



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 from June 7, 2018

Members Present: Al Silverstein, Chairman, Jackie Wilson, Vice Chairman, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Peter Dunbar, Tim Jones, Cassandra Vanhooser, Craig Wanner, Margaret Enloe, Andy Hollis, Reza Jafari, Shannon Dill, Gerald O'Mara

Members Absent:, Andrea Lev, Walter Chase, Jean Weisman, Scott Beatty, Jennifer Williams, Terenda Thomas, Mike Henry

Department of Economic Development Staff Present: Sam Shoge, Ryan Snow, Kathy Megahan

Attendees: Tracy Ward, Helga Einhorn, Daphne Cawley-Edwards, Debbie Holmes-Leber

Call to Order: Al Silverstein called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:06 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the May 3, 2018 meeting were presented. Mr. Jafari moved the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Guest Speaker Series, Talbot County Free Library: Daphne Cawley-Edwards, President and Debbie Holmes-Leber, Executive Director, Mid Shore Board of Realtors

Ms. Leber and Ms. Cawley began their presentation with a brief history of Mid Shore Board of Realtors. It was formed in 1997 when Talbot, Dorchester, and Caroline County Boards of Realtors decided to merge to provide standardized practices to better serve the public. Ms. Leber stated their mission is to be the voice for the public and to equip their members with resources to conduct business professionally. Their two main focuses are on education and advocacy for their members and the public. Continuing education classes for its members are provided at no cost. MSBR has won national awards for its membership participation and state awards for its community outreach. MSBR currently has 400 realtor members and 80 affiliate members. Ms. Leber pointed out the real estate industry supports more than 260,000 jobs in the state. On the local level, Ms. Cawley reported 54% of Talbot County's tax revenues are real estate related. She distributed a flier with Talbot County Real Estate data showing a 12% increase in homes sold between 2016 and 2017 and the average home price in Talbot County has increased 10% for the same period. Her main concern currently is the low inventory of affordable homes for sale, with a decline of over 9% in the number of homes listed for sale from 2016-2017. Ms. Cawley



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pointed out one reason for this is the lending restrictions on older homes that might be at an affordable price, but will not qualify for funding due to the amount of renovations needed.

Economic Development Marketing Update: Sam Shoge

Mr. Shoge distributed copies of the 2018 Talbot County Travel Guide and the newly printed Economic Development Strategic Plan. He thanked the Commission for all the work they did to support the development of the strategic plan. Mr. Shoge gave a quick update on the marketing side, including the continued value of the five videos created for the Business Appreciation Breakfast. They are published on the departments Facebook page, YouTube channel and included in the newsletter, which generated a lot of publicity. This will continue to be the marketing strategy – content that is both informative and engaging. He stated they are making a lot of progress on the Site Selection tool which will soon roll out on the website.

Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser

Ms. Vanhooser stated again her thanks to the staff and members for all the work that went into the Travel Guide and the Strategic Plan over many months. She reported the County is close to finalization of Project 190. Ms. Vanhooser reminded the members to go to the County website and review the documents if they have any final comments. She gave an update on the Noise Ordinance Task Force, of which she is a member. She feels they will soon be ready to make final recommendations to present to the County Council.

Chairman's Report: Alan Silverstein

Mr. Silverstein reminded members there is no meeting in August. Next meeting is rescheduled to July 12.

County Council Report: Andy Hollis

Mr. Hollis announced the County Council has passed the budget with a 3/2 vote. The tax revenue language for the June ballot will be reviewed at the next Council meeting. Mr. Hollis expects the Council to introduce Project 190 in early July and they must take action by the end of October.

Member Updates:

Ron Engle reported the approval process is just about complete for the construction of the pedestrian/bike bridge across the Tred Avon. Mr. Engle attended the ribbon cutting for the new Sullivan Spa and Surgery opening on Goldsboro St. in Easton.



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Craig Wanner updated members they have almost completed the application process for The Whalen Company to participate in the PACE program.

Gerry O'Mara reminded members the Historical Society has a large exhibition on the history of agriculture in Talbot County. On Saturday, July 14 the Historical Society is holding an event around the exhibition and will have Maryland's Secretary of Agriculture, Joseph Bartenfelder, as their guest speaker.

Margaret Enloe inquired as to the current status of the open field on the corner of the Bypass and the Oxford Rd., which for years held a Waterfowl Festival sign, but is not owned by Waterfowl. The property is owned by the hospital, is currently for sale and is zoned institutional.

Ted Bautz commented on the recent increase in commercial activity and new construction going on around Easton. This includes a new Verizon store, a new Starbucks opening, the new addition to the Country School, and Anne Arundel Medical Group building in Waterside Village. Mr. Bautz reminded members to pay attention to the implementation of what is known as The Opportunity Zone. Easton is one of only a few communities in the state of Maryland that has been designated an Opportunity Zone. This is designed to encourage investment in rural areas.

Tim Jones reported this week Chesapeake College graduated the largest class in its history. Also this week, Dr. Clifford Coppersmith started his tenure as the new president.

Adjournment: With business concluded Mr. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Bautz. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

July's meeting will be Thursday, July 12 at 8:00 at 100 W. Dover Street (TCFL)