

Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 5, 2020
Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairperson, Jackie Wilson called the meeting to order at approximately 8 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe, Andy Hollis, Reza Jafari, Tina Jones, Sandi Pepe, Micah Risher, Terenda Thomas, Cassandra Vanhooser, Scott Warner, Jean Weisman, Jackie Wilson

Board Members Absent: Chuck Callahan, Walter Chase, Donna Saathoff, Al Silverstein

Staff Present: Pam Keeton and Candace Harris

Guests: Susie Hayward, Melissa Kelly, Mary Mears, Kim Kratovil

- II. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the October 1, 2020, meeting were presented. Reza Jafari moved the minutes be accepted as written. Ted Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.
- III. County Council Report:** Chuck Callahan was unable to attend, but sent his apologies via Andy Hollis.
- IV. Chairman's Report:** Jackie Wilson presented the recommendation of Debbie Walsworth to join the EDC. Reza Jafari, Tina Jones, and Cassandra Vanhooser expressed support for the recommendation. Ms. Vanhooser explained that if the Commission supports the recommendation, she will draft a letter to the County Council on behalf of the Commission recommending approval. Reza Jafari moved to accept the chairman's recommendation, and Tina Jones seconded the motion. Ms. Vanhooser will send the recommendation to the Council.
- V. Director's Report:** Ms. Vanhooser reported on the results of the first two rounds of the Talbot CARES Small Business Grant program. A total of 114 applications were approved for a total of \$1.08 million. There is approximately \$120K left and new applications are being processed.

Ms. Vanhooser reported the Talbot County will receive \$531,350 from the Maryland Restaurant Relief Fund to be distributed to Talbot County food and beverage establishments. The CARES Grants Task Force, with the addition of Judy Bixler from the Tourism Board, met to work out the criteria for grants. There will not be an income qualification and there will be a set window the grants will be open as the money must be dispersed by December 31, 2020. The criteria will be presented to the County Council during its next meeting.

Ms. Vanhooser reported that the Talbot County Economic Symposium was a success. Mr. Jafari reported that 170 people participated and he thanked Ms. Vanhooser for co-sponsoring the event. Video will be available soon. Ms. Wilson commented that she found several points from the symposium interesting, including that number of residents in Talbot County has decreased recently. There is an opportunity for growth that must be properly managed, and the need for broadband remains a high priority.

Mr. Jafari also reported that the Chamber of Commerce Board plans to appoint Amy Kreiner as the new president of the Chamber beginning January 1, 2021. Ms. Vanhooser announced that the job announcement for the position in her office is closed and she hopes to make a selection soon. She also announced that responsibility for management of the Talbot County Business Center has transferred to Micha Risher. Mr. Risher stated that the building will be open for three more years and that he is working with potential clients to rent space.

Finally, Ms. Vanhooser reported that Hinckley Yachts is not leaving Talbot County. They are adjusting their operations to use other boatyards with lifts, and their Brooks Drive location to continue operations.

- VI. Maryland Department of Commerce:** Nancy LaJoice reported that the state is working to process applications from the business grant program and clear the backlog. Also, the Main Street Program will release criteria for assistance soon and grants through the Neighborhood Business Works program will open in November 17.

- VII. Town Reports:** Town representatives reported on events and happenings in their jurisdictions.

- VIII. Comments from Board Members and Guests:** Other EDC members and guests shared information about their activities.
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- IX. Next Meeting:** December 3, 2020, at 8 a.m.

- X. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:43 a.m.