



Audio recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found on the Recordings Tab.

July 13, 2022

Commission Members Present: Sandy Scott, Charlie Athey, Paula Reeder, Aaron Bramble, Tracey Williams, and Rob Thompson

Members Absent: Dick Story

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Dawson Hunter, Housing and Community Coordinator, Economic and Tourism Development; Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; and Shelley Heller, County Administrator

At 2:59 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from June 8, 2022, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Scott, June 8, 2022, minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Mackey shared that Kenah One Health Care Services is applying for a special exception to expand their services in Worton. Kenah One operates an assisted living facility with ten beds at 25000 Lambs Meadow Road, which is zoned Village. The proposal would allow the facility to serve adults with mental health and substance use disorders who need rehabilitative services over a 30- to 90-day period. Kenah One affirmed that its current residents would be able to continue to be served under assisted living. The application for a special exception will be scheduled for review by the Planning Commission and the Board of Appeals.

Kent Sand and Gravel, LLC applied for a minor site plan for 13505 Alexander Road, which is zoned Agricultural Zoning District (AZD). The proposal is to demolish an existing scale-house and office building and replace them with a larger 56-foot by 14-foot building that will serve the same purpose and provide additional room. This will not require the Planning Commission's review.

Kent County has a variety of business openings, ribbon cuttings, and other business events that play a key role in encouraging and highlighting local investment by current and prospective businesses. Staff and Commission members are encouraged to attend when available, it is important to create supportive experiences at these events.

The Comprehensive Rezoning Task Force will meet on Wednesday, July 27, at 6 p.m. The Task Force will review the last of the requests for specific text changes by the public, proposed changes by the consultant for the sign code, and proposed changes by the consultant to the nonconformities chapter. The goal is to work through the consultant's work products by the end of calendar year. Legislation would follow in 2023. The next step would be the review of the zoning map, most likely in 2024.

Mr. Mackey confirmed that the Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning has been kept informed of Richardson Properties' plans for the parcels located on 301 and a formal site plan application is expected as the next step.

Mr. Hunter shared the pilot shuttle data. Ridership has continued to increase each week with the July 4th weekend having 265 riders and 632 trips. Most trips were in the Rock Hall area however, traffic is increasing to Chestertown and Tolchester as more marketing efforts are deployed, and service is being shared by riders and businesses. Promotion is the key, Haven Harbour and Tolchester Marina have been the biggest commercial promoters. The drivers are Rick Carter, Delmarva Craft, owner, and four part-time employees. It is important we understand that: \$5 and \$10 will not sustain a service like this, without business and government support the rates would have to increase. Tourists are good with the rates; local riders have asked for vouchers for free or reduced rates. The concerns expressed with Delmarva Community Transit services are they are not convenient and not user friendly.

Jamie Williams requested a letter of support for the Town of Millington and the Town of Galena's grant application to the Rural Maryland Council for a transportation project for residents to access medical needs. Millington and Galena have committed \$45,000 each to project. A motion was made by Ms. Reeder to provide a letter of support, seconded by Mr. Thompson, and carried unanimously.

Jamie Williams shared the Rural Economic Development Fund recipients will be decided by the County Commissioners and no review committee was required. The Department of Economic and Tourism Development received twelve project submissions. Ms. Wright developed ads regarding short term rentals and lodging tax, staff is focused on providing awareness and education.

Ms. Carter shared that a Canadian freelance writer will be hosted on July 23, 2022, to focus on the Great Chesapeake Bay Loop and will be visiting Annapolis, Talbot County, Chestertown, and Rock Hall. A writer from a Harrisburg, PA newspaper will be hosted in August, date to be determined, with a focus on the Arts. Destination Maryland is the official state visitors guide and provides a free business listing to tourism businesses. Grant reporting for FY2022 has been completed, all state funds were utilized. Co-op advertising opportunities are being explored for FY2023 by identifying markets and maintaining a mix of print, digital, radio and television ads. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra will be in Chestertown on August 6, 2022, at Wilmer Park.

Ms. Wright created business cards with a QR code directing users to the Career Opportunities page on the Kent County website to be passed out at job fairs. A one-page employee benefits summary was created and posted on the Human Resources web page to provide benefits information to potential applicants. The Youth Opportunities page will focus on all entry level positions. Project Restore opened July 7, 2022 and will run through September 8, 2022. Information regarding Project Restore was shared on social media and featured in the Economic Development newsletter. A copy of the final 2022 Strategic Plan was provided to commission members.

Mr. Thompson asked about the status of 98 Riverfront Grille. Nina Fleegle, Executive Director, Chestertown Historic Main Street shared an update.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Thompson, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:13 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director