



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 February 6, 2020

Members Present: Chairman Jackie Wilson, Vice Chairman Reza Jafari, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Micah Risher, Scott Beatty, Chuck Callahan, Donna Saathoff, Tina Jones, Jean Weisman, Cassandra Vanhooser, Terenda Thomas, Margaret Enloe

Members Absent: Andy Hollis, Shannon Dill, Al Silverstein, Craig Wanner, Walter Chase

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

Attendees: Dana Newman, Scott Warner, Tracy Ward, Liz Connelly, Patty Shreves, Christy Morrell

Call to Order: Jackie Wilson called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:04 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the December 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: Ashley Roush, Partnership Specialist, Philadelphia Regional Census Center and Martin Sokolich, Planner III, Talbot County Department of Planning and Zoning

Ms. Roush is a Partnership Specialist at the Philadelphia Regional Census Center and covers eleven counties in Maryland. She explained her job is to work with local organizations to raise awareness and promote participation in the 2020 Census. The Census, Ms. Roush added, affects one's voice in government, how much funding one's community receives, and how one's community plans for the future. The census started in 1790 and has taken place every ten years since. The goal of the census is to get an accurate count of the population in our community. Congressional apportionment and distribution of federal funds are decided by the data that comes from the census. This census, Ms. Roush noted, is set to determine the distribution of 675 billion dollars in federal funding, per year, for ten years until the next census. She explained there are three ways one can take the 2020 Census. The standard paper form, which has only nine questions this year. New this year, one can take the census online, using any device that can connect to the internet. The third way is a 1-800 number for people who have trouble with the paper or internet methods, and is available in many languages. Many people feel they do not



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need to take the census because it does not directly affect their life. They do not realize how many services come with funding from the federal government if they do not use any federal services. Police, fire department, snow removal, and many more would not exist without the census supplying the data for each communities needs. Businesses, corporations, and colleges use census data to determine if a certain community can support their business model

It is extremely important that everyone be counted. The way people are counted is based on where they spend most of their time. For instance, college students spend 80% of their time at their college, so that is where they would take their census.

Mr. Sokolich, from Talbot County Planning & Zoning, explained the methods Talbot County will use to handle the local census. He said the goal in every county is to get a "complete count." In the 2010 census, they achieved approximately 70% of Talbot County residents counted. That leaves approximately 30% of the counties citizens unaccounted for and left out of receiving those federal dollars. Mr. Sokolich reported he is collaborating with the town of Easton to find the best way to get the census completed. There are locations in Easton already gearing up to encourage people to participate as well as get help completing the form. These include the Talbot County Free Library, and the Senior Center. He said the Easton and Talbot County Census Committee will be having events in Easton to help raise awareness and help high priority groups learn more about the benefits and how to complete the form. He noted this is going to be the first digital census. By the month of March, invitations should have arrived in every home. April 1 is Census Day with events nationwide to urge people to turn in their completed forms.

Department Report: Sam Shoge

Mr. Shoge stated January has been a very busy month for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, which means local businesses are busy expanding. He updated the members on recent activity with Aphena Pharma Solutions in Easton. They announced a \$7 million expansion companywide, which means very good things for the local economy here in Easton. Choptank Transport is opening an additional office in Easton, which will house 150 new employees. On the retention side, Mr. Shoge said the department is working to help Abreu Boatworks get back on their feet after a devastating fire, and a company that is growing mealworms is working out of a former chicken house in Cordova. Additionally, Mr. Shoge and Ms. Vanhooser met with a company looking for space to grow algae to make biofuels.

Mr. Shoge reported the department is in the interviewing stage of hiring a Content Marketing and Events Coordinator to become involved with the local businesses to help promote Talbot County.



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He said nominations for the Community Impact Awards have closed. They received over 30 nominations. Mr. Shoge will be compiling the information on each nominee and will send it out to members to cast their vote for one individual and four businesses or non-profit by mid-February.

Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser

Ms. Vanhooser reported her concern over several bills coming out of the state legislature, many of them designed to reduce the amount of incentives for small businesses. She stated the department is working with Laura Price, our MACO representative, to weigh in on these bills. Ms. Vanhooser said there are several tourism bills for which The Maryland Association of Destinations and Marketing Organizations has hired a lobbyist to help monitor the situation with this legislation, and how it could affect Talbot County. Ms. Vanhooser stated the Departments' by-laws now require them to report to the County Council on a quarterly basis. She said they are hoping to get it changed to only two times a year. Furthermore, the Mid-Shore Regional Council manages the regions Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and annually reviews the plan for projects that need to come off or be added. The Frederick Douglas Park on the Tuckahoe was approved to be added to the CEDS.

Department of Commerce Report: Nancy LaJoice

No Report

Chairman's Report: Jackie Wilson

Ms. Wilson introduced Sandy Pepe who will be the new EDC representative for the Town of Oxford. The fund raising committee soliciting sponsorships for the Business Appreciation Breakfast, will meet after the EDC meeting. Ms. Wilson reminded members to continue to suggest speakers for the monthly meeting. Next month the guest speaker will be Michael Hoffman from The Inn at Perry Cabin.

County Council Report: Chuck Callahan

Mr. Callahan reported the County Council is hoping for a proposal from the Tax Cap Committee sometime in March. He said the Council will be working on the county budget all of March and April. The council will be having a work session February 18 at the Community Center to discuss how to improve public transportation in Talbot County. Mr. Callahan said on February 11 the council will be recognizing February as American Heart month.



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Town Reports

Town of Easton – Ron Engle

Mr. Engle reported Easton will be having its first annual Fire and Ice Festival the weekend of February 14. In addition, he said he continues to be concerned over the limited affordable housing with local businesses expanding and adding new employees.

Town of St. Michaels – Jean Weisman

No Report

Town of Oxford – Sandy Pepe

Ms. Pepe reported The Mews RFP for development has been advertised and responses are due by February 28. The building known as the Town Park Building has received renovation permitting. She said the town has installed two electric car chargers at either end of town.

Town of Trappe – Walter Chase

No Report.

Town of Queen Anne

No Report

Adjournment: With business, concluded Mr. Jafari moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Bautz. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Next meeting will be Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. at 100 W. Dover Street (TCFL)