



Audio recordings of the Economic & Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found at Recordings Tab.

June 9, 2021

Commission Members Present: Aaron Bramble, Dick Story, Rob Thompson, Suzanne Einstein, and Sandy Scott

Commission Members Absent: Dolores Jones, Chikki Shajwani, and Tracey Williams

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, and Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Assistant, Economic & Tourism Development; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; Bob Jacob, County Commissioner

At 3:02 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2021 Economic Development Commission meeting and May 18th, 2021 Tourism Development Advisory Board meeting. On motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the May 5, 2021 meeting. On motion by Ms. Eistein and seconded by Ms. Scott, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the May 18, 2021 meeting.

Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning provided an update of the department and projects. A Comprehensive Rezoning Update task force meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2021. At the June 23, 2021 task force meeting have Jamie Williams will present the 2017 Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The Planning Commission sent a recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a renewal of an existing sand and gravel pit. Every 5 years sand and gravel pits must go through a review. The Commission also approved a letter to be sent to the Maryland Department of Planning in lieu of annual report. 34 houses were constructed in 2020, up from 24 in 2019. Board of Appeals met and reviewed favorably on two variance applications, both for single family homes.

Jamie Williams announced the Department of Economic and Tourism Development is fully staffed and introduced Shalyn Boulden as the new Administrative Assistant. The website has been updated to reflect the merger of the Economic Development Commission and the Tourism Development Advisory Board. Links to the previous board and commission minutes and recordings can be found at the bottom of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission minutes page.

The 2017 Economic Development Strategic Plan needs to be updated. The update process began with public meetings in early 2020 prior to the pandemic. The plan will include Tourism with the restructuring of the departments and the merger of the board and commission. A verbal quote was obtained from a consultant at approximately \$13,000.00. It was determined it can be accomplished in house. Mr. Bramble suggested completing another SWOT analysis with the public to include new ideas and thoughts resulting from the pandemic.

Ms. Williams shared a year in review. Economic Tourism & Development is fully staffed. A list of COVID grants administered were summarized. A business mentor was provided to businesses to navigate the all the COVID resources that were made available. The Small Business Marketing Grant program was successfully launched with the Upper Shore Regional Council which provided marketing funds as well as technical training. The Upper Shore Micro Ag Grant program was also launched and is underway. The Kent County Datastory is complete and on the website. Economic and Tourism Development is exploring additional ways to market Kent County including radio promotions, television, a box truck wrap, and new Welcome to Kent County signs were installed. Ms. Williams shared the commercial property database is being updated on the Maryland Department of Commerce website and a data center attraction webpage was created.

Ms. Carter provided a tourism update. Ms. Carter stated diversification of ways to market Kent County included a 3-month campaign of a 26' box truck wrapped with an ad for Kent County. The 2021 Kent County Visitors Guides have been printed as well as table tents with a QR link to the Visitors guide. Ms. Carter and Shalyn will work on reaching out to county businesses and visitor centers across the state to get the guides and table tents distributed. Print ad and editorial placements in regional magazines were shared. Ms. Carter collaborated with Mix 106.5 to host Jess Dutra as part of the Make Me Maryland promotion from May 28, 2021- May 30, 2021. Ms. Carter is working with Andover Media to create town focused videos for the County YouTube channel.

Ms. Williams stated this is the first meeting of the newly formed Economic and Tourism Development Commission, a Chair and Vice Chair need be appointed. Mr. Story nominated and motioned Mr. Bramble to serve as Chair and the motion was seconded Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson nominated and motioned Mr. Story to serve as Vice Chair and the motion was seconded by Mr. Bramble. The Commission unanimously voted to appoint Mr. Bramble as Chair and Mr. Story as Vice Chair.

Ms. Williams requested a letter of support for the county's grant application to the Department of Housing and Community Development for the Chestertown Business Campus infrastructure for Phase II, the entrance from MD Route 213. Mr. Thompson motioned to provide a letter of support for the grant application, the motion was seconded by Mr. Story and carried unanimously in favor of sending a letter of support from the Economic and Tourism Development Commission.

Mr. Thompson recommended a webpage for Kids' Activities; Ms. Scott seconded the need and value to families visiting. Staff will begin working on a webpage for Kids' Activities.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Ms. Scott, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director
Department of Economic & Tourism Development