

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

June 2, 2021

PRESENT

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (URP), Sandra Edwards (OED Mgr.), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (Agribusiness Coordinator), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), 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 Coordinator),

ABSENT

Linda Burris (Delmarva Power), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Bruce England (SWN), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

GUESTS

Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Melissa Cook-MacKenzie (North East Town Administrator), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Scott Flanigan (CC Director, DPW), Tim Gardner (Fair Hill Int. Board), Christie Griest (Tourism), Marion Hess (Tourism Committee), Danielle Hornberger (CC Executive), Mary Ioppolo (Tourism Helper), Michael Kline (North East Mayor), Steve O'Connor (CC Acting Director, LUDS), Sharon Pelham (APGFCU), Jessica Price (Elkton Alliance), Kim Ray (Tourism), Rupert Rossetti (Tourism Committee), Dan Schneckenburger (CC Dir. of Admin), Rachel Temby (NRMA), Dave Trolie (CC Director, Community Services), Clyde Van Dyke (CC Director, Parks & Rec)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 3:14 pm
- May 5, 2021, meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- Good to see everyone in person
- Honored to have Cecil County Executive, Danielle Hornberger, to kick off our event
 - Very impressed with work your administration and Economic Development are doing
- Recognize Mayor Kline, Town of North East
- Recognize Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration

Introductory Remarks – Danielle Hornberger

- Very proud to be here to kick this new location off — beautiful beacon on the water for Cecil County
- Extend Thanks:
 - Town of North East – renovating space
 - Steve Overbay and his team for their partnership
 - Exciting time for economic growth
 - EDC Chair and EDC Members for all their hard work
- In September, Cecil County will have more projects underway than any other jurisdiction in the State -- Great Wolf, Principio, Bainbridge to name a few
- With Covid restrictions lifted, small business community can operate again

Remarks - Mayor Kline

- Thrilled to have Sandy here – wonderful relationship with her and her team for years
- Will have signage through town -- let people know Tourism Office here; bring more visitors to park
- Will start development of Heron Cove property – fully ADA accessible wildlife area

Director's Report - Steve Overbay

- Thank County Exec and Mayor for unwavering support of Tourism and Economic Development – I inherited a tremendous team
- Tourism Office reflects how we feel about Cecil County
 - Want Tourism Office to be a beacon
- Countians take waterfront access, water activities for granted
- Bright future here in Cecil – span entire economic development front
- Purpose today to say “Thank You”
- Appreciate what EDC can do — take message out to community
- Economic Development important, Tourism and Ag pieces as well
- EDC attendance wonderful in Zoom meeting format – will look at format for fall
- Thank You to Mike Ratchford for serving as Chair -- great voice for business community, sounding board for economic development concepts
- Guests here today:
 - Councilman Coutz – big supporter of EDC
 - Mayor and Town Administrator of North East – thank you for continued support
 - Directors of Cecil County – impact business community in various ways – DPW Director Scott Flannigan, Community Services Director Dave Trolie, Parks & Rec Director Clyde Van Dyke, LUDS Director Steve O'Connor, Emergency Services Director Wayne Tome, IT Director Dave Warnick – committed to doing right thing for residents and businesses
 - County Executive and Director of Administration – Can-do attitude – how can we help our business community?
 - Bruce England – recovering from surgery – huge partner in workforce
- Grants Administration – critical to keep doors open for businesses; administered 11 grants over last 12 months; wrapping up Hotels, Restaurants, Online Sales & Teleworking – Thank You to my team for all their hard work!
- Great Wolf Lodge – Director O'Connor and his team did heavy lifting to be able to issue grading permits to break ground this month – LUDS to be onsite for next 22-24 months
- Business prospecting has been excellent – looking for new sectors to diversify
- What's Ahead?
 - New Opportunities for engagement
 - Subcommittees that need new breath of life
 - More technology focused – revamp website, new Datastory
 - Host world-class events – MD 5 Star
 - Focus on Workforce – SWN huge partner
 - Quality of Life Initiatives – Why people choose to live in Cecil (new & existing residents)
 - Business Visits
 - Cecil College, CCPS great partners

A Tourism Update was presented by Sandy Maruchi-Turner, Manager, Tourism

- Echo appreciation to Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Bob McKnight and Mayor Mike Kline
 - Amazing partnership with the Town – made a dream come true – look forward to long partnership

- Long time coming: 2007, 2014, then seriously in 2015 after Bassmaster Elite
 - 4-day event – learned what an impression the park and town made on visitors
 - Only have one chance to make 1st impression!
- Can also market to boaters from this location
- Marketing Plan for 2021:
 - Received 2 grants - MD Office of Tourism & Upper Shore Regional Council – funded Winter Lights - Cecil Nights and Spring Vibes - Cecil Tides
 - Tourism County Budget & Additional State Grant – Advertise Small businesses by name
 - General & Small Business Advertising – capture attention of travelers
 - Diverse & Targeted – Print, Billboard, Digital, Video, Radio, Mobile Billboards, Signage - Christiana Mall, Press Tours
 - Highlights:
 - Digital Campaigns – targeting two audiences – consumer travelers and equestrian fans
 - Trans Promotion Traveling Billboards – wrapping box trucks with ads
- Upcoming Events:
 - Mike Iaconelli Fishing Tournament and Kids Workshop
 - Santa House Weekend Visitor Center - Opens this Sunday
 - Tourism Office - Opens Soon
 - Make Me Maryland – 106.5 Press Visit - End of June
 - Bassmaster – Kayak Fishing Tournament – August 6th & 7th

A State Park Update was presented by Rachel Temby, Park Manager, NRMA

- Fair Hill:
 - 5,600 ac. Parcel on PA line to almost DE
 - Beautiful, pristine multipurpose facility – but a lot of aging infrastructure
 - Identify critical & capital projects for when funding made available
 - Were able to move forward with construction projects during pandemic
 - Had over 21M visitors Statewide, up by over 43% Statewide, this year suggests sustained growth
 - Fair Hill has small staff; bring on extra seasonal staff
 - Expect visitation to continue with events taking place (Fair and 5 Star)
 - Thrilled to see people come back
 - MD 5 Star at Fair Hill will be 1st Spectator Friendly 5 Star in 2021
 - Have a lot of facility improvements going on
 - Tickets go on sale in couple weeks
- Fair Hill Organizing Committee
 - Vendor and sponsorship looking good – pieces falling into place
 - Oct. 14-17, 2021, Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill
 - Projections for 20,000-30,000 people to attend
- Bohemia:
 - 460 ac. Parcel
 - Lowest visitation in 2020 due to delays in access road construction
 - Access road under construction w/gate for admission
 - Hoping for initial opening later this year – Phase I
 - Restoring barn and house on site, ag conversion, enhancing buffers, trails built, water access, etc.
 - Looking to schedule open houses; will continue with managed hunting this fall

- Phase II – access road down to water, additional parking; additional phases to follow
- Designation: Natural Resources Area – State Park working title
- Welcome hikers, bikers, equestrians, planning on fishing, canoe and kayak launch; continuing wildlife management; looking at environmental & education themes
- Funding:
 - Have operating budget to work with
 - DNR Open Space funds for Improvement projects stabilization funds at time of acquisition
 - Fair Hill & Bohemia received additional monies for initiating public access

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony took place for the New Tourism Office

Good of the Cause / Subcommittee Reports:

Council Update – Councilman Bill Coutz

- Able to pass County budget last night with 5-0 vote
- First time to cut taxes under Charter Government

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Our next EDC Meeting will be on September 1, 2021, at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant