



Recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission (ETDC) meetings can be found on the Meeting Archive Tab.

May 8, 2024

Commission Members Present: Richard Story, Paula Reeder, Charlie Athey, Sandy Scott, Judy Crow, David Bowman, and Judy Gifford.

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director; Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager; Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager; and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist; Economic and Tourism Development.

At 3:00 p.m. Mr. Story called the meeting to order. Mr. Story requested a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2024, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Athey, seconded by Ms. Crow, the April 10, 2024, minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Story advised that due to the fact of having several new members on the Commission, he invited Tom Yeager, County Attorney to review the role of the ETDC. Mr. Yeager reviewed the duties of the ETDC as established in the Code of Local Laws, Chapter 21, noting that the ETDC is an advisory commission and not a regulatory or quasi-judicial commission like the Planning Commission. The role of the ETDC is to support and provide advice and guidance.

Mr. Story advised that he would like to begin meetings now with a quick Chairman's Report. He advised that he has met with each member of the ETDC, staff, and members of the County government to determine a direction for the ETDC. The consensus was brainstorming and briefing. He advised that one meeting would be guest speakers and briefings and the next month would be brainstorming.

Aundra Anderson, Next Generation Scholars Program Manager, presented the Economic and Tourism Development office with a Partnership of the Year Award for their assistance with the signature program career tour. Ms. Anderson advised that students are recruited in tenth grade to the Next Generation Scholars program. The program was started to assist students in accessing funding to attend a trade school, or college in the State of Maryland. Ms. Anderson advised that she works with each student to develop an individualized plan and assists with securing internships and applications.

Liliana Tschanett, Public Affairs Specialist, Small Business Administration, Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience, provided an overview of the services provided by the Federal Government regarding the economic impact due to the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Ms. Tschanett advised that the assistance is only available until December 3, 2024. To access the assistance, an application for the loan must be completed at one of the centers in Baltimore or Glen Burnie or online. Loans have a 4% interest for businesses and a 3.25% interest for private/non-profit organizations. There is no application fee to apply, and no interest or payment in the first twelve months. The loans are designed to ease the economy and can be used for anything that is cash flow to keep the business going. The maximum amount

that can be requested is \$2M. The loans are not awarded on credit scores but on credit history. Ms. Williams added that there are additional resources available through the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Commerce, and the Department of Housing and Community Development. These additional resources are primarily for the two neighborhoods on either side of the bridge.

Ms. Wright gave an overview and provided a summary of the Micro Ag Grant program over the past four years.

The ETDC members discussed what information would be valuable to hear in staff reports. A few of the items identified were current obstacles, challenges and opportunities, updates on ongoing projects, etc.

The ETDC members shared who they would like to hear from and what topics they thought would be valuable. A list was compiled and will be discussed at the June meeting. Ms. Reeder felt the guest speakers were important to create awareness of what is going on in the County and what services are available.

Ms. Williams gave a brief update on Chestertown hotDesks, noting that there is one office available for rent along with co-working space. Advertisements for the available space have been placed with WCTR, Tidewater Trader, and WKHS.

Mr. Story attended the double ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 3, 2024, and added that he thought it was important for ETDC members to attend.

Ms. Gifford would like to hear from other ETDC members about what is going on in their respective areas of expertise.

Ms. Reeder advised of a valuable resource dealing with the economic development issues in rural areas: A Rural New Deal put out by Urban Rural Ridge. Expressing the importance of balance and support of each other's ideas, rather than competing.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Reeder, seconded by Mr. Bowman, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD
Director