

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES**

October 6, 2010

**PRESENT:** Joyce Bowlsbey, John Dillman, Norman Gaither, Paula Gilley, Harland Graef, Raymond Hamm, Commissioner Robert Hodge (Ex-Officio), Dr. Ken Lewis (Chair), Laura Mayse (Chamber), Grove Miller, Jeanne Minner (Town of Elkton rep.), Dr. Stephen Pannill, Mike Ratchford, Rupert Rossetti.  
Staff: Roy Clough, Debbie Graham, Erika Quesenbery, Joanne Richart-Young, Vernon Thompson, Sandy Turner.

**ABSENT:** Mayor Kerry Abrams (Port Deposit), Mayor John Bunnell (Cecilton), Mayor Sandi Didra (Rising Sun), Mayor Jim Eberhardt (Perryville), Mayor Frank Hill (Chesapeake City), Mayor Robert McKnight (North East), Dr. Carl Roberts, Gary Stewart, Donna Tapley, Linda Tipton, Steve Vandervort.

**GUESTS:** Bruce England (SWN), Cheryl Mattix (Cecil Whig), Linda McLeod (Columbia Bank), Alan Sexton (SWN).

### **Call to Order & Welcome**

Chairman Lewis called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The March 3, 2010 and May 11, 2010 minutes were approved as e-mailed.

### **Introduction of New Chairman**

Dr. Lewis introduced Mike Ratchford as the new Chair of the EDC. Chairman Ratchford thanked Dr. Lewis for his service as Chair for the past three years.

### **Direction for Upcoming Year**

Chairman Ratchford stated two questions need to be answered: 1) What is the role of the EDC going forward, and 2) How do we maximize the talent of the EDC members?

He feels the EDC should have a dialogue with the new Board of County Commissioners. Also, the Strategic Plan from 2004 needs to be updated. It was intended to last five years. An assessment of the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats must be done before the Strategic Plan can be updated. He requested EDC members become part of five subcommittees to look at the Strategic Plan:

1. The County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
2. Infrastructure;
3. Government services;
4. Workforce enhancement; and
5. County image

By mid-year 2011, he would hope to have a Strategic Plan that would be useful to the County for the next four to five years.

## **Update on Economic Development Activities**

Director Thompson gave brief comments on staff reports (a copy in the Economic Development Office file for reference). In addition to staff reports, he reported the following:

1. Commissioner Mullin has been working on ag preservation and trying to improve the current program. That program will be re-structured so easement purchase(s) are no longer paid out in a lump sum but rather paid over a period of time.
2. An intensive advertising campaign has been conducted over the last four to five months. Since that campaign started, there has been a surge in prospects. DBED currently has eight formal written proposals, six of which are in Cecil County. Three of the companies are focused on life sciences and two are focused on heavy industrial. Of the six focusing on Cecil County, four are very active.
3. The Bainbridge Development Corporation is working on re-negotiating the Master Development Agreement. They are also working on the environmental issues of the property with the Navy.
4. The office is working with the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC) on transferees from Ft. Monmouth. That move will be completed by September 2011.
5. Hollywood Casino at Perryville is open.
6. A new work group is working on the I95/222 interchange.
7. Cecil County does not have adequate inventory of office space.
8. ARRA bonds could not happen because the submitted proposals all were dependent on bank financing and banks will not lend money for a spec building in today's market.

## **Cecil College Brief**

Dr. Pannill advised that Cecil College has just completed their third 5-year Strategic Plan since he has been involved with the college. It has four initiatives:

1. Complete degrees and/or certifications;
2. Four-year opportunity for Cecil County residents.
3. Opportunities with the federal government;
4. Aspire to be a leader in using innovative technology for learning.

Dr. Pannill agrees that workforce is the key to economic development. There are workforce opportunities in the College's continuing education area, i.e. automotive certification, welding, commercial driver's license programs, etc.

The college has customized training for local companies dealing with performance gap analysis, data interpretation, project management, critical thinking, etc.

Allied Health is a big area of growth for the college. There are good jobs in health care. The college offers courses for certified nursing assistants, physician's assistants, lab work. Physical therapy assistant training is not being offered yet. Criminal justice courses are also being offered, as well as the opportunity to get a teacher's degree.

Government workers need certifications to qualify for a lot of the procurement jobs that are coming to the area. Cecil College has developed a certification and also been recognized by the Defense Acquisition University as an equivalent provider of that training. University of Delaware will be a partner with Cecil College in logistics and supply chain training. Boze Allen is going to help meet the workforce needs of APG for the next five years, and they will use Cecil

College and the University of Delaware for the upper division part of it. Cecil College is partnered with Salisbury University on government contracting.

Cecil College works with Salisbury and Delaware whereby those universities will accept more of Cecil College's credits toward a four-year degree. The college is working with Drexel University through a "Blue and Gold Agreement", which is a very clear pathway and opportunities for scholarships.

Construction will begin in mid 2012 on an engineering and math building at the North East campus. There are currently 80 engineering majors at Cecil, which is largely due to the public school's STEM program.

Mr. Graef asked if the college is partnering with the dental clinic in Perryville? Dr. Pannill stated they have put eight students in that facility.

Fall enrollment at Cecil is up 2% this year. The number of Cecil County young people that attend Cecil College has grown, but non-resident attendance has fallen.

Mr. England stated there is a strong need to help companies upgrade the skills of their workforce. It is better to help them do that than to be on the reactionary end. Also, the workforce that have lost jobs need to be re-skilled. A lot don't have certification or degrees.

Rupert Rossetti questioned the GIS and environmental engineering programs at Cecil College. Erika advised that there is a GIS link on the CSSC website titled REGIS.

### **2011 Meeting Schedule**

Chairman Ratchford stated that he is looking at monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month. Dr. Devine will be at the next meeting on December 1, 2010.

### **General Discussion**

Mr. Rossetti feels TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) should be addressed by the EDC because it is going to have a huge affect on the County. Several EDC members agreed with him. He disbursed a one-page document concerning public review and comment on TMDL, a copy in the Office of Economic Development for reference.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Graham  
Administrative Assistant