



TALBOT COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
215 Bay Street, Suite #5 | EASTON, MARYLAND 21601 | (P) 410-770-8058 (F) 410-770-8059

Talbot County Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, March 2, 2017

Members Present: Chairman Timothy G. Jones; Walter Chase, Gerald O'Mara, Craig Wanner, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Scott Beatty, Jacqueline Wilson, Al Silverstein, Dr. Clay Railey, Andrea Lev, Jennifer Shull

Members Excused: Shannon Dill, Peter Dunbar, Terenda Thomas

Ex Officio Members Present: R. Andrew Hollis, Jennifer Williams, Mike Henry, Cassandra Vanhooser, Sam Shoge, and Ryan Snow

Attendees: Scott Warner, Debbie Bowden

Recording Secretary: Candace Harris

Call to Order: Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, with a quorum, at 9:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the February meeting were presented. Mr. Silverstein moved that the minutes be accepted as written with necessary changes. Mr. Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Business Appreciation Award Breakfast: Ryan Snow discussed the breakfast and announced that the Lt. Governor would be the speaker. Mr. Snow said that staff members have discussed the awards and decided to form a program committee. He then asked for volunteers for the committee to make some improvements.

Mr. Silverstein asked if the members were going to do as has been done in the past with having each community nominate someone. Mr. Jones said the committee would discuss that and other ways to make the program better. Mr. Jones said in the past not all industry segments have been represented. He asked the question: "Is this really about giving awards or thanking the business community?" He then said that we should talk about successes in the community and celebrate something that has been done in each community.

Ms. Shull suggested that, rather than just finding a business to plug a hole, the group should look at the broader community and recognize what they have done to provide improvements. Ms.



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Shull said that we have done this in the past and three years later they have folded up and gone away. Mr. Snow said that there is definitely room for improvement with this program.

Ms. Williams said that instead of having certain categories to open it up to a variety of different businesses we want to applaud for different reasons, successes we want to celebrate within the county. Ms. Shull suggested that we could find a way for people from our community to bring that to our attention. Ms. Williams suggested that the county adopt broader criteria so that we don't have to fit them into these specific categories.

Mr. Beatty recommended that the EDC give four awards for community impact. Mr. Jones asked him to elaborate. He said it could economic, volunteerism, whatever was notable. Mr. Silverstein stated that he liked the idea of general categories. He said that you could look at the volunteer fire department or the school system — there are lots of different things you could honor with a more generalized approach. Ms. Wilson, Ms. Shull, Mr. Beatty, and Mr. Silverstein volunteered to be members on this committee.

Logo Design for Department of Economic Development and Tourism: Mr. Shoge announced that the team has been working with a graphic designer to develop an image to capture the synergy between Economic Development and Tourism. Mr. Shoge passed around different examples of the design for the new logo and asked the Board to take a look at the logo. He said the draft logo has blue to represent water, green to represent land and agriculture, and yellow to represent bright vision for the future as well as industry. He then opened the floor up for comments.

Mr. Silverstein asked if the logo concept had been test marketed. Mr. Shoge said that we did with Tim and the people in the building. Mr. Jones said that we have to still work on the tag line and he thinks it looks like Dorchester's logo. There is some value in having some synergy of the region but we don't want to be confused with Dorchester. Tim said when you look at all three iterations together that gives you a different perception. Beyond the brand what is really important is the content.

Mr. Shoge said now that we actually have an image and the logo behind our brand that we are building we can start rolling out different platforms. We can start developing regular newsletters to capture success stories in the community and to share those stories; we can start creating social media pages to engage the populist and get them excited about economic development, we can build upon our linked in strategies so we can interface regularly with our business leaders who are very active on linked in. Ms. Weisman stated that the shades of green and blue are very similar to the DNR logo.



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The Listening Session: Mr. Jones said he thought that this was a great session. Clearly they had some different ideas, but at the end people started sharing. HE said that this is the kind of forum we need, and we need to do this more frequently to keep folks engaged. There are some concerns. For example, it's unfortunate that the county gets blamed for the health department. But overall, he was every encouraged by the conversation.

Sam said any feedback on these forums will be very helpful. Al mentioned that it was a little difficult to hear. Ms. Shull said she doesn't know what you are doing to capture information about people who attended, maybe have a sign-in sheet or get their emails. Mr. Shoge said that we will definitely do that for the next time.

Mr. Jones also reported that Cassandra and Sam presented the budget request to the County Council. The base budget is flat. There is a reallocation of costs particularly to advertising which has a \$20,000 line item in addition of that we have submitted a supplemental request for an additional \$25,000 with the understanding that the money will be made available to be used for Economic Development advertising. I feel the staff put together a very reasonable budget plan.

Committee Reports: Mr. Bautz reported that the business environment committee met on February 21. The focus of that session was discussing the real property tax credit the county implemented as a function of the strategic plan. The legislation was approved roughly three years ago and no one has used it. We started to probe into how much is in the reserve which is \$50,000 and started to brainstorm different ways to tweak the resolution to make it a responsive type of tool for the office to use.

County Manager's Report: Mr. Hollis reported that the County Council has contracted CTC to submit a proposal to look at broadband connectivity. He said that this it is a very big first step, but in the case of Kent County, they are spending over \$4 million dollars to actually install. He noted that the County does not have any money budgeted for this initiative at this time.

Council introduced two resolutions for the leases for Maverick and Whalen at the old Black & Decker building. The EDC is to be congratulated because the issue with Whalen came up at this meeting, and Ms. Vanhooser and her team jumped on it very quickly. He note that he is really glad that is has come to fruition. Mr. Hollis said that he is very proud of the way Talbot County reacted. Ms. Vanhooser is going to spearhead a meeting with Top of the Bay Pet Lodge, and . the town of Trappe will be invited to the table, as well. "I am very disturbed by the comments the gentlemen made, and we are going to do a good job to address his needs as much as we can," Mr. Hollis noted.



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Someone asked for clarification of when the former Black & Decker building will to be torn down. Mr. Hollis said there is an 8- to 10-year window. We are executing five-year leases with the option for one-year renewals.

Members of the EDC then provided updates on their businesses after which Mr. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meeting

Town of Oxford Listening Session will be held April 6 at 8 a.m. at the Oxford Community Center.

Town of St. Michaels Listening Session will be held May 4 an 8 a.m. at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's Van Lennup Auditorium