



**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 December 5, 2019**

**Members Present:** Chairman, Jackie Wilson, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Al Silverstein, Micah Risher, Craig Wanner, Walter Chase, Scott Beatty, Chuck Callahan, Donna Saathoff, Tina Jones, Jean Weisman, Cassandra Vanhooser, Reza Jafari, Andy Hollis

**Members Absent:** Terenda Thomas, Shannon Dill, Margaret Enloe

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

**Attendees:** Corey Pack, Dana Newman, Scott Warner, Mike Arntz, Tracy Ward, Kelly Simonsen,

**Call to Order:** Jackie Wilson called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:03 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the November 7, 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:** Corey Pack, President, Talbot County Council

Mr. Pack spoke to the members on issues currently affecting Economic Development in Talbot County. He stated Economic Development is one of the biggest drivers in the County. One of the top issues the County Council has been addressing over the last 12 months is short-term rentals. Mr. Pack noted the previous Council had made some changes on how the County handles short term rentals. The current Council has put some new legislation over how the property owners can operate. These include limiting the number of people staying at the rental and the length of time the renters could stay. He said the County Council recognizes this industry is a very strong economic driver in the County and has been for many years. Therefore, the Council legislated additional safety nets on how the rentals operate. He said the Council put in place a Short Term Rental Review Board to oversee applications and the Board put forth over 20 recommendations that the Council will be reviewing at the next work session.

Another issue before the Council is the revenue cap. The Council will again be putting a ballot question on the 2020 election.. Mr. Pack said they have put together a Revenue Cap Committee, chaired by Angela Lane, Finance Department Director. The first thing the committee decided was needed was an educational campaign to familiarize the public with what a revenue cap is



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and how it works.. The Committee will be having public meetings to receive input from Talbot County citizens.

Also before the Council is continued progress on the Mistletoe Hall Commerce Business Park with the completion of Phase One, the improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road, done by the County Roads Dept. Mr. Pack noted this project is another option for attracting, retaining, and expanding current and potential new businesses in Talbot County. He added the recent change of ownership of the old Black & Decker building from the County to Easton Airport. The building is still scheduled to be torn down in 2023 to make way for the Easton Airport runway relocation. All the current tenants have been notified.

Next, Mr. Pack addressed the future of the hospital. He said the plan is still to build a regional hospital. He meets monthly with County, town, and business officials for an update from the Maryland Healthcare Commission. He made note on the slowness of progress toward the plan being approved in order to break ground by 2024.

The last item Mr. Pack touched on is the Kirwan Commission for Education. The County does not yet know how this will affect the County's budget. This pushes a heavy debt service on the County with no way to pay for it.

#### **Department Report: Sam Shoge**

Mr. Shoge began by laying out the framework for the department's initiatives for 2020. The first item on the departments list is to change this year's Business Appreciation Breakfast to Business Appreciation Day, scheduled for Friday, April 24. The keynote speaker for the breakfast this year will be Dr. Connie Reimers-Hild, who is a certified futurist. She will speak on the topic of Community Identity and how rural areas can achieve their own identity. Mr. Shoge said the Department of Economic Development again sponsored the Coffee and Conservation event at the Waterfowl Festival. Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio was the guest speaker. The Department held its first Annual Resource Fair for the business community; approximately 40 people attended. Mr. Shoge said the Department hopes to expand on this event next year. The topic for 2020 will be "Work Force Development." He stated the department is working on pulling its many resources together to create a new promotional video of all the services the Department of Economic Development and Tourism offers to the community. Mr. Shoge added, the department continues to meet with current and new businesses to help them grow and expand and become part of the community.



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#### **Director's Report:** Cassandra Vanhooser

Ms. Vanhooser reported she and Mr. Shoge went before the County Council to have the plans for the Frederick Douglas Park on the Tuckahoe added to the lists of County projects for 2020 in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. She shared the 2018 economic impact numbers for Tourism. They showed tourism in Talbot County up in revenue 7.8%, with over 2,000 jobs in the County related to tourism. The County supports over half a million visitors a year, with over 40% being overnight guest. The accommodations tax, which funds the marketing budget, along with short-term rentals, account for about 10% of the tourism revenue.

Ms. Vanhooser and Mr. Shoge attended the Cordova Master Plan public meeting in which Chris Hlubb, of American Salmon, gave a detailed update on the company's plans to redevelop the old Allen Harim property.

Ms. Vanhooser reported on the recent fire at Abreu Boatworks in Trappe. She immediately reached out to the owner to offer help getting the business up and running again in Talbot County. Ms. Vanhooser reminded members it is time for nominations for EDC Chair and Vice Chair. Nominations are due January 1 and should be sent to Ms. Vanhooser or Mr. Shoge.

#### **Department of Commerce Report:** Nancy LaJoice

No Report

#### **Chairman's Report:** Jackie Wilson

Ms. Wilson reported Craig Wanner and Scott Beatty have offered to be on the fundraising committee for the Business Appreciation Breakfast. She asked members to continue to obtain guest speakers for the upcoming EDC meetings. She is hoping to get Michael Hoffman from The Inn at Perry Cabin to come speak. Ms. Wilson said she would like to get some of our state representatives to come speak about the upcoming census. She reminded members we need to find a replacement for Andrea Lev, who has left Baleigh Chase for another opportunity. The Committee will need to find a new Healthcare Representative in addition to a new representative for the Town of Oxford, which will need to be appointed by the town.

#### **County Council Report:** Chuck Callahan

No Report



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#### **Town Reports**

##### **Town of Easton – Ron Engle**

Mr. Engle reported he is on the Tax Cap Committee, and urged EDC members help get the ballot question passed. He noted when they went through the voter rolls after the last election they found over 3,000 citizens who voted in the election did not make a choice on the Tax Cap question. He said the committee will be working feverishly to come out with a package that helps voters understand what the Tax Cap is and how it affects them. Mr. Engle added the Town of Easton is testing out a new parking app that helps people coming into Easton find an open parking space. He mentioned The Neighborhood Service Center is celebrating 50 years of service. They will be having a gala to celebrate on April 25. Mr. Engle will have more information as the time gets closer.

##### **Town of St. Michaels – Jean Weisman**

Ms. Weisman announced the former Chesapeake Bay Outfitters building was sold and a new business will be taking over that space.

##### **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 9:03 a.m.

Next meeting will be Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. at 100 W. Dover Street (TCFL)