

Economic Development Commission

The County Commissioners of Kent County

400 High Street, 3rd Floor

Chestertown, MD 21620

Audio recordings of the Economic Development Commission meetings can be found at <https://www.kentcounty.com/economic-development/board-meetings> click on the ‘Audio Recordings Tab’.

September 4, 2019

Commission Members Present: Jim Luff, Cindy Genter, Kate Gray, Rob Thompson, Tracey Williams, and Dick Story

Commission Members Absent: Aaron Bramble

Also in Attendance: Bob Jacobs, County Commissioner; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; William Mackey, Director and Stephanie Jones, Environmental Planner, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Jamie Williams, Director, Economic Development; and Emily McCoy, Assistant, Economic Development

At 2:03 p.m. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order.

Steve Meehan and Mark Vogel, Principals, Talbot Road, LLC provided an update on the Radcliffe Center Development and the validation for seeking a tax abatement from the County and the Town. The commission discussed a variety of options. Jamie Williams shared the amount of research and collaboration to consider a tax credit for multi-family housing. It was recommended that Ms. Williams, Ms. Genter, and Mr. Thompson share concept with the County Commissioners to determine if the efforts were warranted.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 7, 2019 meeting. On motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the August 7, 2019 meeting.

Ms. Jones introduced Mr. Mackey, Director, Planning Housing and Zoning. Mr. Mackey began his employment with the County on September 3, 2019. Ms. Jones shared the following updates:

- Code Home Rule Bill No. 3-2019 was adopted with amendments by the County Commissioners on August 20, 2019. This will add “animal shelters as defined by the County Code of Public Laws” to existing permitted principal uses and structures for veterinary hospital or clinic in the Agricultural Zoning District (AZD) and consistent language in the Industrial District (I).
- Code Home Rule Bill No. 5-2019 was adopted with amendments by the County Commissioners at the previous meeting (yesterday). Currently structures for buying, processing, and sale of farm products related to agriculture are limited to 25,000 square feet and is not defined to be on farms. This amendment will increase the size limit placed on structures to 50,000 square feet. The amendment from the Commissioners included removing ON FARMS from the proposed legislation allowing for these structures to be on 20 acres or less.

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- All Planning and Zoning services that the County have been completing for the Town of Rock Hall are now to be conducted by the Town of Rock Hall. The Town of Rock Hall hired Chris Jakubiak as their Town Planner. All permit and project applications are to go to the Town. The County will continue to review stormwater management and sediment control applicants for the Town.
- The County will be holding a Kickoff Meeting/training for the Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census. Be on the lookout for important information regarding the 2020 Census. Completing of the form can be done electronically for the 2020 Census and is very important that all are counted.
- Planning Commission cancelled for July. This month it will include;
 - Two applications for Ag Preservation Districts which are recommendations to the County Commissioners
 - Concept Site Plan Review for Chester River Properties, LLC. The applicants propose to renovate the two existing buildings at 31787 River Road, Millington, in the First Election District, in order to conduct commercial sales and service. The proposal also includes an outdoor storage area. The proposed outdoor sales area is indicated to be 7,000 square feet in a central location of the lot.
 - Setback Variance for a waste management structure

Barry Pritchard, SunX Analytical, LLC shared information about the industrial hemp industry. Mr. Pritchard provided economic data and information on the industry challenges and opportunities

Jamie Williams shared the EDC Nominating Committee Policy & Procedure. The revisions were distributed. Mr. Story made a motion to accept, Mr. Thompson seconded, and the members unanimously approved the EDC Nominating Committee Policy & Procedure.

Ms. Williams shared that scheduling conflicts with the October 2nd meeting and the commission unanimously agreed to move the meeting to October 9, 2019.

Kent County Economic Development received a grant award for \$30,000 from USDA Rural Development to partner with BAON Enterprises to provide workforce training. The first training will be fiber installation certification. Approval of a \$200,000 Rural Maryland Council grant for infrastructure at the Chestertown Business Campus was also received.

The housing webpage is progressing and is expected to be available in November. The partnership with the United Way continues. Ms. Heller and Ms. McCoy have been attending the meetings and offering county assistance. The webpage and surveys will be available on October 1, 2019.

Business Retention and Expansion Efforts include a partnership with the Department of Commerce to issue Citations of Celebration to local businesses celebrating milestone anniversaries. Maryland Economic Development Week is October 19-26, 2019, A proclamation from the Commissioners has been requested for October 15, 2019.

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Ms. Williams shared that Kent County was the number one in Maryland for the percentage of wage growth from 2017 to 2018.

Ms. McCoy demonstrated the mapping tools webpage.

The commission discussed incentives to promote single family residential development. The property tax credit for sprinkler systems, like the one being offered in Dorchester County, was discussed. Ms. Williams was directed to reach out to Dorchester County and request someone speak at a future EDC meeting.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Ms. Gray and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 pm. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at 3:00 pm in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Director