

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

March 2, 2022

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Danny DeMarinis (Mitre Corp), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Sharon Kurfuerst (Christiana Care/Union), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Morgan Miller (CCPL)

GUESTS

Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Michele Burch (Realtor), Bill Coutz (CC Council), Jeff Emmons (Delmarva), Scott Flanigan (CC DPW), Laura Metzler (CCPL), John Ness (WCHC), Nicole Parr (CCST), Sharon Pelham (APGFCU), Brigette Peters (Commerce), Carlos Sailes (CCPL), Jeff Sellers (SB Realty), Alan Sexton (SWN), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Dave Warnick (CC IT)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.
- February 2, 2022, meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- Appears Family Leave Act working way through system
- Carl and Debbie Brown lead Government Relations Committee every Thursday
 - Welcome info/concerns re: bills; keep us updated on Annapolis
- Governor announced Rural MD Economic Development Fund – looks to target eastern shore
- Broadband – tool for economic development; significant federal funding on infrastructure bill

A Broadband Update was presented by Dave Warnick, Director, Cecil County Information Technology

- In 2014, Chair of Broadband (BB) Task Force
- David Black – Working on BB for approx. 8 yrs. – Recognize him for his expertise
- **Mission**...securely, efficiently, and reliably provide the technology services and equipment to support the effective delivery of County services to the citizens, businesses, and taxpayers of Cecil County, Maryland
- **Broadband Baseline**
 - Identified 85+ areas lacking BB
 - 2,350 addresses lacked services as of 12/31/21 = 5% of County total addresses (not including unserved homes with long driveways)
- **April 2020 State Grant Awards (FY'21)**
 - Middleneck Rd. (90 addresses), MD Five Star + 34 addresses, Spring Hill Ln (28 addresses), and McKinneytown Rd (34 addresses) -- 3 of 4 projects complete

- Cable Franchise Agreement Builds (2021)
- Three projects in stages: p/o Nottingham Rd (8 addresses), p/o Blueball Rd (13 addresses), and p/o Carters Mill Rd (10 addresses) = 61 total addresses
- **April 2021 State Grant Awards (FY'22)**
 - Received funding for all 8 applications; projects totaling \$605,915; 302 addresses served via wireless, 76 addresses served via wire based
- **Strawberry Hill**
 - 45 addresses – Construction completed using \$150K CARES funding
- **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**
 - Cecil County takes regional approach
 - Engage with multiple ISPs
 - 18 Grant Applications for projects totaling \$9.9M submitted December 2021
 - If all receive funding, 1,112 addresses will obtain BB access
- **Funding**
 - Prior to Hornberger administration, Cecil County expended \$200,000 on BB projects
 - In six months since, County has budgeted \$2.48M for BB expansion
 - Funds committed by County will serve as match to obtain ~ \$20M from State, Federal, and private sources
- **Micro-areas/long driveways**
 - OSB considering issuing block grants to Counties to address “long driveways” in already served areas
- **Goals**
 - Customer Care – provide customers with top quality services
 - Empathy – Place in customer’s shoes/understand needs/propose solutions to solve problem
 - Professionalism -provide open, honest answers; treat others with respect and courtesy; complete work in timely, proficient manner
 - Technology – be leaders in providing solutions; think how each solution fits into broader goals
 - Information Assurance – provide 100% integrity of data on network, ensure secure

Comments - Steve Overbay

- Very pleased with work IT department has put in
- BB no longer a hurdle for business community; good coverage in development corridor
- BB needs affect everyone (businesses, schools, farmers, etc.)
- Cecil County aggressively pursuing grant funds – BB being considered as funded infrastructure

Acting Director’s Report – Economic Development Update - Sandra Edwards

- Tourism:
 - Winter Lights Cecil Nights just wrapped up – successful award-winning campaign
 - Sip & Stroll well attended
 - North East Wagon Rides/Other Events very successful
 - Attended Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg and DC Travel and Adventure Show; have upcoming PA Bus Show
- March 5 (this Saturday) – Rooted in Our Community, 9am – 12:30pm (Virtual)
 - 100+ registered; can still register via website

- Three panels:
 - Horses – Impact on Economy
 - New Wave of Agriculture (Vertical Farming Hemp, Farm Breweries)
 - Positioning for the Future (Climate Resiliency, Value Added, Land Acquisitions, etc.)
- Planning trivia prizes (gift cards) and giveaways with new Cecil Grown logo
- Great Wolf Lodge approx. 30% complete
- Next phase of Chesapeake Overlook to go to Fast Track process
 - Number of pad sites there – lots of potential (gas station, fast-food casual dining, sports entertainment)
- Chesapeake Corporate Center – McConnell's built Highline Warren – building across street (possible prospect)
- Enterprise Zone (EZ) expansion for Northrop Grumman's Hypersonic Center of Excellence – need Council approval then application goes to MD Dept. of Commerce
- OED Budget meeting next week
- Rural MD Councils – Governor proposing \$50M in funding – need approval of General Assembly – funding would flow through Commerce directly to the five regional councils
 - Commerce handling application process – compliance with intent of funds
 - Regional Councils will be working with Counties to ensure projects “fit” criteria
 - Dept. of Commerce to set up page on website with Q&A

Administration Update – Steve Overbay

- Budget Season – Budget Town Hall tomorrow evening (officially kicks off public side of budget)
 - Meeting with each department, looking at proposals, finalizing
- Legislative Side: Much appreciation for people/groups watching out for items that will affect County
- May 9-10 - Expecting visit from Federal Reserve Bank to perform assessment of our business community/economy – helps inform federal votes on federal legislation as relates to economic development at federal level
 - Itinerary calls for Roundtables
- Enterprise Zone Expansion under consideration with Council
 - Baseline tool, allows us to be competitive in business attraction, expansion, and reinvestment world
- Submitted MDOT Chapter 30 application for Bainbridge re: infrastructure projects related to transportation needs over \$5M
- Beginning discussions with MD 5 Star team re: EMS and CCSO needs
 - Looking for emergency overflow parking areas due to expected growth of event this year – please advise if your business can help out
- Looking to have video development done

Good of the Cause:

Council Update – Bill Coutz

- See OED folks out at business functions – big part in attracting businesses to County
- Passed expedited bill for agriculture tire recycling

Chamber Update - Debbie Brown

- March 15 – Shamrock Games Bowling Event (in person)
- April 28 – Legislative Wrap-up Breakfast @ Schaefer's (in person)

CCPS Update – Dr. Jeff Lawson

- Principal for a Day – invite business community to shadow a principal for a day
- Superintendent Breakfast/Lunch @ CCST - get business partners together, tour of CCST

College Update – Dr. Mary Bolt

- Masks no longer mandated, now optional
- Opening face-to-face summer camp and summer classes; Milburn Stone Theater open
- Attending MD Association of Community Colleges Legislative Committee meeting in Annapolis
 - Testifying in support of SB540 –transfer between community college and 4-yr institutions
- Maj. Gen Edmondson, APG, on campus this Friday for tour of stem program
- Men’s’ basketball team #1 in region 20, #6 in nation for NCCA Division II – playoffs this weekend
- Baseball team hosting games this Saturday and Sunday – leading to playoffs
- Virginia Federal Reserve (Andy Bauer) upcoming visit – College providing meeting space

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 am.

Next EDC Meeting will be VIRTUAL on April 6, 2022, at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant