



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 November 7, 2019

Members Present: Chairman, Jackie Wilson, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Al Silverstein, Margaret Enloe, Micah Risher, Craig Wanner, Walter Chase, Scott Beatty, Chuck Callahan

Members Absent: Terenda Thomas, Gordon Fronk, Donna Saathoff, Jean Weisman, Tim Jones, Shannon Dill, Reza Jafari, Andy Hollis, Cassandra Vanhooser

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

Attendees: Dana Newman, Cristy Morrell, Scott Warner, Mike Arntz, Patty Shreves, Tracy Ward,

Call to Order: Jackie Wilson called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the September 5, 2019 meeting were presented. Mr. Risher moved the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Guest Speaker Series: Rich Setter, General Manager, Hog Neck Golf Course

Mr. Setter began his presentation with a short history of Hog Neck Golf Course. The vision began in 1972 when Talbot County resident, Mrs. W. Alton Netty Marie Jones and her husband donated a 250-acre farm along Route 50 for the development of a municipal golf course. The county hired a young architect named Lindsey Ervin and developer Charlie Maddox, who had experience building golf courses and had the equipment needed to move a large amount of earth. They broke ground in 1974 and named the course Hog Neck, which was the name of the original farm. It was a good thing that Mrs. Jones was of the mind to bring golf to the area, since at that time there were not many choices to play golf on the shore. Mr. Setter stated, "It is still less expensive to come across the bridge to Talbot County to play golf than anywhere on the western shore". He noted, from its beginning in the 1970's through to the 1990's, Hog Neck was rated in the top fifty of public courses in the United States.

Mr. Setter discussed how much the weather has an economic impact on the facility. Last year the area experienced over 90" of rain, which resulted in many lost rounds of golf. This year the weather greatly improved, which resulted in the course being up 4,300 rounds over last year. A second challenge Mr. Setter mentioned is the time it takes, about 4 hours, to play a round of golf,



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so they added a nine hole Executive Course, which has proven to be very popular. He noted golf is an expensive sport to play which leaves out many people from participating.

Mr. Setter said they have developed several youth programs in the last couple of years. One of these programs is the PGA Junior League, which had 35 elementary and middle school students participating this past summer. He hopes to double that number next summer. They are the home course for many of the surrounding high school teams.

He said most of the golf courses marketing dollars are spent across the bridge in the Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington, DC area. They also get people who stop to play a round of golf on their way to the beach. This brings revenue to local hotels, restaurants, and shops. He noted one of the great things about golf is you can play at any age, from 8 years old to 88 years old.

The Hog Neck course is considered an Enterprise Fund in Talbot County, which means they have to be solvent and be able to pay for any expenses they incur. This year the course is doing well financially. Mr. Setter said the golf course gave away over 2,000 rounds of golf this past year to organizations to help them raise money for their charities.

Department Report: Sam Shoge

Mr. Shoge reported on October 21 the Economic Development Department hosted the Maryland Economic Development Association's Fall Conference to kick off Economic Development Week in Maryland. The theme of this year's conference is "Building a Community Identity" and Mike Thielke of Eastern Shore Entrepreneurial Center moderated a panel discussion on innovations and the future of Agriculture in the state of Maryland. On Sunday, October 20, the department hosted an opening reception attended by U. S. Senator Van Hollen. The week included the Governor's Proclamation and the next day a Proclamation by the County Council. He noted the Conference had excellent media coverage.

To kick off Waterfowl Festival, on Friday, November 8, the department will hold Coffee and Conservation, beginning at 8:30 with DNR Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio as guest speaker. On November 21, there will be the second Cordova Master Plan meeting at 5:30 at the Cordova fire hall. Finally, this year's Business Appreciation Breakfast is scheduled for Friday, April 24.

Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser

No Report



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Ms. Vanhooser is receiving an award from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development for the Maryland Tastiest Catch campaign and cookbook produced by the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

Department of Commerce Report: Nancy LaJoice

No Report

Chairman's Report: Jackie Wilson

Ms. Wilson updated members on the question of obtaining sponsors for the Business Appreciation Breakfast. The committee sent a letter to the County Ethics Commission, asking if the EDC could solicit sponsors and in that way, no County employees would be involved. The Commission gave approval so a committee will be formed to attract sponsors to help cover the cost of the breakfast. Ms. Wilson asked members to continue to obtain guest speakers for the upcoming EDC meetings. She informed member Andrea Lev has left Bailey Chase for another opportunity, so the Committee will need to find a new Healthcare Representative. In addition, a new representative for the Town of Oxford will need to be appointed by the town.

County Council Report: Chuck Callahan

Mr. Callahan thanked Mr. Setter for his management of Hog Neck Golf Course. He noted Mr. Setter has been in his position less than 2 years and came aboard at a difficult time, financially, for the golf course. He pointed out, in the short time Mr. Setter has been with the County, he has managed to turn the golf courses finances from red to black. He stated how important the golf course is to the County in terms of tourism dollars from vacationers playing at the course then eating in local restaurants, making purchases in local shops, and staying in local hotels.

Mr. Callahan reported on the progress of the improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road and the money the county saved by having the County Roads Department do the work to complete Phase 1 of the Mistletoe Farm Project. On another issue, he said the County has formed a committee of about 15 people to tackle revamping the ballot question on raising the property tax cap. The committee has had one meeting and Mr. Callahan encouraged the members to participate in the process of forming the question on the upcoming ballot to hopefully have voters better understand the need to vote yes.



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Town Reports

Town of Easton – Al Silverstein

Mr. Silverstein reported on a discussion the Easton Town Council had concerning the implications to the town of having town employees going on to private property to pick up trashcans for residents who are unable or feel they need that service. The council decided they need to look further into the town's fiscal and legal responsibility before offering the service.

Town of St. Michaels – Jean Weisman

No Report

Town of Oxford – Gordon Fronk

No Report

Town of Trappe – Walter Chase

No Report.

Town of Queen Anne

No Report

Adjournment: With business, concluded Mr. Bautz moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Silverstein. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Next meeting will be Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at 100 W. Dover Street (TCFL)