

Business Meeting Minutes for September 23, 2020

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum:

The business meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jesse Parks at 9:02 a.m. at the Chesapeake Heritage Visitor Center, 425 Piney Narrows Road, Chester, MD 21619. Due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, attendees were given the option to attend via Zoom meeting, to be displayed on a monitor in the Barrett Room meeting space. The following Board Members were present and represented a quorum:

Jesse Parks, Chairman
Helen Bennett, Secretary
Royce Herman, Treasurer (via Zoom)
Rob Marsh
Brian DeMoss
Jeremy Reynolds
Ed Beres
Hazen Arnold (via Zoom)
Lee Bridgmon (via Zoom)
Heather Bacher (via Zoom)
Jon Cook (via Zoom)

Not Present:

Kathy Deoudes (Vice Chairman)
Mike Rosendale
Steve Donovan
John Anderes

Staff Present:

Heather Tinelli, Director, Economic & Tourism Development
Lisa Gallow, Office Coordinator, Economic & Tourism Development (via Zoom)

Others present:

Linda Friday, President, Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce
Gigi Windley, Director, Kent Narrows Development Foundation
Jody Schulz, Owner, Fisherman's Village/Kent Narrows Boatel
Kim Kratovil, Eastern Shore Field Representative, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (via Zoom)
Brennan Tarleton, Planner, Queen Anne's County Planning & Zoning (via Zoom)
Nancy LaJoice, Sr. Business Development Representative, Maryland Department of Commerce (via Zoom)
Tom Rider, Business Service Supervisor, Dept. of Labor, Licensing & Regulation (via Zoom)
Dave Harper, VP of Workforce & Academic Programs, Chesapeake College (via Zoom)
Greg Bartoo, Business Consultant, Small Business Development Center (via Zoom)
Mike Arntz, Community Liaison, Congressman Andy Harris (via Zoom)
Wick Dudley, Local Government Affairs Director, Bay Area Association of Realtors (via Zoom)

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

On a motion made by Mrs. Bennett, and seconded by Mr. Beres, the September meeting agenda was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

On a motion made by Mrs. Bennett, and seconded by Mr. DeMoss, the minutes from the August meeting were approved by unanimous vote of all members present, with the correction of Mr. Brian DeMoss's attendance at the August meeting.

III. Treasurers Report: Mr. Herman reported that he was unable to get an updated balance report from Chesapeake Charities prior to September's meeting. If there have been any debits from the account, he will let Economic and Tourism Development Director, Heather Tinelli, know via email. Otherwise, if there have been no debits the balance of the account remains at \$3882.98.

IV. Commissioners Report: Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Jack Wilson updated the Economic Development Commission on behalf of the County Commissioners. The Commissioners have approved the Department of Economic and Tourism Development to hire one full-time Administrative Assistant, and 4 or 5 part-time weekend visitor center attendees. The Commissioners have also approved a \$40K match to the Upper Shore Regional Council's funds for the Trade/Apprenticeship Liaison position in Queen Anne's County. This person will act as a liaison between the business community and the education community. They are hoping to have this position filled by November 2020. On September 22nd, there was a hearing on all of the current building codes and proposed changes. A decision on these codes will be made at the October 13th Commissioners meeting.

V. Department of Economic and Tourism Update: Heather Tinelli, Director of Economic & Tourism Development provided a department update for the EDC. Mrs. Tinelli will be meeting with Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works Director, Alan Quimby, to discuss current infrastructure to include capacity and growth areas as it lines up with the Comprehensive Plan to better attract new industry/businesses to the area. The Chesapeake Heritage & Visitor Center remodel has been completed. Official ribbon cutting will be announced as soon as possible. The department has invested in a digital marketing campaign for Tourism that will run through December 2020. This campaign will provide extensive tracking abilities for those viewing their advertisement, and then traveling to Queen Anne's County. The department will also be running a test campaign for the newly developed QR code. This code is linked directly to the CRM software, which will allow us to collect contact information and topics of interest from the visitors to Queen Anne's County. The first round of interviews for the new Tourism Marketing position will begin on Thursday, September 24th.

VI. Old Business:

A. Planning and Zoning Committee Update (not on agenda): Chairman, Jesse Parks, reported to the EDC that the committee has met, and they have put together a list of action items they would like to send to the County Commissioners. The list was passed out to all members present for review and discussion. The main items they would like to focus on include the Development Review Process and the Permitting Process.

- B. TACO-20-08:** This amendment pertains to alcohol production facilities and was introduced to update the standing facility language, and frame it under one use which is alcohol production. There will be a hearing at the October 13th Commissioners meeting, leading to a vote at the October 27th meeting. The EDC will receive the text amendment as it is currently written and decide if they would like to send a second letter of support.
- C. Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Review:** The Comprehensive Plan is moving forward with the new consultants, with a completion date of November 2021. No date has currently been scheduled for the consultants to meet with the Economic Development Commission. Mrs. Tinelli would like the EDC to be prepared when the time comes. The current Economic Development section of the Comprehensive Plan was written in 2010, and needs updating. Mrs. Tinelli would like to send the EDC members a survey addressing each component of the Economic Development portion of the current plan to collect feedback on what has been accomplished, and what is still relevant.
- D. Planning Commission Update (Kathy Deoudes):** This agenda item was not reported on during the September 23, 2020 Economic Development Commission meeting.
- E. QAC Small Business Assistance and Recovery Fund:** The Small Business Assistance and Recovery Fund has been re-opened and will be accepting applications until September 30, 2020. To date, the fund has supported 197 local businesses in the amount of \$2.3M. New applicants will take priority over those that have already received funding. The SBARF Committee has put aside \$100,000 in a Sanitation Fund to help local businesses sanitize if they have had an employee test positive for COVID. They received 16 applications (not all qualified for funding) with a maximum grant award of \$5,000.
- F. Travel & Tourism Advisory Committee:** The next meeting will be on September 24, 2020 via Zoom. The committee has created a resolution that has been approved by the County Commissioners. The topic of Thursday's meeting will be future committee member industry sectors, so that there is appropriate representation from throughout the County.

VII. New Business:

- A. Enterprise Zone-Barclay & Sudlersville Application:** Mrs. Tinelli attended at work session with the towns of Barclay & Sudlersville in regard to becoming a part of the current Enterprise Zone. Work on the application will begin once all information has been verified with the State of Maryland. This is a great opportunity to provide tax credits for this area.
- B. MEDA Annual Conference-Project Bright Future:** On September 22nd Mrs. Tinelli attended the virtual Maryland Economic Development Association Conference, where it was announced that Project Bright Future has received an honorary mention.
- C. Trade Liaison Position:** The Upper Shore Regional Council has set aside funds to help support this Trade Liaison position. Kent and Queen Anne's Counties are both in agreement to use these funds for this shared position. The details of the program and position are still in the planning stages.
- D. Workforce Development Project Roll Out:** In collaboration with the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, the department will be introducing a new Workforce Development Initiative. This program will work to pair local businesses who have the ability to offer in house training, with local motivated applicants. Employers enrolled in the program have the opportunity for wage reimbursement up to 50%.

VIII. Liaison Reports:

- A. Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce:** Linda Friday, Chamber President, provided an update on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. On September 22nd the Chamber attended a zoom call for the upcoming MEDA Conference, where it was announced that Project Bright Future has received an honorary mention from MEDA. There will be a mixer at the Kent Narrows Boatel on October 13th. On October 8th the Chamber will be hosting a Business Succession Planning Session via Zoom. The QAC Goes Purple campaign will run until the end of September. The Chamber is currently working on the new directory and planning their Pinnacle Awards.
- B. Kent Narrows Development Foundation:** Gigi Windley, Director, provided an update on behalf of the Kent Narrows Development Foundation. A recent extension has been granted for the Wells Cove development until March 11, 2021. Shore Power Solutions has moved from Harrison Yacht Yard to Kent Narrows Yacht Yard. There is a pedestrian way finding project underway, an RFP was presented at the Kent Narrows Development Foundation meeting on September 22nd. The Foundation recently met with QAC Planning & Zoning's Amy Moredock to discuss their Community Plan and how it links to the Comprehensive Plan update. There have not been any recent development discussions for the Jemal property. Safe Harbor development plans have been extended 60-90 days. They are looking at doing more commercial development vs. residential development as was identified in the original plans.
- C. August 2020 Real Estate Statistics:** Ed Beres updated the board with the August 2020 local market insight for Centreville and Stevensville. The statistics were passed out to the members present. There is a lack of inventory in the area right now. In 2019 there was 457 active listings, and in 2020, 198 active listings. The number of closed sales for August was up 37.4% over August 2019. They are anticipating a slow down as we head into the fall and winter months.
- D. Chesapeake College:** Dave Harper, VP of Workforce & Academic Programs provided and updated to the board on behalf of Chesapeake College. 85%-90% of current instruction is taking place online, but some programs are still offering face to face learning. Looking for more instruction to go live moving forward as safety allows. Just signed a fresh MOU with Adam Tolley and Queen Anne's County Public Schools.
- E. Queen Anne's County Planning and Zoning:** Brennan Tarleton, Planner, updated the board on behalf of Queen Anne's' County Planning and Zoning. Current projects include the Boatel Phase II, Postal Road Apartments, and the Barnstable Project. Miscellaneous projects include two Monopole Health Communication facilities, and the Goldsboro Material Mining project. The Big Truck Wye Farm Brewery plan is currently under the 25-day review. Wells Cove Development project received a 6-month extension to get their finances in order, and Perry's Retreat also received an extension, they are planning to break ground in Spring 2021.

- IX. Adjournment:** On a motion made by Mrs. Bennett, and seconded by Mr. Reynolds, the board unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting at 11:00am.