

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**June 7, 2023**

**PRESENT**

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Sandra Edwards (OED Mgr.), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Kimberly Justus (SWN), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Bill Sorenson (OED Director), Richard Starr (OED Coordinator), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancer)

**ABSENT**

Danny DeMarinis (Mitre Corp), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Jeff Emmons (Delmarva Power), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC)

**GUESTS**

Alicia Calhoun (Elkton Alliance), Ashley Cottrell (MD 5 Star), Christie Griest (Tourism), Scott Flanigan (DPW), Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald (USRC), Rebecca Hamilton (CC Council), Megan McRay (CC Chamber of Commerce), Marissa Melzer (MD 5 Star), John Ness (WCHC), Jeff Newman (MD5 Star), Kim Ray (Tourism), Alan Sexton (SWN), Maura Van Syckle (SBDC)

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

- Meeting called to order at 8:01 am
- Meeting minutes for May and March approved

**Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford**

- Appreciate legislative wrap up from MD Chamber
- Presenters from MD 5 Star today
- MD 5 Star terrific event that puts Cecil County on the map –best face forward

**An update on Maryland 5 Star Activities was presented by Jeff Newman, President & CEO, and Ashley Cottrell, Marketing & Communications Manager, MARS Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill**

- MARS MD 5 Star scheduled for October 18-22, 2023
- Thank you for assistance to date – Great experience working with businesses and great people in Cecil County
- Continue to use event as platform to showcase what's great about Maryland and Cecil County
- Work for Sport & Entertainment Corp of MD – part of MD 5 Star, MD Cycling Classic, and AAU Junior Olympic Games
- Voted by MD Tourism Coalition as best large event of 2022; best returning event by Press Box
- **Eventing:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Phase – Dressage; 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase – Cross-Country; 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase – Show Jumping
  - Men and women compete equally
- **Competition:**
  - 185 Horses, 10 Countries represented; \$325,000 prize money; International competition with riders from all over the world

- 3Star (CCI3\*-L) & USEF 3 Star Eventing National Championship
- **Attendance:**
  - 2022 Total Attendance = 25,207
  - Generated ≈ \$5M; Direct Spending Impact \$12M+
- **Broadcast & Livestream:**
  - 32+ hours of live coverage -- mpt, USEF, Horse & Country – regional/national/international
- **Media & Promotion:**
  - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube
  - Hired social media company to grow followers
  - Articles in The Baltimore Sun, Practical Horseman EXTRA, and Inside Maryland
- **What to Expect:**
  - Thrilling Competition, 5-Star Hospitality, Picturesque Tailgating, Live Entertainment, Corgi Racing, Equestrian Demonstrations, Unique Sponsor Opportunities, Retail, Food & Beverage Offerings, Beer, Wine & Spirits Showcase, Fresh Food Festival, Dog Friendly Activities, Curated Event Merchandise, and More
- **Hospitality & Tailgating:**
  - VIP Hospitality, Private Chalets, Sawmill Waterfront Club
- **Experiences & Activations:**
  - Building on food options; Building on kid activities
- **Horse Industry Demographics:**
  - MD has more horses per square mile than any other state
  - MD has more eventing competitions than any other state
- **Partnership Opportunities:**
  - Sponsorships critical
  - Speaking with Hollywood Casino, M&T Bank, Christiana Care, 1<sup>st</sup> Farmers Holdings, Chick-fil-a, Chesapeake Gold
  - Talking to local dealerships - Hope to have a car for a raffle
- **Branding Opportunities:**
  - Can brand obstacles; great signage opportunities
- **How Your Company Can Get Involved:**
  - Different sponsorship levels: Title Sponsor; Presenting Sponsor, 5 Star – 1 Star Sponsors, Ribbon Sponsor; \$5,000 minimum sponsorship
  - Everything can be customized
- **How Cecil County EDC Can Help MD 5 Star:**
  - Support & Awareness – businesses become supporters, events in community, preferred vendors
  - Volunteer – encourage businesses to promote volunteer opportunities
  - Get Connected – Retail vendors, special events, storage options, dog rescues
- **How Can MD 5 Star Help EDC:**
  - Assets, Accommodations & Access, Information
- **Things We Are Working On:**
  - Creating awareness of event
  - Creating “Supporter” category for companies that can’t be involved due to other commitments but can still support event

- Getting local business community involved
- Encourage businesses to buy tickets (group rates for packages)
- Local activities during 5 Star – love to add to calendar so attendees can attend/check out
- What to do in area while visiting event – Great Wolf Lodge, The Wellwood, etc.
- Vendors: Food, Retail, Pop-up Shops, Dog Rescue – Dog Adoptions
- Volunteer – opportunities for businesses, high schools, etc.
- Special Event: Beer, Wine & Spirits Showcase – need more distilleries, breweries, wineries to participate
- MD 5 Star is an asset – how can they help move EDC forward?
- **What We Need:**
  - Use of Parking Lots: Last year Cecil College, W.L. Gore & Cecil Parks & Rec provided lots
  - Need help with storage
  - Need Operations help – assist with many items
  - Want to grow attendance – 50,000+ goal
  - Make event local, regional, and international
  - Thank Sandy Turner & Tourism for promoting and allowing coordinating events; business for 5 Star brochures
  - Engage equine industry – Harford County, Pennsylvania, Delaware
  - Host field trips for students; SWN to work with CCPS for career opportunities; Promote talk at Career Center @ Cecil College
  - 5 Star accepting interns – Cecil College Career Center will post opportunities

#### ***Director's Report – Economic Development Update – Bill Sorenson***

- Co-hosted with Elkton Alliance visit with Brooke Lierman, Comptroller of MD – Main Street Walk & Tour of Elkton, ribbon cutting @ Sonny's Deli
- 10:00 this morning – Bond Hearing on Sportsplex in Elkton; hope to address travel sports issue in Cecil
- Saturday – Ike Fishing Tournament
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Upper Bay Tournament; Top Prize new boat & motor
  - Kids Zone – thanks to Town of North East, and various partners & sponsors
  - 100 kids come & learn to fish; activities in park
  - Each child leaves with tackle box from Ike Foundation and other gifts
  - Lunch provided by Ray Logging
  - Each child receives a fishing pole from Integrity Real Estate
- Bond Rating – meeting with reviewers; currently AA+ rating, like to get to AAA+
- Thank Terri for all the work she does for organization
- June 14 – Virtual Small Business event to learn about state procurement opportunities
- Maureen has left OED for new position with USRC; she will be managing \$10M grant from State

#### ***Cecil College Update – Dr. Mary Bolt***

- Graduation May 21 – over 200 graduates walked, 343 graduates total
- Athletic Gold Tournament held -- sold out
- June 13 – Ribbon Cutting for Turf Field (soccer/lacrosse)
- “Sweat” (play) opens at Milburn Stone Theater this weekend

***Cecil Chamber of Commerce Update – Megan McRay***

- Katie Lewis has resigned after 14 years with Chamber
  - Open House on June 13 to honor Katie
- June 20 – Marketing Network @ Perryville Library; Bainbridge & Hollywood Casino presenting

***Elkton Alliance Update – Alicia Calhoun***

- Co-Hosted Comptroller Brooke Lierman visit last Friday; met with Historical Society & some local businesses
- This Friday – Jump Into June event & Car Show; lots of family fun events, 5-7pm
- Next Friday – Dog Days of Summer; will have bandanas, paw waxing, pup cups, great family activities

***Miscellaneous***

No formal EDC meetings in July or August; back in September

***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 am.

**Next EDC Meeting will be on September 6, 2023, at 8:00 am.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel  
Administrative Assistant