ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

October 2, 2024

PRESENT
Ariel Balog (Ag Industry Coordinator), Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), Kristina Brown (Delmarva Power), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (NEMD URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Amy DiPietro (MRA), Sandra Edwards (OED Mgr.), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Bryan Lightner (Town of Charlestown), Joan Pirrung (rep. Amy Marston, Christiana Care-Union), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Carl Roberts (BDC), Bill Sorenson (OED Director), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

ABSENT
Kimberly Justus (SWN), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Rachel Wright (interim for CCPL)

GUESTS
Stacey Brown (SWN), Scott Flanigan (CCDPW), Heather Gramm (Dept. of Commerce), Christie Griest (Tourism), Megan McRay (CC Chamber of Commerce), John Ness (WCHC), Brigitte Peters (Dept. of Commerce), Jenifer Peterson (BDC), Kim Ray (Tourism), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Andrea Vuncannon (APGFCU)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford
- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- September 2024 Meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford
- Alan Sexton of SWN passed away
  - Always attended EDC; great contributor to community; tremendous loss for SWN -- He will be missed
- Greater Baltimore Committee (GRC) presentation last week – hired firm to develop regional plan for economic growth in greater Baltimore regions (includes Cecil County)
- 350th Anniversary of Cecil County – Oct. 21 time capsule ceremony

Director's Report – Bill Sorenson
- Harvest Dinner tonight @ The Wellwood
- Cecil Grown ag magazine published – make sure to get a copy
- Oct. 9 – RAMP MD – Prototyping to Production Symposium, CONVERGE Innovation Center in Aberdeen
  - Tektonik, breakout from Fluoron group, displaying at symposium
- Oct. 21 – Time Capsule Ceremony for 350th Anniversary of Cecil County; to be opened in 50 years
- Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) presented to audience in Cecil last week
  - Wanted to present to all jurisdictions in metropolitan statistical area (MSA)
  - Cecil not 100% in MSA but interested in what value could bring to Cecil
  - Requested GBC stay in touch with Bainbridge Development Corp and MD 5 Star
- Oct. 17-20 -- MD 5 Star
  - Ticket sales up 20+%; sponsorships up a bit
  - Oxford Firm performed Impact study on Cecil in 2023

- Total Room Nights: Estimated 11,750
- Total Room Nights for region (includes Delaware, DC, Philly): 16,950
- 73% of attendees from outside of State; 58% stayed overnight, 15% came for the day
- Federal, State, and Local government revenue generated $3.7M; $4.1M in total labor income in State of MD; $5.3M regionally
- MD economy; $5.3M generated regionally
- Approx. 30,000 total attendees in 2023

A Department of Commerce update was presented by Heather Gramm, Assistant Secretary of Business and Industry Sector Development, Dept. of Commerce
- Thank OED team for partnership with Commerce to achieve common goal of positive economic development in MD
- Shout out to Brigitte Peters for her work with local partners and business community, making Commerce aware of critical needs in her region
- Dept. of Commerce proud sponsor of MD 5 Star

An explanation on what the Dept. of Commerce is, what they do, how they do it, different divisions under the Governor and Lieutenant Governor was provided in a PowerPoint presentation **(attached)**:
- The Commerce Mission
- How We Do It
- Organizational Chart showing various Dept. of Commerce divisions/departments; Secretary of Commerce reports directly to Governor/Lieutenant Governor
- Business and Industry Sector Development
- Business Recruitment & Location Services
- Regional Growth & Retention
- Strategic Industries & Entrepreneurship
- International Investment & Trade
    - Services, Programs, Map of MD's Foreign Offices
- Military and Federal Affairs
- Moore-Miller State Plan
    - Mission "Leave No One Behind"; 10 Priorities
- Priority – Creating an Equitable, Robust, and Competitive Economy – involves Commerce, MD Dept. of Labor, MD Dept. of Ag, MD Dept. of General Services
- Connecting Marylanders to jobs
- Dept. of Commerce further defining State's economic competitiveness – strategies and initiatives over next 5 years
    - Working with MD Economic Development Commission; hired consulting firm
    - Sent out survey, hosted focus groups with regional, industry, and economic development professionals
    - Developing pillars of focus and initiatives for next 5 years
    - Plan will require partnerships (MARBIDCO, TEDCO, MEDCO)
- Legislators may occasionally seek Dept. of Commerce input on bills specific to economic development
    - Commerce will review bills, comment addressing any concerns, can provide letter of information or letter of support/not support for General Assembly to consider
- Be engaged; be in touch with your legislators – important they hear from constituents not just during session
- Dept. of Commerce also working with Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC)

Others:
Cecil College – Dr. Mary Bolt
- End of October - Cecil College and Cecil County Public School Boards hosting joint meeting
- Off to a good fall start

Cecil County Public Schools – Dr. Jeff Lawson
- Have Teacher of the Year finalist, Brittany Rigdon, Natural Resources teacher, School of Technology
    - Total of 7 finalists in State
    - Brittany is the 6th finalist Cecil County Public Schools has had in last 10 years
- Apprenticeship program growing – any businesses interested in hiring a student, please contact CCPS
- Still seeing significant class size challenges
- Optimistic at this time

Cecil County Chamber of Commerce – Megan McRay
- Bonfire on Thursday – will have some big announcements
- Have tent at 5 Star – be there every day; will have special gift for Chamber members on Sunday
- Oct 9 – Candidate Forum

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 9:00 am
Next EDC Meeting is November 6, 2024, and will be VIRTUAL. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant