



Business Meeting Minutes for September 28th, 2022

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 & Visitors Center, 425 Piney Narrows Rd., 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:

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

Economic Development Commission:

- Jesse Parks, 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

Staff Present:

- Heather Tinelli, Director, Economic & Tourism Development
- Rebecca Clark, Economic Development Coordinator
- Lisa Gallow, Office Coordinator, ED & Tourism Dev. (via Zoom)

County Commissioners:

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

Others present:

Jack Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner (Zoom)

Gigi Windley, Director, Kent Narrows Development Foundation

Steve Johnson, Planner, QAC Planning & Zoning

Dave Harper, VP of Programs, Chesapeake College

Linda Friday, President, QAC Chamber of Commerce

Mike Clark, Executive Director, Housing & Family Services

Michelle Marshall, Housing Program Administrator, QAC Dept. of Community Services

II. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

On a motion made by Ed Beres and seconded by Larissa Costello, the September meeting agenda was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

On a motion made by Brian Demoss and seconded by Larissa Costello, the August meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

III. **Treasurers Report:** Mr. Beres share that the account managed by Chesapeake Charities has a current balance of \$2,791.02.

IV. **Commissioners Report:** County Commissioner, Jack Wilson provided the members with an update:

- A. Have recently been working on Parks projects, pricing, and planning. They will be adding 2 turf fields, one in North County and one at Batts Neck Park in Stevensville. These fields will help with local teams as well as tournaments that are hosted in the county.
- B. Kent Island Crossing Development was approved for water & sewer allocation. The site includes a 50,000 square foot grocer pad, 6 restaurant pads and an assisted living facility that will include an 85 apartments and healthcare facility withing the building. Mr. Wilson explained that he voted for the allocation because 90% of the assisted living occupants don't drive and the facility will offer a great opportunity to residents located on the west bound side of Rt 50 (Four Seasons and Gibson's Grant).

V. **Department of Economic & Tourism Development Update:** Heather Tinelli, Director of ED & Tourism Development, provided an update for the EDC members and liaisons.

- A. Continue to work with the new manager at the Queenstown Outlets. Supporting them in their efforts to facilitate some community outreach projects for the holidays to include holiday tree display and ice rink. They have seen an improvement in traffic counts as well as buses.
- B. Attended the County Transportation Priority Meeting with MDTA to discuss upcoming and ongoing projects.
- C. Each year they need to report for their Enterprise Zone which runs from the Bay Bridge up close to Queenstown ant Rt 50/301. There were a couple projects that applied and were improved. They will be shared in an annual report.
- D. There have been a couple Economic Development Incentive Fund applications that have been approved. Fox Acupuncture is looking to expand and add couple employees and Eastern Shore Urgent Care, which is now open, employing twelve and already looking to hire more.

- E. Had some training with the IT Dept. that included details on how to pull reporting from the planning software. Will offer a great opportunity to track new businesses and allow for us to reach out with support.
- F. Attended the Open Session at the American Legion regarding the NEPA Tier Two Study and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Crossing.
- G. Hosted a Regional Partners Meeting with the MD Dept. of Commerce and discussed ways in which we can work together with Economic Development partners in the region.
- H. Owners of Kentmorr Restaurant are retiring. Ms. Tinelli met with the Kentmorr Marina owners to discuss future plans. She also met with Tammy Harper to offer support to staff members that will be looking for new jobs. Ms. Harper said most have not had any issue relocating to new restaurants.
- I. MD Economic Development week is coming the week of October 23rd. The department is planning an event on October 21st
- J. Attended the quarterly Rural MD Council Meeting in Annapolis. Great to hear the funding opportunities as well as information about what projects others have done with the funds. It was shared that Susan O'Neil will be the new president of the council.
- K. Continue to work with Stevensville A&E on a regular basis.
- L. Ms. Tinelli and Ms. Plummer took a tour of the new Hyatt Place which is beautiful and a great addition to the area. They are hoping to be open by the end of the year.
- M. There are two upcoming meetings regarding Tourism that they will be attending. The first is a quarterly meeting with MDMO's and the second is the annual MTC event in Ocean City this year.
- N. The department received \$266,000 in marketing funds that are to be utilized for visitor attraction marketing. Ms. Tinelli shared that there are very specific rules in how the funds can be spent, however, this is an amazing opportunity, and they are very excited.
- O. The funds for the Ferry Feasibility Study were approved. The counties that were included in this were Queen Anne's, Anne Arundel, Somerset, St. Mary's, and Charles County.
- P. Staff attended the MD Motorcoach Conference that took place in Salisbury this year.
- Q. Continue to work with the QAC Watermen's Association regarding the Crab Basket Tree event which will take place on December 3rd this year.
- R. Community Development Efforts- Ms. Clark has been the lead with the Sudlersville Middle Feasibility Project. Recently had a meeting with local residents and the architects that presented their findings as well as many options for adaptive reuse of the building.
- S. Had DHCD return to Centreville for a follow meeting in which they toured Centreville to show and discuss their needs.
- T. Ms. Clark shared details regarding the upcoming event on October 21st as they kick off MD Economic Development Week. The Strengthening the Emerging Workforce Career Technology Tour which will be highlighting the work of Chesapeake College with either a Trades Careers Tour or a Health Care Careers Tour. Commissioner Wilson and Hazen Arnold will be speakers for the event and the afternoon lunch session will include a business round table where teachers and local business leaders will be able to make connections and discuss how to engage young people in the workforce.
- U. Backyard Brews with Benefits on October 30th at Kent Island Resort will showcase local breweries and raise funds for charity.

VIII. Liaison Reports

- A. **Queen Anne's County Career Technology Liaison:** Connie Dean briefed the Commission on current projects, events and details regarding Apprenticeship and Internship programs.
 - i. MD Business Roundtable Volunteer Training-
 - a. 12 business people attended training on September 13th.

- b. Sixteen 9th Grade classes are being taught between now and October 10th.
- c. MD Scholars lesson involving Career Development and Financial Literacy off the opportunity for business volunteers to share their business and career field with students.
- ii. Jr Achievement of the Eastern Shore has agreed to include QAC & Kent Counties in the JA Inspire Career Fair.
- iii. Ms. Dean led the QACPS Career & Technology Professional Development Day with 32 teachers and 21 local business people. Event began with a panel discussion and then teachers dispersed to go visit the local businesses. It was a great opportunity too enhance and develop partnerships between CTE teachers and local businesses related to what they teach.
- iv. Currently working on a project to video local businesses offering Internships and/or apprenticeships to add to the website and share on daily announcements at the high schools.
- v. Working to start a "Career Corner" on QACHS & KIHS morning news/announcements which offers awareness of career opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships to both teachers and students.

B. Kent Narrows Development Foundation: Gigi Windley, Executive Director provided an update on behalf of the Kent Narrows Development Foundation:

- i. Ms. Windley shared her new Post Cards.
- ii. The application to purchase Crab Baskets for the Holiday Tree can be found on the Kent Narrows website.
- iii. The Narrows Restaurant addition will be opening soon. The new addition will include an indoor meeting space that opens to an outdoor space.
- iv. The Hyatt Place is now taking reservations for the 28th of December.
- v. Continue to work on the Pedestrian Wayfinding Project. This is a multi-year project with the goal of reducing the sign clutter, enhancing the focal points, landscaping, and gateways. landscape and
- vi. Ms. Windley attended the Bay Bridge Crossing meeting and urges others to follow and attend meetings as this will drastically affect the corridor from Annapolis to the 301/50 split.

C. Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce-President, Linda Friday provided a brief update regarding the QAC Chamber activities and events.

- i. Had the kickoff for the QAC Goes Purple Drug Free Coalition Event in Centreville.
- ii. Local businesses donated school supplies as well as funds to purchase additional supplies that were delivered by Chamber staff to teachers that are new to the county. One of the local schools is in need of \$3000 for choir uniforms which consists of approximately 36 students. Ms. Friday asked if any local businesses are interested in donating funds to please let her know.
- iii. Have begun working on the 2023 Directory.
- iv. The Dock House Restaurant will be hosting the October Mixer on the 19th.
- v. The Chamber will be holding their Celebration of Business event to highlight businesses that are celebration milestones. The event will take place at the new Four Seasons Club House.
- vi. The Harvest Breakfast is on November 18th and will take place at Chesapeake College.
- vii. The Family Medical Pool that would require all businesses with a certain number of employees to contribute has been delayed until as late as 2025. Ms. Friday will provide more details as they are shared.

D. QAC Planning and Zoning-Steve Johnson, Planner with QAC Planning and Zoning, provided an update.

- i. Last evening the County Commissioners passed the TACO 22-02 bought forward by the Kent Island Yacht Club to allow limited overnight parking. This will become effective on November 12, 2022.
- ii. Earlier this month the Planning Commission approved 2 local commercial lots located in Ellendale behind Target in Stevensville.

E. Chesapeake College- Dave Harper, VP of Programs, Chesapeake College, provided an update regarding happenings at the college.

- i. Mr. Harper shared that they have recently booked 2 major events at the college and continue to suggest local hotels and restaurants to their attendees.
- ii. October 7th they will be having their Program Advisory Council Breakfast and are excited that the new QAC Superintendent of Schools will be attending.
- iii. They are excited about their collaboration with the Workforce Event on October 21st.
- iv. Will soon have a Full Time Manufacturing Program Coordinator position.
- v. Looking carefully at High School Dual Enrollment numbers which are higher and continuing to improve recruitment efforts for the CTE programs. Also focusing on recruitment of young adults, 20 to 24, that want to improve skills to upgrade current jobs.
- vi. Keeping a close ear on MD Blueprint trying to funnel 20, 30, or 45 percent of high school graduates to have either an apprenticeship or CTE credential

F. Real Estate-Ed Beres shared real estate statistics from surrounding counties to compare to QAC. The counties that were included were, Talbot, Caroline, Kent, and Anne Arundel:

- i. Most of summer has reflected a downturn in pricing, meaning that people are still asking for high price but not receiving. This is a drastic change from a year prior where sellers were receiving well over the asking price.
- ii. Active listings are low due to sellers having to sell prior to making a purchase of another home. With the interest rates rising and the lack of buyers the active listings will continue to stay low.

IX. New Business

A. Housing Study Update- Michelle Marshal and Mike Clark with QAC Housing and Community Services were here to share information regarding the Affordable Housing Study and plans moving forward.

- a. This study was completed just over a year ago due to the consistent plea for the opportunity for more affordable housing for QAC residents. Affordable Housing is defined as someone that can put 30% of their income into a home. Some of the main issues that were determined to be issues due to the lack of affordable housing are:
 - i. Commuting long distances for those trying to find housing
 - ii. Inadequate housing
 - iii. Overcrowded dwellings
 - iv. Homeless population with people sleeping in cars or staying in other homes

- b. Benefits of offering Affordable Housing to the Community:
 - i. Reduce financial stress
 - ii. Have more money available for essentials
 - iii. Shorter work commute
 - iv. More time for family
 - v. Reduce over crowding
 - vi. Seniors can downsize
 - vii. Higher educational achievement
 - viii. Better physical/mental health
 - ix. Adult children are able to continue living in the county
 - x. County will be better able to compete for qualified teachers, police officers, firefighters
 - xi. Increased employee retention and less turnover
- c. Created an Affordable Housing Committee to prioritize strategies:
 - i. Preserve existing housing
 - ii. Adopt Planning & Zoning Provisions to allow greater range of housing types
 - iii. Incentivize new housing
 - iv. Explore partnerships for affordable housing
 - v. Pursue additional financial resources
- d. Next Steps-
 - i. 2020 Housing Study was used in collaboration with the new Comprehensive Plan.
 - ii. Many strategies involve Planning & Zoning. Having the results incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan helps with the entire process.
 - iii. Determine community partners to help achieve strategies described in the study
 - iv. Determine which strategies are Most Important and Most Urgent
- e. The group established that steps 2, 3 and one were a priority.
- f. Organize a meeting with Planning & Zoning to discuss:
 - i. Importance of changing current provisions
 - ii. The current provisions hinderance on increasing the affordable housing stock
 - iii. What would the process for change look like and how do we start?
 - iv. Discussed Fees
 - v. Discussed incentives and waivers
 - vi. County should continue to support development using the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
 - vii. Research other DHCD programs that further affordable housing development.

The Affordable Housing Committee continues to work through the strategies and is facing many challenges, such as sewer allocation in specific regions. It was suggested that an EDC member participate on the committee and Commissioner Jack Wilson offered to participate as a Commissioner Liaison.

B. Bay Bridge Run Update-

- a. Run is November 13, 2022
- b. Expecting 16,000 racers this year. As of today, 43 states and DC are represented. Sixty Four percent are female verses male. Average age is 44.

- c. Race begins on western shore and ends at the Chesapeake Business Park in Stevensville where there will be food, music, drinks, and vendors.
- d. QAC Economic & Tourism Department is working on a digital campaign that is shared with the attendees through newsletter from Corrigan Sports. Will highlight local assets, restaurants etc. for visiting runners and drive them to the website for more information.
- e. They will be offering a virtual Goody Bag that businesses can create discounts to offer to runners.
- f. Parking will be available at Kent Narrows and Chesapeake College.
- g. This year there will be a packet pick up on the Eastern Shore.

X. Old Business:

- C. Board Terms & Positions** – Mr. Parks shared that all members that were eligible to renew their board membership for an additional term have provided the necessary documentation, but no one has shown interest in stepping forward for the open Chair position. Ms. Tinelli asked anyone that would be interested in that position or had any questions to please reach out to her to discuss.

- IX. Adjournment:** On a motion made by Shelly Gross-Wade and seconded by Ed Beres, the board unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting at 10:48 am.