

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street

Chestertown, MD 21620

August 2, 2017

Commission Members Present: Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Jim Luff, Rob Thompson, Mary Ford, Aaron Bramble, and Bob Jacob

Commission Members Absent: Shreyas Suresh and Tracey Williams

Also in Attendance: Shelley Heller, County Administrator

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 July 5, 2017, meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Bramble, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the July 5, 2017, meeting.

Mr. Luff shared that two letters of support were submitted for the Rural Maryland Council's Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund grant applications for the Kent Center and Betterton Economic Development from the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Luff shared that the Commissioners approved the appointment of Tracey Williams to fill the unexpired term of Dan MacLeod. Ms. Williams will join us at the September meeting.

Ms. Williams shared ThinkBig's report about 100 subscribers currently online. This number includes more than a dozen businesses, large and small. ThinkBig is continuing to make progress with the infrastructure and has over 600 county residences waiting to be served. Mr. Boone shared 110 miles was originally planned to be built, 122 miles are now being built. The network is 70% lit with another 9.1% construction complete. The fiber project is on track to be completed in early October.

Ms. Williams shared that the Commerce Zone Tax Credit took effect on July 20, 2017. An application has been received and is in process. The Enterprise Zone Tax Credit application has been received from KRM/Dixon Valve for the warehouse/distribution center located at the Chestertown Business Campus project site.

The Marketing Plan for Economic Development is being developed. Sandy Sponaule, Platinum PR visited on July 19, 2017, and reviewed the efforts to date. Ms. Sponaule toured Chestertown and Rock Hall. A future visit will include a visit to Betterton, Galena, and Millington.

The Commission reviewed the Economic Development plan and comments to the plan were discussed. Edits will be made according to the conversations and consensus. Public transportation was discussed at length, in respect to education, workforce, healthcare, etc. Ms. Heller suggested inviting Delmarva Community Transit to an Economic Development Commission meeting in the future to discuss the need. The Commission discussed pulling out the overarching goals of economic development in which the objectives and strategies would fall

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within. Ms. Ford shared that having the goals listed first added to the readability of the document. The goals identified were: focus on business retention, expansion and attraction; promote workforce development and education; and enhance infrastructure. Mr. Thompson shared the need of the school system to educate the students on the opportunities here in the community. There are many opportunities within our county for students after high school or college. Ms. Williams shared the challenges identified in getting high school students to visit businesses included funding for transportation and time within the current curriculum. The Commission agreed to revise the plan to a five-year plan.

Ms. Williams suggested that the Economic Development Commission consider reviewing liquor laws and the process, in an effort to make it easier for businesses to operate. Mr. Bramble shared concerns with the restaurant license requirement of at least 60% food sales and a bar does not allow anyone under 21 in the establishment. Mr. Jacob shared a concern that business owners cannot be on more than one license.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Bramble, seconded by Mr. Jacob, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, September 6, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator