

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

March 3, 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), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Steve Overbay (OED Director), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC), Richard Starr (OED Economic Development Coordinator), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

ABSENT

Woody Jackson (Citizen), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen)

GUESTS

David Black (CCGIS), Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Michele Burch (Tourism Committee), Steve Cassard (BDC), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Scott Flanigan (CCDPW), Becca Nappi (APG), Sharon Pelham (APGFCU), Brigitte Peters (MD Commerce), Jack Schammel (TEDCO), Dan Schneckenburger (CC Dir. of Admin), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Scott Sturgill (Quest End Capital)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:01 am
- February 3, 2021 meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- In heart of Legislative session in Annapolis – a lot of Legislation that can adversely affect businesses
- Government Relations Committee on top of legislative items affecting Cecil County
- Hearing last week on moving I-95 tolls closer to Delaware border – Cecil County represented

Director's Report - Steve Overbay

- Active in Grants Administration
 - Accepted 546 applications for total of \$4.9M
 - Concluded HOTEL Relief Grant – 13 applications, \$267,000
 - Wrapped up WINTER Restaurant Relief Grant – 53 applications, \$398,000
 - Micro Ag Grants – Disbursing \$28,000 to 15 businesses
- FY22 Budget – Being mindful of remaining FY21 Budget; Impact of coming FY22 Budget
- Cecil County Chamber – Working with business community and tracking important legislation in Annapolis affecting Cecil County (Hollywood Casino, Relocation of I-95 Toll Plaza)
- Rooted in Our Community: Farming Up Close and Personal – Saturday, March 6th, 9-1
- Business Visits (Dupont, Northrop Grumman, Southfields) – Letting businesses know how to utilize OED resources to benefit their company
- Great Wolf Lodge
 - Perryville will be largest lodge in portfolio
 - Biweekly Meetings – making sure doing business in Cecil County easy

- LUDS has been instrumental
- Tourism Office now in North East
 - Working on signage on I-95 through Town of North East
 - Thank you to Town of North East for their efforts
 - Great location to showcase Cecil
- Wrapped up Winter Lights Cecil Nights
 - Spring Vibes Cecil Tides coming -- Transition from Winter to Spring weather events
- OED working with towns and County partners on monthly basis
- Meeting with professional services reps on upcoming major construction projects
 - Number of long-term and new projects starting this summer
- Prospects – lots of interest in Cecil County
- March 11th – Chamber hosting Annual State of the County Address
- Welcome Sharon Kurfuerst officially to EDC – will represent hospital system
- Save the Date – June 2nd EDC Meeting will be outdoors at new Tourism Office
 - 3:00pm Meeting followed by 4:00pm Social Hour
 - Will include County Executive, Director of Administration, and County Directors

An Update on Bainbridge was given by Dr. Carl Roberts, Chair, Bainbridge Development Corporation, Toni Sprenkle, BDC Project Coordinator, and Steve Cassard, BDC Executive Director

Dr. Carl Roberts:

- *Attitude change – obstacles to can-do*
- *How to help properties like Bainbridge emerge/develop*
- *Everyone's support has made difference in Bainbridge for last 5 years*
- *Agreement with Navy – ESCA occurred*
- *Cecil County Gov. took over sewer/wastewater for Bainbridge; Artesian providing water*
- *Total property 1185 acres, Tome School 50 acres – not part of agreement with developer, BDC owned*

Toni Sprenkle:

- In Sept. 2019 executed ESCA with Navy for Phase I development
- Phase I = 422 - 438 acres
- Activities within ESCA tied to environmental issues – identify residual asbestos (surface scan for asbestos, clearing/grubbing of vegetation, tilling soil monitored by asbestos team)
- Phase I to be complete Summer 2021
- Phase II – Memorandum of Agreement signed March 2020; mirror same process as Phase I
- Hoping to have groundbreaking but not safe due to Covid
- Working on video to show site transformation

Steve Cassard:

- MTPM developer/partner
- 20 years ago, Navy conducted cleanup but not thorough
- Navy has now stepped up and doing work again
- At end, property will be restricted to commercial and industrial development
- MTPM had property re-zoned through Port Deposit
- MTPM signed exclusive agreement with MRP Industrial for takedown of Phase I
- MRP will purchase and develop property when MDE declares no further action required – projected “shovels in the ground” September 2021

- MRP well known – have developed 17M ft. to date; have 12M ft. in pipeline; developed over \$1.2B worth of property
- MRP has equity partner (Hillwood Investment Properties) – have 200M sq. ft. of properties across North America and Europe
- Development to include fulfillment, distribution, offices and data centers
- Cecil College Truck Driving Program to be relocated to old main gate location off Rt. 222
- BDC office to remain onsite; to be relocated at main gate off Rt. 222
- Infrastructure a factor
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant constructed, sewer line to connect plant to Bainbridge
 - Artesian to provide water services; pipe to be built in conjunction with other site work
 - No road improvements suggested; main entrance off Tome Highway; some improvements recommended to Rts.275/276
- Major draw -- project is within 3 miles of I-95
- Optimistic Phase II site development within next two years

Toni Sprenkle:

- Tome School not part of agreement with Navy; on historical register
- No found contamination at site
- Tome School is BDC responsibility
- Tome School Committee looking at conditions, opportunities, constraints – identified strategic plan for options moving forward

A Broadband Update was presented by Danny DeMarinis, University Research Park, and David Black, GIS Coordinator, Cecil County

- Broadband (BB) Committee Purpose/Approach
 - Review 2014 BB Task Force report
 - Receive overview of program made
 - Perform SWOT analysis
 - Deliver updated recommendations to County Exec and administration
- Importance of High-Speed Internet
 - Prior to Covid viewed as lower-level priority
- Bottom Line Up Front...recipe for successful BB expansion
 - Resident express interest in subscribing to service
 - BB providers express interest to serve area
 - Funding to make up customer contribution difference must be available
 - SWOT analysis resulted in 7 recommendations
- BB Baseline
 - CCGOV identified 80+ areas lacking BB
 - Analytics got >100 homes connected
 - Special Taxation District enabling legislation (2019)
 - First dedicated funding stream for BB expansion (2020)
 - Received 4 grant awards in 2020
- BB expansion expensive
- Primary challenge finding funding
 - 2014 BB Task Force recommended fees go into a fund dedicated to BB
- SWOT Analysis Findings: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- CC Broadband Committee Recommendations:

- Franchise fees received from three cable franchise agreements go into fund dedicated to extending BB to unserved area
- Treat BB as critical infrastructure
- When cable franchise agreements require renewal, drop distances and line density extension provisions
- Ensure new construction has BB access
- Take advantage of construction projects to install BB infrastructure
- Continue pursuing grant opportunities, especially State level
- Broaden stakeholder participation

A copy of the Broadband Committee Report and Presentation was sent to all EDC members.

Good of the Cause / Subcommittee Reports:

Education/Workforce Subcommittee – Dr. Mary Bolt/Bruce England

- Received additional GEARS funding for medical assisting, cyber, accounting
- BioProduction degree courses started this semester
- SWN will be receiving significant amount of funding for training
- Have a lot of resources to help people gain new skills

Technology Subcommittee – Danny DeMarinis

- BB Committee will stay in existence; serve at pleasure of County Exec
 - Want to broaden by inviting Tech subcommittee members

Communications Subcommittee - JoAnn Dawson

- Winter Lights Cecil Nights were great
- Article on Steve and OED as well as Dr. Lawson
- Promotional video on North East Chamber's website
- Hopes Legacy movie released last week – partially filmed in Cecil County
- Another movie to be filmed in Cecil in June

Council Update – Councilman Bill Coutz

- Council back in swing with new administration
- SWOT analysis well done
- Here to support administration and EDC

Administration Update – Dan Schneckenburger

- SB797 / HB859 -- Fairness and Equity for Hollywood Casino
 - Hollywood was first casino in MD; only getting 33% of overhead from operations vs. other casinos up to 40%
- Great updates on Bainbridge and BB – administration very supportive
- Welcome Sharon Kurfuerst to EDC

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

Our next EDC meeting will be (Virtual) on April 7, 2021 at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant