

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**March 6, 2024**

### **PRESENT**

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), Kristina Brown (Delmarva Power), Danny DeMarinis (NEMD URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Amy DiPietro (MRA), Sandra Edwards (OED Mgr.), Jackie Gregory (Council), Christie Griest (Tourism), Rebecca Hamilton (Council), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Kimberly Justus (SWN), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Kim Ray (Tourism), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC)

### **ABSENT**

Ariel Balog (Ag-Industry Coordinator), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Amy Marston (Christiana Care-Union), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Bill Sorenson (OED Director), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancercenter)

### **GUESTS**

Scott Flanigan (DPW), Bryan Lightner (Charlestown), Megan McRay (Chamber of Commerce), John Ness (WCHC), Brigitte Peters (MD Commerce), Jen Peterson (Bainbridge), Mark Scarano (Delmarva Power), Alan Sexton (SWN), Kim Swyka (Peoples Bank), Andrea Vuncannon (APGFCU)

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

- Meeting called to order at 8:01 am
- Meeting minutes approved for February 2024

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

- Nothing to report

### **Director's Report – Sandra Edwards for Bill Sorenson**

- Rt. 40 Revitalization Grant – 5 applications received; 2 recommended to County Executive for approval; a third likely -- If awarded, total grants \$54,075
- Sat, March 2 -- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Rooted in Our Community (2<sup>nd</sup> in person)
  - Went well; good formula of presenters and CCST students panel
- Economic Development Coordinator position – 5 applicants; 3 interviews next week
- March 20 @ 2:00pm -- Hart Print Ribbon Cutting
  - Aluminum can print manufacturer in Free State Business Park, Elkton
- Upcoming Workshops: AI (specific to marketing, ChatGPT); Patent & Trademarks Bootcamp; Making Videos & Commercials
  - Want to partner with CCPL to establish equipment loan program for small businesses for marketing purposes
- Upper Shore Micro Ag Grants
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Year, 27 applications in review; Total Grants Requested \$216,000; Total Grant Funding \$84,000
- Winter Lights Cecil Nights wrapped up end of February
  - Want to thank towns & chamber partners for another successful campaign & great events
- Tourism & OED will be presenting at Cecil Leadership Institute next Wednesday
- Working on Eastern Shore Partnership grant application for Chesapeake Country All American Road

- Tourism will have a booth at PA Bus Association Market Place in State College and attend Quarterly Tourism Committee meeting

***An update on Business Programs and Impact of Government Policies was presented by Mark Scarano, Sr. Manager for Economic Development, Delmarva Power***

- Started with Delmarva as part of merger with Pepco Holdings Inc.; includes Ace Atlantic City Electric
- Have been in Economic Development work for 25 years including small-business counseling, conducting training programs, as well as ran community development financial institution providing loans to businesses
- Utilize utilities to increase economic opportunities in communities

**About Delmarva Power**

- Incorporated in 1909
- Service territory: 5,400 sq. mi.
- Electric Customers: 532,000; Delaware: 324,000; Maryland: 208,000
- Gas Customers: 138,000
- Employees: 1,515
- Substations: 199
- “More Than Energy”

**Economic Development**

- Attracting and Retaining Businesses
  - Concierge level service for businesses seeking to invest in Delmarva service area
  - A proactive approach
  - Specializes in large load inquiries, industrial, and data centers

**Workforce Development**

- Powering the Workforce Program:
  - 8-week adult training program preparing you and work-ready adults for family-supporting careers in STEM fields
  - Cecil College received \$13K grant from Delmarva to support planning and program launch
  - Launch 1<sup>st</sup> cohort in Q2 2024
  - To support future workforce and keep people in Cecil County
  - Exelon feels strongly about workforce development being part of future of communities

**Community Impact Capital Fund**

- Strengthen our communities and help businesses grow
  - \$36 million in funding commitment
  - Providing affordable capital to businesses challenged in accessing and securing funding
  - Increasing business capacity and subsequent employment opportunities for diverse local communities
  - Leverage fund through partnerships
  - Loans between \$100,000-\$600,000; equity investment up to \$2 million
  - Nearly \$4 million in investments distributed

**How can we partner?**

- Proactively identify developable sites in Cecil County that Delmarva can investigate for high-load probability
- Contact Delmarva when connecting with developers, site location consultants, or businesses seeking to expand/create jobs
- Delmarva happy to participate in familiarization tours of County
- Invite Delmarva to business panels, events, etc. and inform how they can assist with economic and workforce priorities

- Delmarva has amazing external affairs team
- Have access to local knowledge through team
- Love to come to meetings, meet in person, become involved
- 25 years' experience
- Delmarva – EV Needs
  - Become topic for Strategic Planning
  - Working on States, localities, and federal grants for EV sites
  - Not allowed to share info will get some info to Mike
- Kristina Brown – Delmarva Power
  - Handles not-for-profit grants
  - EDC Member
- Delmarva continues to invest in system in Cecil County
  - Developing economic impact studies and analysis – hope to break down by County
  - Goal to have analysis of work and economic impact for Cecil County as well as around state of MD
  - Need to spend money on infrastructure to be effective in future – people are infrastructure too

#### ***County Council – Jackie Gregory***

- Setting up Veterans Commission – looking for members – reach out to Administration or Dave Culver on Council for application
  - Mission: Outreach for vets with organization to bring resources
  - Help obtain jobs; Employers with perks to hire vets
- Passed legislation enabling another farm to go into preservation
- Funding \$3M asphalt overlay to repair roads in the spring

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

- State of MD recommending collective \$22M decrease in funding for community colleges; would result in \$1M decrease in funding for Cecil College
- Summer camp registration is open and booming
- Milburn Stone Theater – Charlie's Celtic Festival, etc.
- Venue for Rooted in Our Community last Saturday
- Hosting Region 20 Basketball Tournament this weekend

#### ***Brigitte Peters – Maryland Dept. of Commerce***

- GWL quite a draw on electricity & responsiveness to work with GWL team and get things up and running
- Accident Rt. 222 with school bus and power line
- Appreciate response and work & time Delmarva puts into their people

#### ***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 am.

**Next EDC Meeting is April 3, 2024, and is scheduled to be VIRTUAL.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Terri Springel  
Administrative Assistant