

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**May 5, 2021**

### **PRESENT**

Chris Ann Szep for Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Sandra Edwards (OED Economic Development Mgr.), Bruce England (SWN), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (OED Agribusiness Coordinator), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Morgan Miller (CCPL), 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**

Linda Burris (Delmarva Power), Danny DeMarinis (URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Bob Meffley (CC Council)

### **GUESTS**

Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Nicole Parr (CCPS), Sharon Pelham (APGFCU), Dan Schneckenburger (CC Dir. of Admin), Jeff Sellers (SB Real Estate, LLC), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC)

### **Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford**

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- April 7, 2021 meeting minutes approved

### **Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford**

- Congratulations to Morgan Miller and CCPL for North East Library opening – just spectacular!
- Thanks to Debbie Brown and Carl Roberts for Chamber's Government Relations Committee
  - Hosted Legislative Wrap up last week with Cecil delegation.
  - Discussed challenges faced re agenda, logistics of operating.
  - Commend for how responsive, accessible delegation has been and for what have done for Cecil County
  - Great event by Debbie and Katie Lewis

### **Director's Report - Steve Overbay**

- Thanks to my team for their efforts – wonderful to hear positive feedback from community on their interactions with them
- Grants administration:
  - Administering two additional rounds (prescribed monies): \$170K+ to hotels, approx. \$375K to restaurants
  - Ask EDC members to help make community aware of available grants
  - Applications open through May 14<sup>th</sup>, funds disbursement by June 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Additional grant for online sales and telemarketing being developed for just under \$9K
- Trammel Crow – Groundbreaking for industrial side of Southfields
  - Type of company with industry clout to pull off first-class projects – 3<sup>rd</sup> project in Cecil County, most substantial in portfolio

- Constructing 3 buildings for total of 3m sq. ft. = 1,000 construction jobs (temporary); 3,000 permanent jobs
- Great Wolf Lodge – meet biweekly for smooth process
  - Anticipate increase in Tourism traffic
- Bainbridge Development Corp met with County Administration
  - MRP and CBRE on board for Phase I development of Bainbridge
  - Phase II under discussion
  - On pace for late summer/early fall groundbreaking with MRP
- USRC been fantastic partner with OED
  - Incredibly supportive of initiatives OED has underway
  - Website updates
  - Datastory – takes story of Cecil County through numbers and statistics to tell story visually – why locate business here, find qualified workforce here, employment opportunities, quality schools, tell info through storytelling
  - Supporting Tourism for Winter Lights/Cecil Nights, Spring Vibes/ Cecil Tides
- Cecil College & CCPS offerings – ties between local industry sectors and readying students for positions that will be available
- MEDA Spring Conference – Our Next New Normal
  - Best Practices, Future of Real Estate
    - Positive Vibe – Real Estate Market Unprecedented
- Legislative Session
  - Pleased from economic standpoint; delegation did great job as advocates for Cecil County
  - Chamber did excellent job keeping business community apprised during legislative session
- Adopt-A-Highway – initiative by County Executive
  - Belle Hill Road – 660 lbs. of debris cleaned up; OED participated
  - Clean up and beautify County, volunteer opportunities available
- WILMAPCO
  - Cecil part of re transportation planning
  - HB1236 re service to Delaware – of interest to OED
  - Two new am and two new pm trains connecting to Newark (Marc vs. Amtrak)
  - Would be huge step in breaching gap in accessing workforce
- Tourism
  - Comprehensive Marketing Plan being put in place
    - Allow us to look at several things here in County:
    - Spring Vibes/Cecil Tides, Santa House in North East begins in June, Fishing Tournaments, Economic Impact Analysis in partnership with Parks & Rec looking at parks and wedding venues to bring in more tourists
  - MD 5 Star at FairHill in October (looking positive for spectators)
    - Hotel availability already almost non-existent; looking at B&Bs, vacation rentals
- Prospecting – bio science, farm breweries, small retail, existing company growth
- Wages – Warehouse Wages have increased significantly with benefits and incentives being offered

***An update on Cecil County School of Technology was presented by Dr. Jeff Lawson, Superintendent, Cecil County Public Schools and Nicole Parr, Program Coordinator, Career & Technology Education***

- History
  - Purchased Bassel property Fall 2013 (\$19.6M / \$8.2M for property)
  - Design 2013-2014

- MSDE Contributes \$5.3M CIP
  - Renovations July 2014-2015
  - Building Opens September 2015
- New Programs Created at the SOT:
  - PLTW Pre-Engineering
  - Interactive Media
  - American Culinary Federation
  - PLTW Bio Medical Science
  - Teacher Academy of MD
  - Homeland Security
  - Applied Trades Academy
  - Student Transition Employability Program (STEP)
  - Certified Clinical Medical Assistant
  - IT Networking
  - Diesel
  - Manufacturing Technology
  - Curriculum for Agriculture and Science Ed (CASE)
- Odds and Ends:
  - SOT enrollment doubled by organizing high schools to A/B Block Schedule – have 425-450 students every day at SOT
  - Students selected through merit based and lottery
  - ATA proven highly effective
  - 95% of students are accepted into one of their three choices
  - Question – can ever be a comprehensive high school?
    - CCST does not meet criteria currently
- Diesel Technician Program:
  - Program started September 2019
  - Used ASE-Education Foundation Medium/Heavy Truck Curriculum: Inspection, Maintenance, and Minor Repair
  - Received Full ASE Accreditation valid until 5/1/2026
  - Several Business Partnerships and Donations for startup and continuing
  - Wrote & Received Innovation Grant – Purchased training/trainer equipment
  - First Graduates June 1, 2021
- Manual Machining/CNC Programming & Operations:
  - Starting September 1, 2021
  - County Government supporting with \$500K
  - Business partners helped identify program direction, tools and equipment needed
  - Will use National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) Machining Level I Credentials
  - Currently quoting equipment and tools with vendors
  - Considering training/trainer equipment designed for businesses and schools
  - Evaluating and Planning class/shop layout
  - Wrote & Received Innovation Grant – Will purchase necessary equipment
  - Teacher will attend/receive training through NIMS

***Good of the Cause / Subcommittee Reports:***

***Education/Workforce Subcommittee – Morgan Miller***

- Wonderful to celebrate opening of North East Library
  - Welcomed approx. 3,000 visitors in 1<sup>st</sup> week; seeing heavy use already

- Have 10 study rooms, work rooms - some specially designed with technology -- Hope to host EDC
- Thank Susan O'Neill and USRC for significant grant award to library system to outfit our book mobile to take job, technology and business training to places that have broadband barriers

***Council Update – Councilman Bill Coutz***

- Cleaned up some of the roads in the area – great initiative
- Working through budget season – everything being well presented
- Appreciate everything OED and Administration is helping us with

***Director of Administration Update - Dan Schneckenburger***

- Appreciate great work OED doing and support from EDC

***Chamber Update***

- National Small Business Week – Recognizing Small Businesses
  - 2/3 of membership have between 1-10 employees
  - Hosting contest w/prizes – want to hear your story – how you faired last year

***Small Business Update – Mike Travers***

- Constructing 9,000 sq. ft. building off Flint Drive
  - Tenant will be Upper Bay Counseling Youth Services
  - Encountered roadblocks -- Thank you to County Exec, County Administration, OED, Planning & Zoning for really jumping in to help
  - Hoping for ribbon cutting early September

***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

Our next EDC meeting will be INVITATION ONLY on JUNE 2, 2021 at 3:00 PM. ATTENDANCE IS LIMITED TO THOSE FOLKS WHO HAVE RECEIVED A SAVE THE DATE INVITATION. Our “Regular” EDC Meetings will return on September 1, 2021 at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel  
Administrative Assistant