



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

**August 11, 2021**

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

Commission Members Absent: Sandy Scott, Tracey Williams, and Dolores Jones

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, and Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Assistant, Economic & Tourism Development

At 3:03 p.m. Mr. Bramble called the meeting to order. Mr. Bramble requested a motion to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2021, Economic & Tourism Development Commission meeting. On motion by Mr. Thompson and second by Mr. Story, the July 14, 2021, minutes were unanimously approved.

Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning provided an update of the department and projects. On August 11 and 25, 2021, the Task Force will meet to continue to discuss requests for specific text changes with a focus on changes related to the Agricultural Zoning District and agricultural uses. The Task Force is about halfway through the items to be reviewed. In the Fall, the Task Force will begin to review the broader code changes including condensing the code, inserting specific text changes, and reviewing the best practices recommendations forthcoming from the consultant. Regarding the matter of the American Legion and Minary's Dream Alliance, the Board of Appeals voted the American Legion is a legally nonconforming use and did not abandon its nonconforming use. The Planning Commission met and approved Great Oak Manor's final site plan for a permanent tent pad and tabled the preliminary site plan for cottages and a pavilion. The Planning Commission approved Dr. Smack's final site plan for a wine tasting facility and recommended favorably on the proposal to amend the County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan for Mrs. Reed's request to transfer one water and sewer allocation from one property to another.

Emiliano Espinosa, Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) provided an update on hotDesks. There are hotDesks locations in Easton, Salisbury, Denton, Cambridge, and Chestertown currently and serves as a coworking space. A member pays a membership fee based on usage and is given a key card to access the building. The Chestertown hotDesks location has three offices with two currently leased. ESEC is looking to market more through social media and raise awareness with the goal of building a network of entrepreneurs supporting one another and working together. A few locations have been explored in Downtown Chestertown to see if it would serve as a location for hotDesks.

Jamie Williams reminded the Commission, there will be a public input meeting on August 18, 2021, at 6 p.m. for the update to the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The meeting will be in person and virtual. The International Economic Development Council is hosting a webinar on August 19, 2021, on Strategic Planning. Bryan Matthews is currently

leading the Kent Forward efforts and will be our guest speaker at the September meeting. Ms. Williams will be presenting the opportunity to apply for Census Tract 9505, to be designated as an Enterprise Zone, which included the Town of Rock Hall to the Mayor and Council of Rock Hall. The application is extensive and must be a joint application between the town and county. Enterprise Zone designation allows income tax credit and property tax credit for businesses that add jobs and make capital investment in the property.

Ms. Carter shared Economic & Tourism Development is working on a monthly newsletter highlighting monthly events and building the database for the newsletter. Shalyn is working on listing Kent County annual events on regional event calendars. Ms. Carter is working on the ad plan for FY2022. Jana met with representatives from the National Park Service and the Pride of Baltimore at Georgetown Yacht Basin. Both are planning on visiting Georgetown in October and will be offering public and invitation only sails. Ms. Carter is reaching out to the Kitty Knight House and the Fish Whistle to partner on the war of 1812 theme during the visit. Jana will be meeting with Washington College to discuss ways to reach students, potential students, and families to further promote Kent County.

Ms. Williams shared the photo contest judging is complete and votes are being tallied to determine winners. Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, continues to push out numerous job openings on social media. The Online Sales/Teleworking grant program will reopen soon, the Maryland Department of Commerce is providing Kent County with an additional \$15,991.00. Five \$3,000.00 grants will be available.

Nina Fleegle, Executive Director, Main Street Chestertown, presented information on Project Restore. Any business who qualifies can receive one year of rent up to \$2,500.00 per month. A sample application will be available on the DHCD website. The application will open on September 8, 2021. The two grants are rental assistance and business operations.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Story and seconded by Mr. Thompson, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:26 p.m. and the Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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