



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

October 12, 2022

Commission Members Present: Aaron Bramble, Charlie Athey, Dick Story, Tracey Williams, and Rob Thompson

Commission Members Absent: Paula Reeder and Sandy Scott

Also in Attendance: Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Dawson Hunter, Housing and Transportation Coordinator, Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development; and Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning

At 3:01 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from September 14, 2022, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr. Athey, September 14, 2022, minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Mackey shared that from October 25th to 27th, 2022, a planning charrette is scheduled to be held at the Millington Firehouse sponsored by the Millington Lion's Club. Members of the public, local elected officials, and County and Town staff are invited to participate. The charrette will focus on the future of a group of properties located east of US Route 301, which are represented by Russ Richardson's team. A variety of County staff are being asked to provide brief presentations in areas of their subject matter expertise, and Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning will provide volunteer facilitators for the table exercises. There will be daily activities and planning exercises, and an evening presentation on Wednesday.

The Planning Commission approved the changes to the Animal Care Shelter of Kent County including building color.

The Comprehensive Rezoning and Update Task Force met on September 28, 2022 and reviewed the proposed changes to the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) by the consulting firm ZoneCo. Sean Suder led the group through the new draft LUO, which contains the graphics, matrices, and consultant-recommended text changes including merging six of the zoning districts into three. The goal for the process is to hold a December 14, 2022, public forum to wrap up the consultant's work in December.

Chestertown is experiencing somewhat of a building boom. In 2019, there was one single-family dwelling built in the town. In 2020, there were thirteen. In 2021, there were ten. In 2022, there are twenty-seven being built. At the same time, the other towns together have built about a dozen new houses, and the County has built eighty houses. In the County, there appears to be a significant number of demolitions; however, net growth is difficult to determine.

David Foster, Mayor, Town of Chestertown, shared the development philosophy of Chestertown while they value retirees, the town's focus needs to be on the attraction and retention of young families. The Town of Chestertown's priorities includes affordable housing, education, and youth activities. During the last decade, Kent County lost 5% of its population while Chestertown grew by 5%. The Town of Chestertown has a close working relationship with Ms. Jamie Williams and the County in particular regard to the Enterprise Zone which benefited businesses such as Dixon, LaMotte, and Zelda's. A major rehabilitation was completed at Brook Meadow Apartments on Flatland Road, 35 last year and 35 this year. Tourism has made a comeback after the pandemic and the Farmer's Market has improved because of some of the forced changes and is considered one of the best in the State. Mayor Foster shared views on the tax differential and the need for an unbiased analysis on the topic. The Town is cautiously optimistic that the Chestertown Armory property will move forward to develop a hotel on the site and Washington College is considering the development of a hospitality program at the facility.

Ms. Boulden shared that Ms. Jamie Williams and Ms. Wright met with Jillyn Coleman, Director, and Recreation, to discuss collaborating on social media and email outreach to assist with marketing efforts of programming offered for youth and older adults. Ms. Jamie Williams and Ms. Wright met with Jo Manning, Town Manager, Town of Millington, to discuss the Commercial Property Database, Business Directory, and the Events Calendar the department manages to promote the town. The Micro-Ag Grant will open on January 2, 2023, and close on January 31, 2023. The process will be overseen by Ms. Wright and Ms. Boulden with the assistance of a selection committee. A ribbon cutting will be held on October 14, 2022, at the Galena Elementary School to celebrate the official opening of the town's new walking path.

Ms. Carter attended the October 11, 2022, Commissioners' meeting to have the annual grant agreement signed for \$232,896 to market Kent County to visitors. Ms. Carter is working with the Museums of Kent County to assist with the planning of the annual museum driving tour in May of 2023. Ms. Carter attended the Maryland Destination Marketing Organizations retreat to discuss the State of Maryland marketing strategy for 2023. The Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) will hold the annual Media Marketplace Conference on October 18th to 20th, 2022.

Mr. Hunter is working with Planning and Zoning to map town and county subsidized dwelling units to be published on the Kent County website. The Rock Hall Shuttle has had over 2,500 riders, making over 5,000 trips. The Shuttle will continue through December 10, 2022, with the support of a grant from the Kent County Health Department.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story, seconded by Mr. Athey, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:34 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director