

**Economic Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 3, 2022

8 a.m.

Via Zoom

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

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

**Members Present:** Ted Bautz, Walter Chase, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe-North, Reza Jafari, Jimmy Jaramillo, Ken Kozel, Amy Kreiner, Jeff Rhodes, Micah Risher, Clay Stamp, Cassandra Vanhooser, Debbie Walsworth, Jackie Wilson.

**Members Absent:** Donna Saathoff, Terenda Thomas, Craig Wanner.

**Staff Present:** Krista Boothby, Pam Keeton

**Guests:** Helga Einhorn, Brent Garner, Susie Hayward, Tina Jones, Melissa Kelly, Kimberly Kratovil, Nancy LaJoice, Cheryl Lewis, Meredith Mears, Dana Newman, Kelly Simonsen, Tracy Ward, Scott Warner

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the December 2, 2021, meeting were presented. Mr. Bautz made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Kozel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**III. Introduction of New Format and New EDC Vice Chairman**

EDC business meeting will now be held quarterly, with various other meetings scattered throughout the year. Mr. Jafari announced that Ken Kozel, president and CEO of UM Shore Regional Health, will be the new EDC vice chairman.

**IV. Director's Report**

Ms. Vanhooser introduced Brent Garner, Talbot County's Manager of Permits and Inspections. He provided information on the increase in applications for permits, which is a good sign for the county's economy.

**Business Appreciation Summit:** The annual Business Appreciation Summit is scheduled for Friday, May 6, at 8 a.m. at the Tidewater Inn. Johnathan Holifield, author of *The New Economy and Inclusive Competitiveness*, will be the speaker. The breakfast will be followed by a reception for David Baker, the new state director of USDA Rural

Development. The final event of the day will be a roundtable discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Building African American Minds Athletic Center at 31 Jowitz Street.

**Community Economic Review Sessions:** Talbot County will conduct four public outreach sessions to demonstrate the publicly accessible tools developed by the Eastern Shore Eastern Shore Economic Recovery Project. Meetings will take place in Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels, and Trappe. She asked that EDC members attend at least one meeting. Ms. Vanhooser also announced that the project won an award from MEDA.

**Business Sentiment Survey:** Ms. Vanhooser provided a summary of results from the Business Sentiment Survey. Though the numbers have dropped, businesses on the Eastern Shore remain optimistic about 2022.

**SBDC Partnership:** Ms Vanhooser reported the department's work with the Small Business Development Center. Greg Bartoo and Rich Loeffler are the business consultants assigned to cover Talbot County. Statistics are attached.

**Emergency Grants:** In October 2021, a number of Talbot County businesses experienced flooding. Ms. Vanhooser worked with the business owners to apply for emergency grants from Maryland Capital Enterprises. A total of nine businesses received \$160,000 in funding.

**Talbot County Incentive Fund:** Aphena Pharma used grant money from the Talbot County, the Town of Easton, and the State of Maryland to complete a \$7 million expansion, resulting in the company hiring 156 new employees, a 66 percent growth in the number of jobs.

**Rural Economic Development Fund:** Ms. Vanhooser asked Scott Warner to provide information about the new \$50 million Rural Economic Development Fund being considered by the state legislature. Each of the state's five regional councils will receive \$10 million for use on infrastructure, industry development, workforce development, and other initiatives. The funding will become available after the governor's budget passes.

**Mid-Shore Hires:** Ms. Vanhooser reported that she and her colleagues in Caroline and Dorchester counties worked together to create a new website designed to help employers expand their hiring efforts.

**EDA Funding for Tourism:** The Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Tourism Development has received \$9.6 million in funding has been set aside for tourism. Local organizations will be able to apply.

## V. County Council's Report

Mr. Clay Stamp conveyed the thanks for Mr. Chuck Callahan and the County Council for the work of the EDC. He went on to share some information about the budget process underway for 2023.

## **VI. Town Reports**

Thanks to the new format, each of the town representatives was asked to present a detailed report of the development activity in their towns. Those presenting included: Ron Engle, Town of Easton; Jimmy Jaramillo, Town of Oxford; Jeff Rhodes, Town of St. Michaels, and Walter Chase, Town of Trappe. The Town of Queen Anne does not have representation on the EDC.

## **VII. Chairman's Report**

Mr. Jafari reiterated that a committee of EDC members will lead the effort to secure sponsors for the annual Business Appreciation Summit and invited all members to participate.

## **VIII. Comments from Board Members and Guests**

Several guests reported on upcoming events and initiatives.

## **IX. Maryland Department of Commerce**

Ms. Nancy LaJoice reported that two Talbot County businesses received grants from Project Restore and noted that information will be forthcoming about a new small business credit initiative.

## **X. Upcoming Meetings**

- May 6, 2022 – Business Appreciation Summit @ 8 a.m.
- June 2, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m. (Date will be adjusted due to a conflict.)
- Sept. 1, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.
- Dec. 1, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Mr. Bautz made the motion to adjourn; Amy Kreiner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.