

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**November 3, 2021**

### **PRESENT**

Chris Mills for Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), Danny DeMarinis (URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Sandra Edwards (Acting Dir., OED), Bruce England (SWN), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (Agribusiness Coordinator), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Steve Overbay (Acting Dir. of Admin.), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Richard Starr (OED Coordinator), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancer)

### **ABSENT**

Linda Burris (Delmarva Power), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC),

### **GUESTS**

Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Michele Burch (Exit Realty), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Scott Flanigan (CC Director, DPW), Laura Metzler (CCPL), Becca Nappi (APG), Susan O'Neill (USRC), Janice Palmer (USRC), Nicole Parr (CCPS), Sharon Pelham (APGFCU), Jack Schammel (TEDCO), Jeff Sellers (SB Real Estate), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC)

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

- Meeting called to order at 8:01 a.m.
- October 6, 2021, meeting minutes approved

### **Administration Update – Steve Overbay**

- Serving as Acting Director of Administration -- Dan Schneckenburger has moved on from Cecil County
- Will oversee Economic Development and other departments
- Sandra Edwards Acting OED Director during interim
- Have great team in Economic Development and Tourism -- Will still be actively involved
- Lots of good initiatives going on in County; hope to spread enthusiasm into other departments
- EDC: Upcoming subcommittee activity; bring in additional members - look at current membership, what areas need representation

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

- Dan Schneckenburger huge supporter of Cecil County and economic development when on Council and active EDC member – wish him all the best
- Congratulations to Steve – tribute to his talent, energy and job well done in Economic Development
  - Do not want to lose momentum in Economic Development
  - Strong team remains in place
- Want EDC to remain viable – continue to move forward
- Propose giving Dan Schneckenburger certificate for service on EDC

***An Upper Shore Regional Council Update was presented by Susan O'Neill, Executive Director, USRC***

- Introduce Janice Palmer – Partner with Upper Shore Regional Council
- Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) represents three counties: Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's
- Mission: ...foster regional planning and development...to afford federal, state, county, and local governments a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities; and, to provide leadership in planning and implementing programs to improve the quality of life in the Upper Shore Region of Maryland.
- Regional Programs:
  - Data Stories for regional & Each County
  - Career Technical Education Liaison
  - Micro Ag Grants
  - Log Heat Treatment
- Cecil County Programs:
  - SWN – Warehouse/Distribution
  - CCPL – Mobile Tech Labs
  - Tourism – Winter Lights/Cecil Nights Video Production
  - CC School of Tech – Days of Learning
  - Cecil College – Little Black Dress
  - MD Extension (4H) – Information Videos
  - CC Community Services – Cecil Cares
  - Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill
- 2019-2021 Impact Report
- Exciting Project – Years in the Making:
  - Field Demo of Heat Treatment to Eliminate Trade Barriers for MD Log Exports
  - Polo Pallet & Mill Creek Lumber, Elkton
  - International Treaty – “Montreal Protocol of 1987”
  - New Treatment - Innovative application; 10 yrs. of research
  - Partnerships: DNR, Virginia Tech, Cecil County OED, USRC, Rural MD Council, Commerce, USDA, Private Sector
  - Flow Chart of White Oak, Log Export Trial Supply
- ***Always open to any ideas, thoughts, ways we can do things differently***

***Acting Director's Report – Sandra Edwards***

- Inaugural Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill – Oct. 14-17
  - Resounding success
  - Attendance estimated just shy of 21,000; 10,000 Saturday alone
  - Economic impact approx. \$11M; estimated next year at \$30M
  - Hotels, B&Bs booked solid – will be good to add Great Wolf Lodge in 2023
    - Keep economic impact dollars in County
  - Received tons of press coverage during & after event
  - Tourism had huge tent at entrance themed with look & feel of Cecil County
    - Free samples of local foods
    - Basket of restaurant menus – very popular with visitors
    - Captured great feedback re event impressions, demographics, etc.
    - Prizes offered
  - Fresh Food Fest – Vendors selling fresh produce; great success for first year

- Looking to add more vendors from across state next year
- Cecil County had 1 of 6 catered chalets with ringside seating
  - Invited number of groups over four days of events
  - OED groups: brokers, developers, business partners, major employers – all very successful
  - Plan to do similar next year
  - Likely to have tent along cross country course next year for Saturday
- Have list of running suggestions for next year to make improvements
  - Any suggestions for improvements welcome, will add to list
- Commercial Broker Event originally scheduled for an October 14<sup>th</sup> rescheduled for May 18, 2022
  - Details to follow
- Harvest Dinner – Oct. 7 at The Wellwood – Sold Out
  - Tremendous Job by Wellwood; Delicious Menu
- Economic Development Week last week
  - Visited several businesses with certificates of recognition; plan to present certificates throughout year to mark milestones through creation of database
  - Manufacturers Leadership Breakfast – cosponsored by CC Chamber, SWN, and OED
    - Highlighted incentives and workforce assistance
- Round 2 Online Sales & Telework Grant \$85,136 from State
  - Application period closed; 28 received, 3 ineligible, 25 approved
  - Monies to be split evenly
- Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings:
  - Planet Fitness – owned by Victor & Lynn Brick
- Prospect interest remains high
- Working with Mike and Steve on EDC membership
  - Lara & Burris retired; build up membership; subcommittees
- Thank you to members of EDC who represented boards and commissions at 5 Star

***Good of the Cause:***

***Acting Director of Administration – Steve Overbay***

- 5 Star – wanted to get as many eyes on event as possible
  - Invited approx. 1400 people
  - Thank you to all who participated, attended, and hopefully experienced a first 5 Star event
  - Meeting to see how we can make this event even better next year
  - Tell extended networks about 5 Star
  - Love to be near 80,000 at year three
- Economic Development Week big deal in State of MD – can't do what we do without our business partners

***Council Update – Bill Coutz***

- USRC has provided access to resources County would not have had (i.e., broadband)
- 5 Star success universally understood – hats off to Economic Development
- Harvest Dinner – Maureen amazing job; Wellwood did great job
- Telework & Online Sales resolution introduced last night -- see no issues in being passed

***Chamber Update – Debbie Brown***

- Collaboration and relationships – keep us together

- Chamber picked up new members: Alo Yoga and Bella + Canvas and Plasticoid
- Thank you to SWN, OED, and all Chamber relationships

***TEDCO Update - Jack Schammel***

- Cecil County start up working on two technology-based projects
  - Great things to come out of first project; will put them on map
  - Will do great things for economy

***Closing Items – Sandra Edwards***

- December EDC Meeting:
  - December 1<sup>st</sup>; in person; to be held at North East Library
  - Tours of facility available; light breakfast provided
- Virtual meetings well attended but would like to meet in person 1-2 times/year

Thank you to Morgan Miller for hosting

***Adjournment***

Wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 am.

Next EDC Meeting will be on December 1, 2021, at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel  
Administrative Assistant