

Economic Development Commission
The County Commissioners of Kent County
400 High Street
Chestertown, MD 21620

March 2, 2016

Board Members Present: Bob Ampula, Kate Gray, Cindy Genther, Shreyas Suresh, and Jim Luff

Board Members Absent: Dan MacLeod, Bob Jacob and Aaron Bramble

Also in Attendance: Commissioner William Short; Shelley Herman, County Administrator; Amy Moredock, Director, Katrina Tucker, Community Planner, Stephanie Jones, Environmental Planner, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Buck Nickerson, Professional Land Surveyor, Extreme Measures; Jason Depp, Webmaster, Information Technology; Loretta Lodge, Executive Director, Kent County Chamber of Commerce; Kevin Shearon, Partner, Davis, Moore & Shearon; Doris Mason, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council and Sandy Coyman, Planning and Water Quality Consultant, Earth Data Incorporated

At 3:02 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2016 meeting. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the February 3, 2016 meeting.

Ms. Williams introduced Mr. Coyman. Mr. Coyman is the consultant working with Planning and Zoning on the update of the Kent County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Coyman discussed the process and wanted to hear the Commission's ideas and comments, specifically regarding the update to the Economy section of the Plan. Ms. Moredock elaborated on Mr. Coyman's experience and expertise in comprehensive planning and some of his work history including his insight in developing the Total Maximum Daily Load milestones addressing watershed implementation goals. Mr. Coyman shared that Earth Data has done hundreds of projects in Kent County and surrounding communities.

The required elements of the Comprehensive Plan include: growth tiers; goals and objectives, land use, transportation, water resources, sensitive areas, development regulations, mineral resources, fisheries, community facilities, and critical state concern areas. Further Comprehensive Plan elements include: natural resources, pollution control, public utilities, priority preservation area, community renewal, conservation, flood control, and housing. The update timeline is meant to culminate with a final draft for a County Commissioner's public hearing and approval of the updated Comprehensive Plan by December 2016.

The process begins with reviewing policies and proposals and a background report which includes statistics and demographics. Public outreach will be the next step, postcards will be sent out to all property tax payers to make them aware of the update. There will be a series of open meetings to hear public concerns. Once the Planning Commission has completed their

work, the Plan will be forwarded to the County Commissioners for approval. The Commission members, as well as audience members introduced themselves to Mr. Coyman. Ms. Moredock shared that the Comprehensive Plan should be the overarching document that drives the strategies and philosophies of the County.

Ms. Moredock gave a Planning and Zoning update sharing current projects. A public hearing was held on a zoning text amendment to allow for larger signage in the village districts. The text amendment is a prelude to a site plan that is expected to be submitted by Oxford Chase for a Dollar General, retail store, in Worton. Ms. Moredock stated the department is spending a lot of time recently with the Public Service Commission regarding the proposed utility scale solar projects. Two applicants are currently seeking to circumvent the Forest Conservation Area regulations. Ms. Moredock shared some basic information on the Mills Branch (Apex) solar project, and this case that relates to a 1990 preemption decision that the Planning Commission Attorney feels is being erroneously applied. Planning personnel are heavily involved in updating the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission is meeting the first Wednesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. in Comprehensive Plan work sessions. The public is encouraged to attend. The meetings will also be live streamed and may be viewed on the County's website.

Mr. Depp reviewed the forum that was created for the Economic Development Commission members to share information about website improvements. The forum was created as a vehicle to gather input and garner conversations around the Economic Development portion of the website. We have begun developing new features and rebuilding the content to improve the overall usability and ensure that finding resources is convenient and efficient. Mr. Depp shared that the outcome relies heavily on input from the Commission members as the subject experts. The Commercial Property Database and a new Business Directory are currently being developed and should be available soon. Mr. Depp shared that the information will be moderated by the County. Commissioner Short shared that Mr. Depp has added Kent County, Maryland Government to LinkedIn. Mr. Suresh asked if small groups could be created for smaller groups to collaborate, after some discussion the group decided to leave the topics open so that everyone can participate.

Ms. Williams reminded everyone that Secretary Michael Gill, Maryland Department of Commerce would be visiting Kent County on April 13, 2016. The County was asked to invite elected officials and economic development personnel. Ms. Mason attended Secretary Gill's visit with Cecil County and shared the type of subject matters that were discussed during their meeting.

Ms. Williams shared that she completed the International Economic Development Council, Business Retention and Expansion training. Workforce development and workforce readiness is a recurring issue for businesses. Mr. Ampula shared that in Salt Lake City, the local high school students also attend apprenticeship classes at a local community college. Ms. Herman shared that the Local Management Board at the direction of the Governor's Office of Children focus on disconnected youth, defined at 18-24 year olds that are not enrolled in school

or employed. Ms. Gray shared that Human Resources at Dixon would be a resource on this subject as they have had to develop their own programs.

Mr. Luff shared that Commissioner Short wanted the Commission to weigh in on the amendments for signage and second hand stores currently being reviewed. After a brief discussion on the two bills the Commission agreed to support both bills. On motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Commission agreed to send a letter of support for both amendments. Mr. Luff will draft the letters and forward to Ms. Williams to get them added to the Commissioners' packet for the following Tuesday.

Ms. Genter shared she is drafting a residential housing update for the Commission and the Commissioners.

A motion was made by Ms. Gray, seconded by Mr. Ampula, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 p.m. The Board agreed to meet again on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams
Coordinator