

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

June 7, 2017

Commission Members Present: Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Jim Luff, Dan MacLeod, Rob Thompson, Jason Depp, and Mary Ford

Commission Members Absent: Aaron Bramble and Shreyas Suresh

Also in Attendance: Shelley Heller, County Administrator; and Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning

At 3:00 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the May 3, 2017, meeting. On motion by Ms. Genter and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the May 3, 2017, meeting.

Mr. Luff shared that the Economic Development Commission submitted three letters of support for grant applications. Two for the Town of Rock Hall, the Hairnet and a hotel on Main Street, and one for the Town of Chestertown, Chestertown Business Campus. Ms. Gray abstained from voting on all three letters of support.

Mr. Luff welcomed Rob Thompson a newly appointed Economic Development Commission member.

Russ Richardson, Richardson Properties, shared some initial ideas for property purchased outside the Town of Millington. The property was acquired by Richardson Properties in January 2017. Richardson Properties is analyzing the characteristics of the property at this stage of development. This stage is also referred to as the opportunities and constraints of an acquisition. Mr. Richardson shared his experience with interchange developments, developing approximately 3,500 acres. Mr. Richardson stated that place making was about people and not just development. Mr. Richardson stated that there are two parcels of approximately 280 acres. The first step in development is talking to neighboring property owners. Mr. Richardson shared his opinion on restrictive zoning and proposed rezoning the 301 Corridor. Mr. Richardson stated improvements are needed in the Town of Millington, i.e. streets and sidewalks. There are approximately 300 acres between the Richardson property and the Town of Millington. There is also a 65 acre parcel owned by a local developer, looking to develop as residential. Mr. Richardson proposed the idea of a hotel, restaurant, gas station, shopping center, light industrial, manufacturing, warehouse/distribution, etc., as possibilities on the site. There are factors to move projects forward; flexible zoning, the approval process, available utilities at affordable cost, and incentives. Mr. Richardson briefly discussed the water and sewer issue at the site.

Ms. Genter asked to revisit Priority Infill Redevelopment District, PIRD. This allows property owners to develop their properties in a particular way. Ms. Genter mentioned overlay zoning in accordance with gateway zoning, which Mr. Richardson had previously mentioned. Ms. Moredock had not reviewed floating zones in this context, which are reviews on individual proposals. Ms. Moredock requested additional time to review and come back and present the options to the Commission. The proposed use on the land presented is desirable to the developer, similar to a special exception. The uses are unidentified and industry driven. There are many variations on how floating zones are adopted. Elected officials make the final decision on projects in floating zones. Ms. Genter identified the two areas of growth within the County's jurisdiction, the 301 Corridor and the Worton Industrial Area. Ms. Williams shared the perception that the 301 Corridor and the Worton Industrial Area may be good areas for this type of zoning. Ms. Williams shared the different districts on the 301 Corridor may be confusing to potential developers. Ms. Moredock shared that more of the same within that area would also be beneficial; zoning districts are not contiguous on the 301 corridor. Ms. Moredock shared that the reality is the County is not a difficult place to develop. The Planning Commission has never denied an economic development project; it is the neighbors and special interest groups that create an atmosphere of contention. There are general standards and people do not like to meet them, which creates a lot of the tension during the development process.

Ms. Williams reported that a letter of intent was submitted to the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) for a Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) grant in the amount of \$70,000.00 for promotion of entrepreneurship in Kent County.

Mr. Luff asked Ms. Heller if there was any idea on the time frame on the two school buildings being vacated. Ms. Heller shared the buildings should be available within a year or less. Ms. Heller also indicated there will most likely be a County use for at least one of the buildings. It is ultimately the County Commissioners' decision. They could choose to maintain ownership and lease out the buildings. Ms. Williams shared that there has been at least one person offer an idea of a future use for the Millington Elementary School.

After a brief discussion about the Economic Development Plan it was determined that the members would review the plan and submit comments to Mr. Luff and the plan would be revisited at the July meeting. Mr. MacLeod asked if the Millington water and sewer should be moved up into years 1 through 3 to at least begin the conversations of options. Ms. Gray and Ms. Genter were in agreement that some action should take place in years 1 through 3.

An extensive discussion took place about meeting times and alternating times to encourage more participation. It was agreed that an email vote would take place for the Commission members to determine if times could be alternated, polling specified times at 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Gray announced that KRM Development will host a groundbreaking next week for the Dixon Warehouse/Distribution Center. Apartments will follow and the same contractor is being used. Construction will begin in July.

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There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Ms. Genter, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, July 5, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator