

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street, 3rd Floor

Chestertown, MD 21620

October 3, 2018

Commission Members Present: Cindy Genther, Jim Luff, Kate Gray, Aaron Bramble, Tracey Williams, and Trae Hoffner

Commission Members Absent: Bob Jacob and Rob Thompson

Also in Attendance: William Short, Commissioner; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Jamie Williams, Director, Economic Development; Emily McCoy, Assistant, Economic Development

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 5, 2018, meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the September 5, 2018 meeting.

Kate Gray gave an update on the Chestertown Business Campus and future phases. The presentation included aerial photographs of the new Dixon Valve distribution center that is expected to be completed in the next few months. The installation of the distribution equipment in the building will take about eight months to complete. KRM Development expects to break ground on the 60,000 sq. ft. headquarter office building the end of 2018 or early 2019. The second floor of the distribution center includes a 20,000 sq. ft. space designated to potentially host a regional education/workforce development center. The construction of a new Kent Athletic and Wellness Center will follow the office headquarters sometime in 2019. The decision was recently made to construct a manufacturing facility on the site for Dixon Valve. Ms. Gray discussed the plans for speculative space for other businesses and apartments to be constructed at future dates to be determined. The new business campus is expected to bring up to 400 new jobs, increase production efficiency to 96%, and enable fulfillment of 24,000 part numbers.

Tracey Williams presented a new apprenticeship program being proposed at Kent County High School. The proposed Apprenticeship Maryland program will have four courses, the first course will consist of educational instruction in the classroom and the remaining three courses will offer onsite work experience. Partnerships are being created with local businesses, the first being Dixon Valve for manufacturing. All businesses would be vetted through the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulations. Jamie Williams asked how the new program varied from current work study programs at Kent and Queen Anne's County High Schools. The proposed program would be more structured and become a new Career Technology Education (CTE) pathway. Aaron Bramble asked if summer hours could be used. Ms. Williams answered that the program will be administered during the school year. The employer may wish to continue training in the summer as either a paid or unpaid internship position. Ms. Genther asked how we educate the students about new programs. It is still in the early stages of conception, the implementation of all CTE pathways include individual meetings with the students at the

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beginning of every school year. The program would be made available on the scheduling sheet and parent teacher conferences will likely be necessary to communicate the availability of the program.

Jamie Williams shared the eastern shore delegation tour of Kent County that took place on October 2nd. Senator Steve Hershey; Delegates Jay Jacobs, Jeff Ghrist, and Steve Arentz; representation from Governor Hogan, Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen, and Congressman Harris' offices and Erika Howard, Senator Hershey's Office were in attendance. Commissioner Fithian, Commissioner Short, Mayor Cerino, Mayor Jones, Mayor Morales, Shelley Heller, Councilman Marcy, Councilwoman Kuechler and Meg Parry all joined for portions of the day. Highlights of the tour included an update on the fiber project, tours of the Chestertown Marina and the Dixon Distribution Center, a road tour on the 301 corridor, a visit to the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge, and lunch at the newly opened Wheelhouse Restaurant in Rock Hall. Ms. Williams shared The MACo Staff Retreat is scheduled for October 9th and includes a tour of Kent County, focused on Tourism in the morning and Economic Development in the afternoon. Commission President William Pickrum will be named President of MACo if he is re-elected. Ms. Heller shared the exceptional opportunity to showcase the County and Commissioner Pickrum would be the very first MACo President from Kent County.

The next project is the Realtors Meeting, scheduled for November 8th, 2018, to assist in selling Kent County to future businesses and residents. Ms. Williams and Ms. McCoy attended the SCORE meeting and briefed the Commission on the services that SCORE provides. Jim Luff asked if the issue of internet speed at the hotDesks had been resolved. Economic development and information technology staff are actively working to resolve the issues. Ms. Gray asked about the success of the hotDesks. Ms. Williams answered that all the offices are occupied and there are approximately 15 additional members actively using the Chestertown location. It was noted that after the 3-year lease, expansion may be needed due to the success. The Villages of Rock Hall were shared as a retail business incubator that should be marketed in the County.

Ms. Moredock shared that, having held the public hearing regarding the Cliff Road Properties, LLC – Zoning Text Amendment regarding County Inn standards at its 2 August meeting, the Planning Commission considered the application and will send an unfavorable recommendation to the County Commissioners. The members concurred that the applicant failed to document and substantiate a public need for the amendment, citing that the applicant did not document adequate public need, and there was no support from similar lodging businesses for the amendment. In addition, the Critical Area Commission had concerns about intensification in the Critical Area, namely in the Resource Conservation Area. Ms. Moredock shared that Brickyard Land Holding, LLC (Gillespie Precast, LLC) Concept/Preliminary Site Plan for a Production Building was approved. Final site plan approval will occur in future. The proposed 16,000 square foot production building will be located adjacent to the storage yard, that recently expanded. Ms. Moredock shared that at the October 4, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, an amendment to a previously-approved site plan will be presented to the Planning Commission to increase the outdoor sales area for a garden center outside of Rock Hall.

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Ms. Moredock shared that Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Annual Pre-Tour occurred at the County Commissioners' meeting held on October 2, 2108. This year's Annual Kent County Transportation Priority Letter emphasized its annual and historic opposition to a proposed span of the Bay Bridge with a terminus in Kent County. The letter further reminded the State of the local support for the proposed Chestertown Boulevard as a high priority. MDOT staff shared with the Commissioners that the Boulevard was on the list, but it was not currently a high priority for state funding. The County's priority list included a continuing desire for pedestrian infrastructure in its towns and villages.

Ms. Moredock shared the Bayshore Campground Growth Allocation and Site Plan review are on hold due to a sewage storage capacity review on the property and unresolved permitting issues resulting from questions about the 1972 Board of Appeals approval. The applicant has requested mediation and the County has agreed to that step prior to resolving the matters of nonconformity in Circuit Court. Ms. Moredock shared that OneEnergy Bluestar has rescinded its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and hopes to sell the energy generated to Washington College (thus placing the project in a different tax bracket under net metering). Massey Solar is appealing the Public Utility Law Judge's second ruling regarding compliance with the forest conservation act requirements. She also shared that Urban Grid has applied for a zoning text amendment meant to enable the Morgnec Road Solar project to move forward by making utility scale solar projects permitted special exception uses in several residential zoning districts. The proposed site for their project is in Chestertown's Priority Designated Growth Area.

Planning updates for the 301 corridor were discussed. A meeting took place with Jamie Williams, Michael Moulds, Director, Public Works and Ms. Heller to discuss possible resolutions pertaining to water and sewer in that area. The decision was made during that meeting to conduct a development study to identify the type of businesses that would be attracted to the corridor and what specific infrastructure needs they will require. Ms. Gray mentioned the draft of the Queen Anne's County 301 study has been released. Ms. Williams will obtain a copy and distribute to the Commission for review.

In new business, the Commission held a detailed discussion on Kent County Public Schools student enrollment and the factors that influence enrollment and decisions to enroll elsewhere.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Bramble, seconded by Ms. Williams and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 pm. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, November 7, 2018, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Director