



## Economic & Tourism Development Commission

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

**September 8, 2021**

Commission Members Present: Aaron Bramble, Dick Story, Rob Thompson, Chikki Shajwani, Tracey Williams, and Suzanne Einstein

Commission Members Absent: Sandy Scott and Dolores Jones

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, and Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Assistant, Economic and Tourism Development; Shelley Heller, County Administrator

At 3:03 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2021, Economic and Tourism Development Commission meeting. On motion by Mr. Thompson and second by Ms. Williams, the August 11, 2021, minutes were unanimously approved.

Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning provided an update of the department and projects. The Comprehensive Rezoning Update Task Force will meet to continue its review of selected requests for specific text changes with a focus on administrative matters. The Task Force will also review its draft recommendations which will be the subject of a Public Forum the end of October. The Planning Commission reviewed an application by Atlantic Tractor for a Site Plan Review (Concept & Preliminary) for a new 6,000 square-foot repair facility. The Planning Commission approved the site plan with conditions. A second set of items for Great Oak Manor were submitted; however, the Preliminary Site Plan for two cottages was postponed at the request of the applicant, and the Concept Site Plan for a pavilion at Great Oak Manor was withdrawn by the applicant.

Bryan Matthews from Kent Forward provided an update. In 2010 Washington College, Kent and Queen Anne's Hospital, and Dixon Valve formed Kent Forward as the three largest employers in Kent County. Mr. Matthews provided a handout showing what the basic building blocks of Kent Forward were back in 2010. The focus is to attract people to come to Kent County to live and work, identifying strategies to support that goal. An equal amount of energy is getting put into business development, education, and infrastructure. According to Mr. Matthews, "Kent Forward continues to look for ways to help improve our public schools, encourage efficiencies and collaboration in our local governments, and advocate for issues that lead to business development and job growth for Kent County."

Jamie Williams shared the 2020 census data recently released. Kent County lost 999 residents from 2010 to 2020 which is a 4.9% decrease. Kent County lost 263 housing units which is a 2.5% decrease. The household population average for Kent County went from 2.29 to 2.21. Land use and property tax revenue by type was shared and Resource-Based Industry data was shared as compared to other counties similar in size by landmass.

Ms. Carter, Tourism Manager, shared updated videos on each of Kent County's incorporated towns, Chestertown, Betterton, Galena, Millington, and Rock Hall. Each video is 30 seconds and will be made available to each town to use on their websites, will be posted on the County website, and Tourism's YouTube channel. Ms. Carter is working on a Kent County Byways video. The County Commissioners declared Underground Railroad month by signing a proclamation. There are two federally designated sites in Kent County currently, two additional sites are expected to submit applications to the Network to Freedom.

Ms. Wright, Economic Development Manager, shared the second round of telework grants open on Friday for businesses and nonprofits. A high number of job listings were pushed out on social media this month. Ms. Wright shared ads listed in Business Expansion Journal and Site Selection magazine. Ads are being designed for the Hunt issue of the Tidewater Trader for Economic Development and Chestertown hotDesks.

Jamie Williams provided an overview of the public input meeting which was held on August 18, 2021. Ten people attended in person and seven people attended virtually. Previous Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) charts were on display and additional SWOT was discussed. The topic of "What did we learn from Covid?" and open discussion was very energetic.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Story and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:26 p.m. and the Commission agreed to meet again on Tuesday, October 12, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director  
Department of Economic and Tourism Development