

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

March 1, 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), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (OED Agribusiness Coordinator), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Kimberly Justus (SWN), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Bill Sorenson (OED Director), Richard Starr (OED Coordinator), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

ABSENT

Jeff Emmons (Delmarva Power), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC),

GUESTS

Michele Burch (Realtor), Laura Hannan (FHNC), Megan McRay (CC Chamber of Commerce), Jeanne Minner (Town of Elkton), Nadine Miracle (GWL), John Ness (WCHC), Brigitte Peters (Commerce), Jen Peterson (BDC), Kim Ray (Tourism), Jeff Sellers (SB Realty), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Scott Sturgill (The Peoples Bank), Andrea Vuncannon (APGFCU), Maura Van Syckle (SBDC)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- February 1, 2023, meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- Chamber hosted Cecil Night in Annapolis – great venue; great event; Lt. Governor made appearance
- Very excited to have Great Wolf in our County

An Update on Great Wolf Lodge (GWL) was presented by Nadine Miracle, General Manager, Great Wolf Lodge, Perryville

- General Manager of 20th lodge opening in Perryville, MD – Official opening July 15, 2023
- Worked for GWL for 15 years
- **Overview:**
 - 700-room resort – Largest resort in Maryland and US
 - Most lodges have 400-412 rooms (Poconos, PA or Williamsburg, VA); some have 600± rooms
 - Destination: Focus on staycation experience – like to be within 3-hour drive for families
 - Capture area: D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City markets and supporting areas of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York
 - Been talking with stadium partners for little league clinics as well as MD 5 Star
 - Largest water park at 128,000 sq. ft.
 - 57,000 sq. ft. adventure park
 - Economic job flow – creating at least 850 jobs with opening (front line, technical skill, management, and leadership positions)
- **Water Park features:**
 - 128,000 sq. ft.; 22 water slides, wave pool, activity pool, lazy river, cabanas (indoor & outdoor) – fun for all ages
 - Can see large water slides from I-95 (much of fun park on exterior part of building)

- 2 brand new water slides for Maryland: Forest Flume (simulates going down a ski slope with long banking curves), High Paw Holler (back-to-back curves, back-to-back twists and spins, 360° spin out – thrill seekers' delight, also have racing water slides (come out of 4 separate tubes together)
 - Otter Caves Waterworks (w/1,000 gal. iconic tipping bucket)
 - Looping Holler – toddler/tot section (small pool & splash pond)
- **Great Wolf Adventure Park:**
 - 57,000 sq. ft. – many family-friendly activities
 - Enchanted Forest, Bowling, Arcade, Ropes Course
- **Food/Beverage offerings:**
 - Barnwood Restaurant – upscale restaurant
 - Campfire Kitchen - Buffet
 - Full-service Dunkin Donuts on site
 - Pizzeria on site
 - Timbers Quick Service – assortment of foods; order on app
 - Sweet Treats Creamery
 - Bar Areas in water park
- **Retail:** Candy Shop, Build-a-Bear Workshop, Gift Shop
- Can buy pre-package experiences: activity passes or dining packages
- Host Day Passes, Birthday Party Celebrations
- **Guest suites:**
 - Standard Rooms, also have bunk beds (4-6 guest)
 - Premium Suites (8-12 guests) (larger families)
- **Grand Lobby:** becomes heart of experience
 - Activities for families to enjoy together
 - Family members get wolf ears
 - Daily programs (yoga, arts & crafts, family bingo, history of GWL with characters and lots of visual effects, dance party)
- **Seasonal Celebrations:**
 - Give families reason to return
 - Fall - Halloween – Trick or Treat Trail
 - Winter – Winter Wonderland – smores inside daily
 - Spring -- 84°F inside lodge and winter park – Get Ready for Spring activities
 - Summer – Camping adventure w/smores; family competitions
- Anticipate ½ million visitors each year
- Reservation bookings are open – out performing prior openings
- **Brand:**
 - Lodges average 80% occupancy or more year round
 - Ramp Period (summer, kids out of school)
 - Mid-Week (home schoolers, families with unique challenges, corporate events)
 - Employment opportunities strong focus
 - GWL wants to be good community partner
 - Corporate: 7,500 sq. ft. meeting space; up to 380 guests
 - Can be used for family reunions, sports groups, etc.
 - Entire Complex: over 650,000 sq. ft.

Director's Report – Update on Economic Development – Bill Sorenson

- Rooted in Our Community (RIOCC) – Saturday, March 4 @ Cecil College TC208
 - 3rd Year – first 2 virtual; expecting 160+ this year
 - Breakfast and Lunch included – FREE
 - 9am-3pm -- 4 Sessions; 3-4pm Happy Hour (2 breweries & Chesapeake Gold Farms)
 - Event created specifically to bring people in, talk about food system, talk to farmers, bring facts to the table, ask questions about local and regional foods, etc.
 - Video – making final comments; hopefully available in near future
- Prospects: Activity levels still high even with recession talks looming
 - Tracking ≈ 60 Opportunities; 7-8 training opportunities
- AUI – Luke Granger stepping back from leadership
 - Forming new company (Utili Train) – lineman and utility training; teaching OSHA safety to advanced lineman training
 - Will be 1st school of its kind North of Georgia and East of Tennessee
 - Huge regional project for Maryland
 - Will bring students from all over area and from other utilities
- New Cecil County PIO – Christian Miele
- MD 5 Star:
 - Event to take place in October
 - Meetings with Jeff Newman; get message out, sponsorships, attendance, etc.

Cecil College Update – Dr. Mary Bolt

- Excited about Rooted in Our Community event
- Warwick Community College has partnered; starting linemen school

Workforce Update – Alan Sexton

- March 4 – Job Fair for Summer Employment; Hours 9am-12pm; 14 employers to participate

Cecil County Chamber Update – Megan McRay

- Monday night was amazing – thanks to all who attended
- March 15 – New Member Orientation (might relabel event) – opportunity for new members, current, and past members to meet; hosted at North East Library

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 am.

Next EDC Meeting will be on April 5, 2023, at 8:00 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant