

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street, 3rd Floor

Chestertown, MD 21620

November 7, 2018

Commission Members Present: Bob Jacob, Cindy Genter, Jim Luff, Kate Gray, Rob Thompson, Tracey Williams, Aaron Bramble

Commission Members Absent: Trae Hoffner

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

At 3:00 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2018 meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the October 3, 2018 meeting.

Ms. Moredock shared that the Planning Commission met in November and six applications for agricultural preservation districts were reviewed favorably and will be forwarded to the Commissioners for approval. The planning commission reviewed an application for an after the fact variance in the Critical Area Buffer for a structural rebuild which had not been authorized; the commission did not send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Appeals citing the need for additional documentation regarding the instability of the demolished structure to substantiate the rebuild. The Board of Appeals will render a decision at its 19 November meeting. Jim Gillespie, Morgan Creek Land Holdings, submitted a major site plan for review on the land known as the former Campbell Soup property. That site plan was approved with a landscape screening plan was requested. The Planning Department has received two applications for zoning text amendments that will on the Planning Commission agenda in December. The Urban Grid, Morgnec Road Solar text amendment application would permit utility scale solar systems as a special exception use in community residential and rural residential districts. The applicant owns the land which is known as the Clark Farm; Urban Grid/Morgen Road Solar has filed for a CPNC to construct such a system on that land. The Planning Commission has sponsored a text amendment to clarify that an animal shelter as a permitted use in agricultural and cross roads commercial districts (to be consistent with veterinary hospitals).

Ms. Moredock shared that she met with Larion Stoltzfus, Delmarva Feed and Seed, and Surveyor Jason Walls on October 16, 2018, regarding his application for expansion on his Old Morgnec Road operation. It was noted that the business began without approvals and continued to expand without proper approvals and permits. The operation has now nearly exceeded the 25,000-sf limit placed on an operation of this size. Planning staff and Mr. Larion's consultants are trying to assist him to find a path to compliance and expansion (he is currently limited to an approximate 700 sf expansion due to previous expansions of the business).

Margie Elsberg, Dr. Jerry O'Connor, and Kay MacIntosh, Economic Development and Marketing Coordinator, Town of Chestertown, provided the Commission with an update on the efforts of the Save the Hospital Group. Ms. Elsberg stated that the primary goal of the organization is to ensure that the Chestertown hospital retain inpatient beds. If it loses inpatient

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beds, it becomes a free-standing medical facility and if that happens, emergency services and support services will stay. The primary concern is to ensure inpatient care, surgery, and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) remain at the Chestertown hospital. Ms. Elsberg shared that lobbying support was requested and the group is working with delegates Jacobs, Arentz, and Ghrist. Dr. O'Connor shared that the process has continued for three years and the proposal issued by Shore Medical was for the location to become a free-standing medical facility. Legislature was passed to ensure inpatient beds remained until 2022. Primary areas of concern included the number of physicians who are retiring and the reduction in the number of specialists. Dr. O'Connor shared the changing healthcare environment where people spend less time in the hospitals. Ms. MacIntosh shared the economic impact of the hospital including that it supplied 10% of the jobs in the county. The changes at the hospital have resulted in the reduction of jobs and members of hospital staff are being transferred and shared with Easton. Ms. MacIntosh shared how the hospital impacts the elderly community, including those at Heron Point, and stated that the hospital also impacts real estate value. Dr. O'Connor shared that Shore Regional will be audited at the direction of the Governor and Secretary of Health; Dr. O'Connor contributed the audit in part to the approximately 1,500 postcards sent to the Governor from the citizens of Kent and northern Queen Anne's counties. The Save The Hospital Group is hoping for a Governor's action and signature to keep the hospital and inpatient beds in the facility. Mr. Bramble asked if the organization could pull away from the university system and it was discussed as a possibility.

Dr. Jay Guban requested funding to support a proposal by Fresh Start Foods. Sabine Harvey, Horticulture Program Assistant and Master Gardener, University of Maryland Extension shared information about the garden at the middle school where 25 students per semester learn to grow fresh produce. Leftovers from the garden are taken to the food bank and local churches. Ms. Harvey shared plans for an upcoming Food Summit to coordinate efforts, regarding the reduction of food waste in Kent County. Dr. Guban's proposal included forming a task force to identify needs and strategies to address those needs.

Cindy Genter, Rock Hall Properties presented a proposal given to the town of Rock Hall to reduce the hookup fees associated with water and sewer. Ms. Genter stated that 36% of the land cost is contributed to water and sewer hookups and that inventory is down in the under \$300K category. Currently in Kent County, not including incorporated towns, there are 47 lots for sale, 15 are potential public sewer hookups, and 3 with public water hookup availability. The cost to hook up to public sewer is \$15,000. Within the last 12 months, 22 lots sold in Kent County. Implementation of a PACE style program and a sprinkler credit were also discussed as possible ideas to increase development and growth throughout Kent County.

Jamie Williams shared the KentHotSpots.com magnets being placed on the County vehicles to promote the free public wi-fi available to students. Ms. Williams reminded the Commission the Realtor's meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2018. The brochure created for Kent County Public Schools was shared, this was the collaborative effort of Citizens for Kent County Public Schools, Kent County Public Schools, and Kent County Economic Development. The information originally appeared in ads in the Kent County News and Tidewater Trader.

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Mr. Jacob announced he is resigning from the Commission due to his election to the Board of County Commissioners of Kent County, Maryland. Mr. Luff presented an interest form of a proposed candidate. A motion was made by Ms. Genther to make a recommendation to the Commissioners to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Jacob with the candidate presented, the motion was seconded by Ms. Gray and carried unanimously. Ms. Williams and Ms. McCoy will be forward the recommendation to the Commissioners.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Bramble, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 pm. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Director