

# *Economic Development Advisory Board*

*The County Commissioners of Kent County*

*400 High Street*

*Chestertown, MD 21620*

**August 5, 2015**

Board Members Present: Robert Jacob, Bob Ampula, Kate Gray, Aaron Bramble and Jim Luff

Board Members Absent: Cindy Genter and Dan MacLeod

Also in Attendance: Commissioner William Short, Shelley Herman, County Administrator, Scott Boone, Director, Information Technology, and Hannah Kinne, Intern, Commissioners' Office

At 3:00 p.m. the meeting convened. Mr. Luff called the meeting to order. Ms. Williams introduced Shelley Herman, the new County Administrator, Catherine Molz, Coaching by Catherine, and Hannah Kinne, Summer Intern, Commissioners' Office. Ms. Williams also welcomed Mr. Bramble as a new Board Member.

Mr. Boone asked if there were any questions or updates required. Mr. Luff asked what the County currently had by way of signed tower agreements. Mr. Boone shared that Kent County had Altius (BridgeMAXX), Cambio, and Delmava WiFi and they were all working in the County. Mr. Jacob asked what areas each entity would primarily cover. Mr. Boone shared that Delmarva WiFi is the old WaveVision footprint and BridgeMAXX is the core, working their way up towards Kinnards Point, Betterton, Galena, Kennedyville, Worton, Chestertown, and Rock Hall. Cambio lit up Tolchester Marina and is looking to service the Tolchester area. BridgeMAXX and Cambio are starting from the ground up. Ms. Gray asked if Cambio was still attempting to locate office space. Mr. Bramble and Ms. Gray will follow up.

Mr. Luff requested a motion to approve the minutes from the July 1, 2015 meeting, on motion by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Mr. Bramble, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the July 1, 2015 meeting.

The Economic Development Advisory Board bylaws were discussed. Mr. Luff shared there was not much of a difference between a Commission and Board. Mr. Ampula shared that per last month's minutes Commissioner Pickrum stated that he would like to see the "Advisory" removed from the Board's name. Mr. Luff stated that a Commission has a set of definitive actions. Mr. Ampula asked what the Commissioners want to hear from the Board. Ms. Gray shared that even in the case of Queen Anne's County the Commission only has an advisory power. Mr. Ampula wants to see accountability and performance measures, i.e. number of visits to local businesses each year and meetings attended. The Economic Development Plan dated October 2013, needs to be updated to include those performance measures. The Board agrees that placing a notice in the Kent County News would be appropriate to share what has happened with Economic Development in Kent County. Mr. Luff stated that the Board should take the lead to revise the bylaws. Mr. Ampula agreed that a working group, through email would be sufficient. Mr. Luff will lead and Mr. Ampula, Mr. Jacob, and Ms. Gray will work on a first draft to be presented at the September meeting. On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr.

Ampula, the Board unanimously agreed that Mr. Luff would lead the charge of revising Chapter 21. Economic and Tourism Development in the Code of Public Local Laws, Kent County.

Ms. Molz shared that she is venturing into a new small business endeavor in Chestertown, after retiring as a psychotherapist. The new business is Coaching by Catherine, focusing on effective communication. Ms. Molz shared that she has met with Rich Loeffler, Small Business Development Center and he has given her guidance to get started, she has met with Ms. Williams, and plans to join the Chamber. Ms. Molz offers a 30-minute phone consultation to see if the partnership will be a good fit. Ms. Molz shared her desire to remain small. Mr. Ampula recommended contacting the local Chapter of SCORE.

Mr. Luff asked for an update on the revolving loan fund. Two local businesses have been forwarded loan applications, with the parameters previously discussed. Ms. Williams shared that the internal procedures need to be drafted and once finalized they will be presented to the Commissioners for approval. Once all the requirements are met and the application is complete, SCORE would be contacted to review the application. Once all paperwork and requirements are deemed satisfactory to SCORE, the application would be forwarded to the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) for review and recommendation to the Commissioners for approval.

Ms. Gray asked if we should talk about the possibility of natural gas coming to Kent County. Ms. Williams shared that there was a closed session meeting about the possibility of bringing natural gas to Kent County. The three largest employers were in attendance and showed an interest in exploring the possibility. A representative from the Maryland Energy Administration will be in traveling in the County to gauge the amount of interest in pursuing the possibility.

A motion was made by Mr. Ampula and seconded by Mr. Jacob and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:06 p.m. The Board agreed to meet again on Wednesday, September 2, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams  
Coordinator