



Economic & Tourism Development Commission

January 8, 2025

Commission Members Present: Charlie Athey, Paula Reeder, Sandy Scott, Judy Gifford, David Bowman, Judy Crow, and Dick Story.

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Abbott, Economic Development Manager, Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager, and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development.

At 3:00 p.m. Mr. Story called the meeting to order. Mr. Story requested a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024, meeting. On a motion by Ms. Reeder seconded by Ms. Scott, the minutes of December 11, 2024, were unanimously approved.

Bernard Carter Jr., Loan Officer Consultant, Maryland Capital Enterprises, Inc. (MCE) presented an overview of the services provided by MCE. Mr. Carter advised that MCE is a non-profit organization and a micro-lender. Loans vary from \$5,000 to \$150,000. They provide services to people who have challenges with traditional lending institutions. Mr. Carter shared that they service the Eastern Shore, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County. Services are offered to start-ups as well as existing businesses that have been in business for 12 months or more. Start-up businesses are eligible for up to \$35,000. Mr. Carter shared that MCE also runs the Women's Business Center which assists women looking to diversify. They assist businesses through the entire process, including preparing business plans and creating an executive summary at no charge. He further shared that the lack of follow-through by applicants is the largest reason that there are not more loans in Kent County from MCE. Mr. Carter advised that MCE receives funding from the Video Lottery Terminal via grants, the Small Business Administration (SBA) as a certified SBA micro-organization, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Business and Industry loan program.

Ms. Williams shared The Governor of Maryland's initiative to allow beer and wine to be sold in grocery stores, there does not seem to be a desire to pursue the initiative in Annapolis. Three staff members will be attending the Chesapeake Bayways and Gateways Destination Assessment Workshops in Annapolis this month, representing Betterton, Chestertown, and Rock Hall. The workshops will allow the Towns to define initiatives they want to work towards when it comes to visitation. The National Parks Service and Preservation Maryland will be giving presentations about programs and grants. Ms. Abbott will be attending the MEDA Winter Conference, 2025 Legislative Outlook for Economic Development.

Mr. Story advised the Commission shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the calendar year. An opportunity was provided for interested candidates, Mr. Athey, Ms. Gifford, and Ms. Reeder, to speak before the vote. Mr. Athey was confirmed as the new Chair and Ms. Reeder was elected as the new Vice Chair. They will assume their respective role, effective immediately.

Ms. Williams shared that Ms. Scott's second full term will end in April and that she is not eligible to serve another term at this time. Ms. Williams shared that the Commission should include representation from

throughout the county. She further advised that we are always looking for additional interest forms. Ms. Williams advised that Mr. Athey's term will also be expiring, however, he will be eligible for re-appointment.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Athey seconded by Ms. Scott, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:01 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD
Director