



Business Meeting Minutes for April May 24, 2023

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum:

The business meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jim Reilly at 9:07 a.m. Due to construction, the meeting was held at the Kent Island Yacht Club in Chester, MD. The meeting was held in-person, with the option to participate via Zoom.

The following Board Members were present and represented a quorum:

Jim Reilly, Chair
 Heather Bacher, Vice Chair
 Lee Bridgman, Secretary
 Ed Beres, Treasurer
 Jesse Parks
 Deayna Ewell
 Shelly Gross-Wade
 Brian DeMoss
 Jeremy Reynolds
 Larissa Costello
 Jaime Thompson (Zoom)
 Lara Wilson

Members Not Present:

Todd Wilhoit

Staff Present:

Heather Tinelli, Director, Economic & Tourism Development
 Rebecca Clark, Economic Development Coordinator
 Lisa Gallow, Office Coordinator, Economic & Tourism Dev.
 Connie Dean, Career Tech. Liaison, QAC Economic & Tourism
 April Plummer, Destination & Marketing Specialist, QAC Economic & Tourism Development

Economic Development Commission:

Jim Reilly, Chair
 Heather Bacher, Vice Chair
 Ed Beres, Treasurer
 Lee Bridgman, Secretary
 Brian Demoss
 Hazen Arnold
 Jeremy Reynolds
 James P. Reilly
 Larissa Costello
 Lara Wilson
 Deayna Ewell
 Jamie Thompson
 Shelly Gross-Wade
 Jesse Parks
 Todd Wilhoit

County Commissioners:

James J. Moran, At Large
 Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1
 Patrick McLaughlin, District 2
 Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
 Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

Others present:

Jack Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner
Gigi Windley, Director, Kent Narrows Development Foundation (Zoom)
Linda Friday, President, QAC Chamber of Commerce
Mike Arentz, Office of Congressman Andy Harris
Steve Johnson, Planner, QAC Planning & Zoning (Zoom)
Dave Harper, VP of Programs, Chesapeake College
Doug Summers, Associate Planner, QAC Planning & Zoning (Zoom)
Stephanie Jones, Senior Planner, QAC Planning & Zoning
Kim Kratovil, Eastern Shore Field Rep., U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (Zoom)
Nancy LaJoyce, Sr. Bus. Dev. Rep., U.S. Dept. of Commerce
Deb Terhune, Kent Island Resort
David Kane, Owner/Representative, Kent Island Resort
Josh & Melanie McCallen, Accountable Equity Dev. & Management Company, K I Resort
Royce Herman, Business Owner & County Resident

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

On a motion made by Jessie Parks and seconded by Heather Bacher, the May agenda was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

On a motion made by Heather Bacher and seconded by Jesse Parks, the April meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

III. Treasurers Report: Mr. Beres stated there is a current balance of \$1996.74 in the account managed by Chesapeake Charities. The additional funds are due to online ticket sales for the Field to Table event. On a motion made by Heather Bacher and seconded by Lee Bridgman, all members present voted in acceptance of the online ticket sales and change in balance.

IV. County Commissioners Liaison Update: County Commissioner, Jack Wilson, provided an update for the Commission Members.

- A.** The FY24 Budget hearings have been completed. Mr. Wilson stated there was no increase in taxes and QAC is in very good shape.
- B.** The Commissioners continue to receive requests to include more pickleball courts in the county. They are interested in introducing a county Rec. Center, but plans would not be for at least another 2 years or more.
- C.** The text amendment introduced by Jamal regarding the old Chesapeake Outlets will move forward for a hearing at the 2nd Commissioner's meeting in June.

V. Department of Economic & Tourism Development Update: Heather Tinelli, Director of ED & Tourism Development provided an update for the EDC members and liaisons. She thanked Amy with Kent Island Yacht Club for allowing us to host the EDC Meeting during the construction to the Visitor Center.

A. Economic Development-

- i.** Ms. Tinelli shared that the lot construction at the QAC Visitor Center is moving along quickly but they do not anticipate it will be complete until late October this year.

- ii. The Jamal property located directly across from the Old Outlet Center is getting a major cleanup and remodel. The property will be leased as commercial office space.
- iii. Ms. Tinelli, as well as 2 Commissioner Representatives, met with PRS Guitar staff. There will be a follow up meeting at the end of June to discuss partnership opportunities for training at the Chesapeake College.
- iv. The department has several significant line items on the FY24 budget. One of the most exciting is the replenishment of the Economic Development Incentive Fund. If approved, it would bring it to a one-million-dollar fund. The current balance is approx. 190,000. It would involve moving the 460,000 from the revolving loan fund, transferring 240,000 in funds that were set aside for training during Covid, and a new request for 200,000 from the FY 24 budget.
- v. The department also asked for funds to open a temporary Visitor Center in the Queenstown Outlets while the current Center is closed due to construction. The space is 327 square feet and was once utilized as the information center for the outlets. They are hoping to be open by the first week in June.
- vi. The Wheatlands housing development that will be located directly across from the Queenstown Outlets will include a Royal Farms and several other commercial opportunities marketed as Fast Casual for quick stops.
- vii. Ms. Tinelli and Ms. Clark have met with Planning and several property owners in Stevensville that are looking to build flex space. Carrolton Enterprises has purchased the Shore United Bank in Queenstown and will be actively marketing the property.
- viii. Several commercial retail developments located in the county have recently reached out to the department to ask how they can attract fast casual restaurants.
- ix. The department is working with County Administrator, Todd Mohn, regarding an Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant. The staff have helped with finding suitable locations.
- x. The department has received the first portion of the Rural MD Economic Dev. Fund Grant money and are working to get the funds to the grantees so they can start/complete their projects. Some of the projects are the Church Hill tower, the Waterman's project, and the 2 public school system Career Centers. Ms. Clark continues her work on the RFP for the strategic planning and a small group of EDC members will be asked to join the review committee.
- xi. There is a Ferry Feasibility kickoff meeting on June 8th that will include the contractor that was chosen. Follow up will include regular stake holder meetings.
- xii. The department continues to work on a M.O.U. with Chesapeake College regarding program funding for 7 projects.
- xiii. The department is hiring 2 interns. One intern will be starting their senior year at Kent Island High School and the other is a college student.
- xiv. QAC Economic Development will utilize USRC grant funds to host the Field to Table event that showcases 14 Micro Ag Grantees. The grantees will have tables set up with their products and the meal will include ingredients produced from the grantees. It will be a private event at Godfrey's Farm including EDC members, County Commissioners, and grantees.

B. Tourism-

- i. MD Tourism referred a group of Canadian Travel Writers and Influencers to our region. They were here for several days and went to visit areas on the eastern shore. During their day in QAC, staff took them on a boat ride, to Love Point Winery and to Crab Deck for a traditional crab feast.

- ii. The department also hosted a group from the UK whose visit included a waterfront lunch hosted by KNDF, breakfast a Dessert First, a tour of the oyster plant, and a bike ride to Terrapin with Park Rangers. The overall goal is to have the writers write about their experiences here and spur international travel back to the area.
- iii. Ms. Tinelli and Ms. Plummer attended a sports facility/sports tourism event hosted by the MD Tourism Coalition. Although the majority of QAC fields are utilized for local recreational teams, it was interesting to hear how the fields/spaces can be utilized in the off season to attract sporting events, fishing, and hunting events and more. Hosting sport tournaments and sporting events is a great opportunity to support and promote local businesses, hotels, and restaurants
- iv. Ms. Plummer and Ms. Clark continue to send out monthly Tourism and Economic Development newsletters that contain updates and event details. Commissioner Wilson suggested the newsletters be sent to local non-profits and events be listed on the Chamber of Commerce website as well.
- v. The department partnered with QAC Parks & Rec. to set up booths at the Kent Island Day event. Staff walked in the parade and threw out mini beach balls and candy to the crowd.
- vi. MD Tourism visited QAC to celebrate Tourism week and "MD in a Day". They enjoyed lunch on the waterfront at Harris Seafood.

VI. Liaisons Report-

A. **Kent Narrows Development Foundation:** The Executive Director of Kent Narrows Development Foundation, Gigi Windley, provided information regarding the region.

- i. The Cass N Reel Houseboat next to Big Owl's Tiki Bar is now open.
- ii. Big Owl has a new BBQ Pit and take out is available.
- iii. Reprinting the Kent Narrows Guide. June completion is expected.
- iv. There is a new bike rental kiosk located by the Holiday Inn Express.
- v. Parking lots under Kent Narrows bridge have been paved.
- vi. Kent Narrows Maps have been updated.
- vii. Going to have a sight visit with Capital Region to discuss the CRUSA Crab Feast that will be here in September.
- viii. The Lt. Governor will be in Kent Narrows today making a statement regarding Memorial Day traffic.

B. **Workforce Development:** Connie Dean, Career Technology Liaison for QAC Economic & Tourism Development, shared a brief statement with EDC members.

- i. Five students completed the Culinary Program
- ii. Ms. Dean has been working with QACTV to create videos for career awareness. Any business in the county is qualifies, it takes approximately an hour and a half on site to create and gives students and parents the look and feel of the experience working at the business. The videos are shared on the morning announcements, shared with teachers, and shared on our website. They are currently working on a masonry program video and plan on filming each of the CTE programs.
- iii. Currently working with Adam Tolley for Career Center plans
- iv. There are entry level positions available for Seniors graduating and information/rack cards were given out in each Senior packet.
- v. Ms. Dean helped facilitate a career Signing Day event and plans to expand the event next year to showcase students committing to CTE programs.

- C. **QAC Planning & Zoning:** Steve Johnson provided a packet containing updates regarding site plan approvals and submissions of major site plans.
- D. **Department of Commerce:** Nancy LaJoice, Sr. Bus. Dev. Rep., U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Ms. LaJoice shared that she is very encouraged by the new team and new administration. She is impressed with the level of communication between the Secretary and collaboration with departments. She also shared that the new Secretary is a resident of the Eastern Shore.
- E. **QAC Chamber of Commerce-** Linda Friday, President, QAC Chamber of Commerce provided an update regarding recent activities and future events.
 - i. Recently hired a Communication Marketing staff member.
 - ii. On June 7th, the QAC Chamber will be hosting the Regional Mixer to include the five regional Chamber of Commerce at Chesapeake College.
 - iii. The ribbon cutting for the new Hyatt in Kent narrows will be on June 21, 2013. The event will include a business mixer as well.
 - iv. The QAC Chamber will be hosting a Friendraiser at Bridges. Event will include Cliff Coppersmith and an overview of the CTE programs offered at Chesapeake College.
 - v. The health care bill that would have helped small businesses offer their employees health care, did not pass-through legislations.
- F. **University of MD Extension QAC- Lee** Bridgman provided details regarding upcoming events and happenings.
 - i. The Queen Anne's County Fair is set to return in August.
 - ii. The UMES will be hosting an Agritourism Conference in Cambridge
- G. **Local Real Estate Update-** Mr. Beres provided an informational packet containing details related to current real estate trends and statistics.

VII. Kent Island Resort- Representatives from the newly renovated Kent Island Resort were in attendance to share details of the remarkable upgrades and future plans for the property. The speakers were David Kane, KI Resort Owner, and Melanie and Josh McCallen, Accountable Equity Dev. & Management Company.

A. History of Kent Island Resort:

- i. Original Manor House was built in early 1700's
- ii. Property is 224 acres
- iii. Current owners have owned property for last 2 years
- iv. Property includes a 150-acre working farm that is leased.

B. Current Status:

- i. Held 123 weddings last year and have 135 on the books for this year. Will approximately 5.1 million from weddings this year. Host 5 weddings per weekend.
- ii. Host corporate events, community dinners and festivals.
- iii. Property includes restaurant (1812) open to outside guests
- iv. Currently employee 500
- v. They are currently turning away over 6000 room requests per year.

C. New Master Plan:

- i. The concept for the master plan is Reviving the Soul and consists of three powerful pillars:
 - a. Truth-Reviving the mind

- b. Beauty- Reviving the senses
 - c. Goodness- Reviving the Soul
 - ii. Themes for Implementation:
 - a. Primordial Experiences- Nature, Water, Fire, Mountains, and Food
 - b. Personal Hospitality- Unplugged Life
 - c. Agrarian Lifestyle- Connection to the earth and agritourism
 - d. Artisan Creations-things made by human hands-retail and live demonstrations and fresh markets
 - e. Culinary Experiences-International Language of Love-utilizing foods and herbs grown on the property
 - f. Entertainment-Music Stirs the Soul
- D. **Site Master Plan:**
 - i. Projected Plans:
 - a. Would like to add to the preservation acreage
 - b. Would like to have a working farm as a source to provide for the restaurant etc.
 - c. There is a significant need for additional rooms. The master plan would include a second Garden House with cottages. In addition, the plan would include a new waterfront outdoor dining deck on the original garden house, potager gardens a pavilion wedding venue, a new 6-bedroom Bayhouse and a new festival and artisan marketplace.

XIII.

EDC Member Updates:

A. Lara Wilson, UMD Shore Regional Health-Ms. Wilson shared that she recently attended the National Rural Health Association Conference in San Diego, and it was great to connect with health care leaders from across the country.

B. Brian Demoss, Local Business Owner, and Representative for the Town of Barclay-

- i. Mr. Demoss announced that the Town of Barclay now has sewer connection, and the community is very appreciative.
- ii. Chesapeake Vault had 2 high school seniors work with the company. One senior will be following the path to a masonry career while the other will be pursuing his pilot's license.
- iii. Chesapeake Vault is now making fire pits.

C. Jesse Parks, President, KRM Development Corp-

- i. KRM Development has two Queen Anne's County High school seniors working with them for the summer.
- ii. Mr. Parks asked how many openings there are on the EDC Board and which industries needed to be represented. There are two openings in which agritourism, and manufacturing were previously represented in those slots

D. Heather Bacher, Marketing Director. Sr. Vice President, Shore United Bank-

- i. The merger between Shore United and Chesapeake will happen on July 1st.
- ii. They are currently offering 100% financing on vehicle 2 years old or newer.
- iii. The bank is offering a new overdraft line.

E. Shelly Gross-Wade, Bay Crossing Consulting

- i. Inducted in the ED Hall of Fame for the State of MD.
- ii. Recognized as Top 100 Woman by Daily Record

- iii. Instrumental and getting a small grant for QAC ED to sponsor Cyber Security in Agriculture Technology event on June 27th.

F. Jeremy Reynolds, RTI Forensic Engineering-

- i. Mr. Reynolds shared that the company continues to struggle to keep full time staff due to employees wanting to continue with jobs where there is work at home option. With RTI, it is necessary for staff to physically investigate accidents and perform lab work.
- ii. Johns Hopkins has shown interest in expanding their applied science labs to the Eastern Shore. They are interested in utilizing part of RTI's building/lab space for research and development projects regarding technology and agritourism, fishing, crabbing and environmental testing.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Shelly Gross-Wade and seconded by Heather Bacher, the board unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting at 10:35 am.