

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 2021

PRESENT

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), Linda Burris (Delmarva Power), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Sandra Edwards (OED Economic Development Mgr.), Bruce England (SWN), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (OED Agribusiness Coordinator), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Steve Overbay (OED Director), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC), Richard Starr (OED Economic Development Coordinator), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

ABSENT

Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Morgan Miller (CCPL)

GUESTS

Randy Baynes (BG&E), Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Michele Burch (Tourism Committee), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Scott Flanigan (CCDPW), Toby Mink (CBRE), Becca Nappi (APG), Jack Schammel (TEDCO), Dan Schneckeburger (CC Dir. of Admin), Jeff Sellers (SB Real Estate, LLC), Alan Sexton (SWN), Scott Sturgill (Quest End Capital)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- March 3, 2021 meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- Should have received Ethics Statement Form #2 from Cecil County HR
 - Required on annual basis; due back to HR by end of April
- Final weeks of legislative session in Annapolis
 - CC Chamber's Government Relations Committee (GRC) & Cecil Delegation on top of issues pertaining to Cecil

Director's Report - Steve Overbay

- OED in grants mode
 - Please share with business community that OED here to assist them
 - Completed Hotels (13 awards, \$267,083) and WINTER Restaurant (53 awards, \$398,000) Grants programs – had to be disbursed by March 31, 2021
 - Micro Ag Grants (16 applicants, \$28,000); Some applied for second round of grants through MARBIDCO
 - Signed three new Grant Agreements with June 30, 2021 disbursement deadline
 - Designated for Hotels, Restaurant, and Online-Teleworking Operations
 - Will run concurrently
 - Additional Grant Award of \$340,000 for non-profit community -- will be administered by Dept. of Community Services
- Submitted OED budget – will meet with Council to discuss in coming weeks
- Hosted Rooted in Our Community: Up Close and Personal on March 6 – well attended

- Farmers Markets (Year-Round & Seasonal) opening end of April/early May
- Tourism has moved to new Jackson House at North East location
 - Gives great first impression of Cecil County
- Spring Vibes Cecil Tides – runs through June 19th
 - USRC supported initiative; several municipalities participating
- Tourism working with film scouts at locations in Cecil County
- Sports Tourism Economic Analysis -- What Sports Tourism means to Cecil County
- Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill proceeding; will be able to host spectators in fall
- Updating OED website
- APG – will have change of command in August
- Prospecting has been beyond wildest expectations – variety of business types showing interest
- Hosted Towns/County meeting – Met with Mayors Alt and Marion
- North East Gateway (700K+ sq. ft) has signed a lease with national distribution company
- Residential Title opening office in Cecil
- Chipotle and 5 Guys coming to Cecil along Rt. 40 corridor
- Will be 9M+ sq. ft. breaking ground this summer and fall – will put Cecil on the map
- Anirban Basu and his company, Sage Policy Group, hosting American Rescue Plan webinar

Real Estate Panel Discussion -- Toby Mink, Executive Vice President, CBRE

National Trends:

- ecommerce – before pandemic 15% of retail sales; during pandemic 25%, now 20%
- If trends continue next 5 years, market will require 1Billion sq. ft. of industrial space
- Warehousing, logistics growing
- Labor most important driver for site selection

State Trends:

- Sit in 4th largest MSA in Nation; most robust ports on East Coast, I-95 centric
 - Baltimore/Washington region #1 on top 10 growth markets for next 5 years
 - Forecasting over 32% rent growth
- One-day truck drive of 33% of US population

Cecil County:

- People (labor force) –education, unemployment rates, wage rates, type of supply, longevity
- Have had smart growth vs. other areas
- Bainbridge project great example of bringing private money into community
- Home to some of largest, smartest institutions
- Cecil has large population center to pull from for workforce (within 30-minute commute)
- Introduce projects in strategic way to preserve population for workforce
- Supply-Demand imbalance pushing companies to act quicker, take on larger facilities
- Price of steel has doubled – more expensive to build new buildings
- Do not want to run out of inventory
- Cecil's Strengths: proven submarket; strong creditworthy tenant base; significant institutional ownership; I-95 access; strong rent growth; lower real estate taxes; incentives; access to port
- Cecil's Challenges: project identity; infrastructure; amenities
- Going to be an exciting journey!

Real Estate Panel Discussion -- Jeff Sellers, Commercial Property Sales/Development, SB Real Estate, LLC and Commercial Real Estate Broker CBM Insurance Agency

- In commercial land and development for last 15 years; 90% of work in Cecil County
- Most exciting time in 20+ years living in Cecil County

- Businesses asking why they should come to Cecil
 - Balance commercial development with rural beauty Cecil known for
- Bainbridge – will bring large employment numbers; Great Wolf Lodge; Hollywood Casino; 30+ ac owned by Stewart Properties (many companies lined up)
- Principio Health Center – additional property available there for growth
- Room to grow & demand in Perryville
- Harford County and Delaware out of land
- Belvidere Road Interchange will be huge blessing to Rt. 40
- North East Commerce Center
- Pad sites for retailers – retail took a hit during Covid -- picking back up
- Office space being reassessed
- Rt. 40 Corridor – tremendous demand for commercial space; very diverse businesses; water and sewer a big plus now
- National chains starting to want to be in Cecil
- Getting word out about Southfields development (employment, sports park)
- National builders looking for land – tremendous housing needs due to employment creation
- Cecil perception changed – now viewed as one of the most business friendly counties
- Looking for businesses with different kinds of background but can't control demand
- Logistics, distribution, warehouse jobs are good paying jobs – Cecil primed for logistic centers
- OED works with Dept. of Commerce on prospects – being mindful of how we do things

Good of the Cause / Subcommittee Reports:

Education/Workforce Subcommittee – Dr. Mary Bolt

- CDL Program at Bainbridge
- Have logistics program at Cecil College for 10+ years
- Will be on panel for EAGB April 28 re education programs available at Cecil
- Cecil has resources and infrastructure; also have educational piece necessary for logistics/warehouse jobs including CDL drivers

Communications Subcommittee - JoAnn Dawson

- Movie to be shot in Cecil County in July
 - Started casting with Milburn Stone Theater
 - To support film, go to Kickstarter Cream of the Crop

Council Update – Councilman Bill Coutz

- In budget season – will be for next couple months
- 110% behind Economic Development and Cecil County

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Our next EDC meeting will be (Virtual) on May 5, 2021 at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant