development Representative, Office of Business Development, Maryland Department of Commerce.

Ms. Williams shared additional advertising in the Tidewater Trader to promote the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Mr. Ampula shared that the size of the ad and the placement was optimal. Rack cards were developed and are now available to promote the Kent County, RLF. An ad was purchased on placemats used by Pizza Hut, Chestertown, a year's supply, the ad was modified to target people and encourage residency in Kent County.

Mr. Luff asked Ms. Gray about the annexation process. Mr. Gray shared that the "Town has to say we accept you and the County has to say we let you go." The Planning Commission will need to make a recommendation to the Commissioners. The Town of Chestertown has a public hearing scheduled for July 5, 2016, at 7 p.m. Mr. Luff asked the Commission to make note of the date and requested representation from the Commission be present at the public hearing. Ms. Williams shared she will attend and offered to convey any comments from those who are unavailable.

Ms. Gray shared an update on the Dixon expansion and the proposed Chestertown Business Campus. DVCC is the parent company of Dixon Valve and KRM Development. Dixon is headquartered in Chestertown and moved here from Philadelphia in 1976. Dixon employs 364 people in Chestertown and about 1,600 people globally. Dixon needs to expand.

The first and foremost need, is a larger warehouse/distribution facility than what currently exists. A business campus is also attractive to KRM. The concept plan includes 120-160 unit market rate apartments. Dixon is exploring an investment of \$20 million in the next two years and \$60 million in the next four years in the proposed development. KRM would ideally like to break ground on the warehouse/distribution facility by the end of 2016. Ms. Gray acknowledged that the timeline is aggressive and dependent on many factors. KRM is currently exploring the possibility of State funding for the infrastructure of roads that would eventually become town roads.

Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, joined the meeting and gave the Commission members an overview of the 301 corridor. Ms. Moredock shared that Planning and Zoning studied the area at the request of the Commissioners in 2012. It has been difficult to attract businesses to that area due to numerous reasons. The area identified is approximately nine miles in length and two miles wide. Approximately 68% of the area is prime agricultural land with some non-tidal wetland pockets. A groundwater study was completed in 2008. There are some groundwater recharge areas and some endangered species in the area. Ms. Moredock shared examples of proposed and/or approved plans for some properties located in the area. The area was intentionally zoned for intense uses. Ms. Moredock also will provide Commission members with the five page memorandum dated June 1, 2016, detailing the information detailing the zoning, natural features, and infrastructure of the 301 corridor.

Mr. Luff addressed the need to update the 2013 Economic Development Plan and requested the Commission members review the plan. Mr. Luff would like the next two meetings to be used as work group sessions to review the plan and make appropriate updates. Mr. Ampula shared that the numbers were based on the 2010 census and projections are now available through 2020.

A motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Mr. Bramble, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, July 6, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator