

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 6, 2023

PRESENT

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (Mitre Corp), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Sandra Edwards (OED Mgr.), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Kimberly Justus (SWN), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC), Bill Sorenson (OED Director), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

ABSENT

Bob Meffley (CC Council), Richard Starr (OED Coordinator)

GUESTS

Scott Flanigan (DPW), Jackie Gregory (Council President), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Kim Swyka (Peoples Bank), Maura Van Syckle (SBDC), Andrea Vuncannon (APGFCU)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- Meeting minutes for June approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- EDC meeting schedule is September thru June; try to meet in person once/quarter
- Format: Chairman's remarks, external speakers on topics relevant to business community; report from OED; open floor for announcements, etc.
- Always welcome ideas on topics; change in format - want to be meaningful to business community
- Reappointments introduced to Council last night; approvals expected in 2 weeks (next legislative session)
- MD Secretary of Commerce wants to put together Cecil County Day – may be an in-person EDC meeting

An update on Bainbridge was presented by Toni Sprenkle, Executive Director, and Dr. Carl Roberts, President, BDC

Dr. Carl Roberts:

- Bainbridge was Naval training station.
- Base closed 1976; BDC created 1999; Things started changing 2018-2019
- BDC receives no operating funds, only grants
- Pleased with direction going in – goal is for BDC to be legislatively disbanded
- Toni Sprenkle hired; hired part-time now Executive Director (critical party to town, county, state, etc.— everything that happens at Bainbridge)

Toni Sprenkle:

- Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) created by State – funded by private development partners
- **BDC Web of Relationships:**
 - Town, County, State, US Navy, MTPM, MRP
- **History of BDC:**
 - Established in 1999 via HB1152
 - Mission: Implementing sustainable plan for former Bainbridge Naval Training Center to accelerate site into productive use in public and/or private sector
 - Governed by 15-member Board of Directors; 9 voting and 6 Ex-Officio
 - Staffed by Executive Director and Executive Assistant
- **History in Brief:**
 - Development Partnership signed 2004
 - Initiated development planning (mixed-use community)
 - Initial phase of development 2006
 - Contamination uncovered 2007/2008
 - MDE halted development 2010 to undergo site-wide sampling
 - 2010-2014 US Navy conducting environmental sampling
 - 2014-2018 BNC and USN negotiations (MDE oversight)
- **Significant Activities:**
 - September 2018 – Memorandum of Understanding signed (BDC, MD, USN); removed residential development; USN to fund remedial activities
 - August 2019 – Execution of Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement with BDC and USN (BDC contractor for USN cleanup)
 - March 2020 – Execution MOA #2 (remainder of site minus Tome School, landfills)
 - 2020-2022 – State funding for public road infrastructure (50/50 match public and private dollars)
 - November 2021 – Transfer 1st Phase of development (444 acres) to create Bainbridge Logistics Center
 - Building A: 1.4-1.9 million sq.ft.; Building B: 1 million sq.ft.; Building C: 600,000 sq.ft.; Building D: 378,000 sq.ft.
 - Early 2023 – Further delineation Phase 1A and Phase 2 parcels
 - Spring 2023 – Completion of Buildings B & C; pad sites A & D
- **Future Outlook:**
 - Finalize environmental data for Phase 1A and Phase 2
 - Conceptual planning for Phase 1A and Phase 2
 - Negotiate and execute ESCA #2
 - Address any residual contamination to receive no further action determination from MDE
 - Market and transfer remaining acreage into private development
- Will try to coordinate so EDC can come out for a tour

Director's Report – Economic Development Update – Bill Sorenson

- Meetings with S&P & Moody's last week for bond review; want to go from AA+ to AAA+
 - Bainbridge & Southfields in presentations
 - Invested in analytical tools doing studies on businesses, traffic

- Traffic entry points from 2021-2022 – every entry point (I-95, Rt. 40) went up double digits; coming in from Hatem up 70%, coming in from Delaware up 26%
- Great Wolf Lodge – increased estimations from 500,000 annual visitors to 700,000
- Educated workforce in region & Cecil County; MD #7 in state ranking of people with advanced degrees; 43% over age 25 have degree or advanced degree
- York Building Supply – developed concrete that has a low carbon concrete manufacturing process that lowers temperature to make aggregate – getting grant from Dept of Environment
- Bond raters impressed with what's going on in County – hope to hear more soon
- Oct. 19-22 – Maryland 5 Star at Fairhill; adding petting zoo & horse activities for kids; additions to infield
- Oct. 4 – Harvest Dinner @ The Wellwood

Council Update – Jackie Gregory

- EDC reappointments introduced last night; vote on Sept. 19th
- Was first Council meeting in a month; expect to be very busy next couple months
- Transferred money to finish safe & secure entrances to schools
- North East Dredging project underway – dredge placement material site prepared; going to happen this winter
- Conowingo Dam – MDE to come in, has been at standstill; money available to start but not appropriated; want to see where MDE is with project
 - Federal Level – EPA putting together team on best practices, etc.
- Whitsitt Center in Kent Co. has some State funding now
 - County Leaders met with MDH to keep Whitsitt Center open and to utilize Carter Center as possible adolescent mental health facility

Cecil College Update – Dr. Mary Bolt

- State funding for turf field – field now finished
- Ribbon cutting at Marine Technology; Partnership with Safe Harbors & Bohemia Vista
 - Waiting list for program; hope to accelerate program; received grant from MD Rural Development to outfit building with tools and technology
- Cecil College hosting accreditation for nursing (RN & LPN) in Maryland
- Scholarship Breakfast this month
- Little Black Dress Event in September

CCPS Update – Dr. Jeff Lawson

- Video on restricted cell phone use of high school students
- Back to School yesterday; approx. 15,000; enrollment increase in Pre-K
- Ribbon Cuttings on turf fields at Elkton High & Rising Sun High
- Test Skills:
 - Language Arts - bouncing back to pre-Covid
 - Math – Scores 10 points above State average; but not performing as well on State assessments

CCPL Update – Morgan Miller

- Crab Crawl this Saturday – funds summer literacy program

- New at Perryville Library: ADA accessible play garden; building on a teen room; adding study rooms and career center
- Libraries are major places to come after school
- September 26 – Business Information Center program on non-profits

Miscellaneous

Carl Roberts:

- Turf fields have been God send at our schools
 - County (Parks & Rec programs) utilize these fields outside of high schools
 - Expand recreational opportunities of all age groups in all areas of the County
- Government Relations Committee started up meetings again; mostly virtual but will have live meetings periodically; 8:00am on Thursdays
 - Tomorrow – Asst. Deputy Secretary of Labor discusses Family Leave Act regulations
 - Businesses have to start contributing to fund in Oct 2024/Act commences Jan 2025
- Focus of GRC this year:
 - What makes it easy for you to be successful in Cecil County and what makes it difficult?
 - What's in existence you want to keep going?

Sandra Edwards:

- Wednesday, Oct. 4 – Harvest Dinner @ The Wellwood
 - Tickets on sale live; buy online at County ag page
 - Draft menu available
 - Dessert to be outsourced this year
 - Taste of Cecil before dinner; cash bar available

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 am.

Next EDC Meeting will be VIRTUAL on October 4, 2023, at 8:00 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant