

Economic Development Advisory Board

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street

Chestertown, MD 21620

September 2, 2015

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

Board Members Absent: Dan MacLeod

Also in Attendance: Commissioner William Short, Shelley Herman, County Administrator, Dr. Karen Couch, Superintendent, Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), Henry Dierker, Property Owner, Michael Lang and Peter Murphy, PharmKent, LLC, Kevin Shearon, DMS & Associates, and Shreyas Sathyanarayana Suresh.

At 3:00 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Short shared that Mr. Dierker had called this morning and requested Mr. he attend tonight to express his concerns. Mr. Dierker owns property located in the Route 301 corridor. In 2013 a fertilizer company was interested in the property and lost interest due to perceptions that the area would soon be developed. Others have stated that nothing is ever going to happen in that area, due to lack of access off of Route 301. Mr. Dierker expressed his concerns with the varied perceptions of the property's value and development surrounding the property. Mr. Dierker asked if the County was going to move forward with development in that area. Mr. Dierker believes the property is locked from many proposed uses. The property is located on Carroll Clark Road, consists of 297 acres, 225 is tillable and some of the property perced in April 2013. Mr. Jacob suggested a sub-committee meeting to address Mr. Dierker's concerns, Ms. Genter agreed. The group agreed to do some research and contact Mr. Dierker for a follow-up meeting.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2015 meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Bramble, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the August 5, 2015 meeting.

Ms. Williams introduced Mr. Suresh, Washington College Student. Mr. Suresh was an invited guest and had submitted an interest form to become a student member of the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB). The Board members introduced themselves to Mr. Suresh.

Ms. Williams introduced Dr. Couch to the Board and shared she had requested Dr. Couch to discuss on how Economic Development and the EDAB can support KCPS. Dr. Couch shared a PowerPoint presentation giving the Board an update on the progress of KCPS. Dr. Couch stated this begins her third year with KCPS and she will review what has been accomplished in the past two years, what has been done to improve student achievement, and how they will know they are making progress. Dr. Couch shared she came from a school district with similar challenges as KCPS. A new mission statement was very important to meeting the challenges

September 2, 2015

Page 2

EDAB Minutes

facing KCPS. The mission statement highlights the core values, students first, collaboration, commitment, community, fiscal responsibility, and public trust. The new logo Anchored in Excellence demonstrates what is unique to Kent County. KCPS also has a new slogan "Growing a Community of Leaders". Universal pre-kindergarten began last year, which allows all four year olds to attend the public school system. KCPS is focusing on 21st century skills, refined communications skills are extremely important as many students will be working remotely and as part of a team. Professional learning communities have been formed to allow teachers to collaborate and share experiences to plan for student success. Dual credit classes at Chesapeake College and Washington College have increased. Last year 68 high school students were taking college classes. KCPS has moved up from 22nd to 13th on the school progress index for the State of Maryland. Last year KCPS was ranked 8th on the Eastern Shore and is now 3rd. Kindergarten readiness data ranked Kent County as first in Maryland and has direct correlation to universal pre-kindergarten. Dr. Couch shared that enrollment for the 2015-2016 is down 95 students which equates to \$1.2 million. KCPS is in the process of a consolidation study with the expectation of closing one elementary school and moving the Board Office. Dr. Couch shared that approximately 80% of KCPS graduates go onto college. Dr. Couch articulated the importance of the EDAB and the County in supporting KCPS during the consolidation process to improve efficiencies.

Mr. Lang and Mr. Murphy presented a new business proposal for a greenhouse operation to grow and process medical cannabis. The other two partners are Brad Johnson and Jim Gillespie. Mr. Lang shared the State of Maryland has passed the law to grow, process, and dispense medical cannabis in the State. There will be three types of licenses, PharmKent will be pursuing all three licenses and at this time will focus on growing and processing. Mr. Murphy shared that time is critical in the process as well as County support, there will be 15 licenses issued for growing medical cannabis and the State is expecting 60-70 applications. Mr. Lang shared the operation would initially bring 25 jobs to Kent County. There is the potential for approximately 100 new jobs by the third year. All jobs would be highly trained technically skilled employees. Mr. Murphy shared that PharmKent will invest \$500,000.00 during the application process. Mr. Murphy was concerned about not being able to move forward with zoning. After discussion it was recommended that PharmKent present the project to the County Commissioners for their support. Ms. Genther asked Ms. Moredock if there were any zoning issues with the property where the proposed facility is anticipated to be located. Ms. Moredock shared that as long as a license is obtained growing is permitted, it is an agricultural use and a pharmaceutical operation would be permitted in a light industrial zone. Mr. Shearon requested a preliminary review by the Planning Commission of the concept plan to address any major issues prior to regulations being finalized and licenses being issued. On motion by Ms. Genther and seconded by Mr. Jacob the Board unanimously agreed to send a letter of support to the Commissioners for the PharmKent project. Ms. Gray suggested that when communicating to the public about this project, Board members communicate properly to mitigate any incorrect public assumptions.

Mr. Luff shared that Chapter 21. Economic and Tourism Development, Public Local Laws of Kent County, is being reviewed and will be on the October agenda for review, prior to submitting to the Commissioners, requesting review and introduction of proposed legislation.

September 2, 2015

Page 3

EDAB Minutes

Mr. Ampula asked for an update on the revolving loan fund. Ms. Williams shared that she has met with Mike Thielke, Executive Director, Entrepreneurship Center to promote the fund with local businesses. Internal procedures need to be drafted and presented to the Commissioners for approval.

Ms. Williams shared that Kent County along with the Maryland Energy Administration and Chesapeake Utilities have been visiting businesses, industrial users along the rail road, to gauge the interest in bringing natural gas to Kent County. The response from local businesses has been overwhelmingly positive and all but one has been very interested in reducing operating cost by utilizing natural gas. Ms. Williams shared that some businesses simply thanked them for visiting and reaching out to them.

Ms. Genter invited Ms. Williams to attend a Cecil County Broker Tour as her guest. The event is sponsored by Cecil County, Economic Development and will be held on Wednesday, September 30, 2015.

Ms. Williams shared that Delegate Jay Jacobs is organizing a Construction Trade Symposium to discuss regulations that are affecting the construction industry. Two topics that will be included are best available technology (BAT) for septic systems and the sprinkler legislation.

A motion was made by Mr. Jacob, seconded by Mr. Amupla, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 p.m. The Board agreed to meet again on Wednesday, October 7, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator