

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 4, 2021

8 a.m.

Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Reza Jafari called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Chuck Callahan, Walter Chase, Cliff Coppersmith, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe, Reza Jafari, Amy Kreiner, Dana Newman, Sandi Pepe, Micah Risher, Donna Saathoff, Clay Stamp, Terenda Thomas, Cassandra Vanhooser, Debbie Walsworth, Scott Warner, Jean Weisman, and Jackie Wilson

Staff Present: Pam Keeton

Guests: Kristen Greenaway, Susie Hayward, Melissa Kelly, Nancy LaJoice, Cristy Morrell, Kelly Simonson, Tracy Ward, and Bob Zimberoff

- II. Guest Speaker:** Kristen Greenaway, President and CEO of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, gave an overview of the Museum's economic impact on the community, significant achievements and programs, and information about plans and projects. She also thanked Talbot County for the CARES Grant.
- III. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the February 4, 2021, meeting were presented. Cliff Coppersmith made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ted Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
- IV. County Council Report:** Council President and EDC Liaison Chuck Callahan announced a vigil to remember victims of COVID-19 and mentioned that the County plans to purchase 15 acres on Oxford Road for a public safety complex.
- V. Chairman's Report:** Mr. Jafari announced that the April 30 Business Appreciation Summit will be held virtually this year via Zoom. Online "mingling" will begin at 8 a.m. and the program will begin at 8:30 a.m. Ms. Vanhooser challenged EDC members to invite guests
- VI. Director's Report:** Ms. Vanhooser jokingly said that while she had promised not to report on grants again, she asked the EDC to review the grants summary she sent with the agenda and minutes. She encouraged members to take a few minutes to look closely at the information and called their attention to the following:

- Though the lion's share of the funding went to businesses in Easton, grant funds were distributed throughout the county.
- The County will distribute at least one more round of hotel grants.
- Even though we awarded grants to 156 businesses, 87 restaurant grants, and 19 hotel grants, we only scratched the surface as there are almost 2,000 businesses in Talbot County.

She also included the individual CARES grant information for your review as well. One grant pool supported businesses while the other grant pool supported the workers. She wanted the EDC to see how the CARES funding helped those who make up the county's workforce.

Now comes the follow up, Ms. Vanhooser said. Every one of these grant recipients has to turn in a final report showing how they spent the money, which is standard procedure for federal and state grants. Nancy Andrew, our recovery coordinator, has taken the lead on reviewing grant files.

Ms. Vanhooser also noted that when the team developed the later grant applications (which reflect only the hospitality sector), they included some general questions about the state of the business. We are just beginning to mine this data for insights and trying to figure out the best way to build on the information we have, she said. Talbot County is also using this information for the Eastern Shore Recovery Project that we are working on with the Mid-Shore Regional Council.

Talbot County also continues to work with the Small Business Development Center to get help for those who need it, and Ms. Vanhooser said that she is working with a couple of businesses on their expansions. Queries from companies looking to locate on or relocate to the Eastern Shore is up significantly.

Finally, Ms. Vanhooser directed a special thank you to Kimberly Kratovil and Melissa Kelly, who both helped support the Eastern Shore's nomination to the Scenic Byways program. Senator Cardin sponsored the legislation that revived the Federal Highway Administration's program, and Ms. Vanhooser announced that the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway, of which Talbot County is a part, was recently named an All-American Road.

- VII. Maryland Department of Commerce:** Ms. LaJoice said that \$5,000 grants are available to businesses for international marketing and that the Maryland RELIEF Act will be administered through the Department of Commerce. More information will be released in the future.
- VIII. Town Reports:** Town representatives gave reports on happenings in and around their jurisdictions.

- IX. Comments from Board Members and Guests:** Mr. Stamp thanked Ms. Vanhooser for her efforts with the grant programs and stated that the County is moving forward and doing well. He mentioned there are two dozen major projects in the works.

Mr. Coppersmith gave a shout out to Senators Van Hollen and Cardin for their work on CARES funding and support for community colleges.

Tracy Ward of the Easton Economic Development Commission reported that the Town of Easton has received eight applications for Mistletoe Hall. When these companies build their facilities, it will mean 200 new jobs for Easton.

- X. Next Meeting:** April 1, 2021, at 8 a.m.

- XI. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

DRAFT