

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

July 6, 2016

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

Board Members Absent: Dan MacLeod, Cindy Genther, and Shreyas Suresh

Also in Attendance: Lois Haggerty, RBI Mentor, Maryland Technology Development Corporation; Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing and Zoning, and others.

At 3:05 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2016 meeting. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Mr. Bramble, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the June 1, 2016 meeting.

Ms. Moredock shared the Planning Commission activities for the months of June and July. Gravel permit approvals continue to be reviewed. The Planning Commission reviewed the annexation request from the Town of Chestertown and submitted a favorable recommendation to the Commissioners. A zoning text amendment was presented by Bay Shore Campgrounds to add campgrounds to the list of permitted uses in existence as of 1989 which may be eligible for expansion in the Resource Conservation Zoning District. Mr. Jacob shared the benefits of this expansion to the Town of Rock Hall as well as the County. Creafill Fibers is seeking Planning Commission approval for a large sign, under the bonus sign criteria. The Renewable Energy Task Force has completed its review of renewable energy provisions, as requested by the Commissioners. The County and Keep Kent Scenic have intervened in the Mills Branch Solar proposal, citing that it is not consistent with the County Land Use Ordinance. All closing arguments resulting from the evidentiary hearings held in June are due by August 15, 2016. Ms. Moredock also reviewed upcoming projects.

Mr. Luff introduced Benjamin Wu, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce, by reading a brief biography and welcomed Mr. Wu to Chestertown and Kent County. Mr. Wu congratulated Chestertown and Kent County on the recent Enterprise Zone designation, sharing this is the first time Kent County has applied. The program was established in 1982 and provides real property and state income tax credits to businesses that create jobs and make capital investments. Mr. Wu shared that some of the best assets in Chestertown are Washington College students. The students support the school and we want them to remain here and nurture their roots in Kent County and Maryland. This is a terrific opportunity to capitalize on the gigabit that will be available in Kent County due to the fiber project buildout. Emiko Kawagoshi, Tax Specialist, Finance Programs, Maryland Department of Commerce, introduced herself as she is on the front line of assisting the County, Town, and businesses with the execution of the Enterprise Zone program and other State programs. There are 29 Enterprise Zone designations throughout the State and they are expected to receive \$32 million in property

tax credits in the past fiscal year. It is an important and valuable tool. Mr. Wu shared the Governor's focus on Economic Development and his focus on Customer Service. The State of Maryland was number one in job growth in March 2016. A balanced budget was passed for the second year without any tax increases. The Department of Commerce did not just experience a name change; they now have more employees in the field to assist with economic growth. The Governor's mantra that "Maryland is Open for Business" has been put of steroids, making customer service a top priority, throughout State agencies. A Commerce Cabinet was created as an interagency collaboration to break down the silos and be as effective as possible. Mr. Wu presented a citation from Secretary Michael Gill to Mr. Luff on the designation of the Chestertown Kent County Enterprise Zone. Ms. Williams thanked Deputy Secretary Wu for attending and Ms. Kawagoshi for the assistance she provided with the application process.

Mayor Cerino shared that incentives are what encourages expansion and attraction for the Town and the County. The collaboration between Ms. MacIntosh and Ms. Williams was great to witness and exactly what the Town and the County anticipated. Mr. Shoge asked how the Enterprise Zone and Arts & Entertainment incentives would coordinate. Ms. Kawagoshi said the incentives are stackable with some restrictions. Ms. Williams shared that the Information Technology (IT) department is working on a specific page for the Enterprise Zone. Businesses will have a central location that contains all the information needed.

Ms. Williams shared that the summer high school intern has been updating the Customer Relationship Management Software and will give the Commission a demonstration of the software at the August meeting.

Ms. Williams also shared the Kent County Fiber website and that IT is working on another component of the website to include information about the economic impact of the gigabit availability in Kent County.

There was a brief discussion on tax incentives and the authority of the County to offer tax abatements to businesses. There was a brief discussion on funding available to businesses. Ms. Gray thanked the Commission for their support of the annexation. The Town approved the annexation at their meeting Tuesday evening. Mr. Luff deferred reviewing the 2013 Economic Development Plan discussion until the August meeting.

Ms. Williams provided copies of the Local Code of Kent County, Chapter 29: Ethics, sharing that the provisions of the chapter apply to appointees to the boards by the Commissioners. Even though the Economic Development Commission members are not required to file gift disclosure forms they are required to adhere to the Code.

A motion was made by Mr. Ampula, seconded by Mr. Bramble, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:05 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, August 3, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator