



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 July 12, 2018

Members Present: Al Silverstein, Chairman, Jackie Wilson, Vice Chairman, Ron Engle, Ted Bautz, Peter Dunbar, Tim Jones, Cassandra Vanhooser, Craig Wanner, Margaret Enloe, Andy Hollis, Reza Jafari, Shannon Dill, Gerald O'Mara, Mike Henry, Scott Beatty, Andrea Lev, Tim Jones, Jennifer Williams

Members Absent:, Walter Chase, Jean Weisman, Shannon Dill, Terenda Thomas, Clay Railey

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

Attendees: Tracy Ward, Dr. Helga Einhorn, Laura Heikes, Melissa Kelly, Kimberly Kratovil, Dan McDermott, Dave Prosner, Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, Jessi Ferrio

Call to Order: Al Silverstein called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the June 7, 2018 meeting were presented. Mr. Jafari moved the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Jones seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Guest Speaker Series, Talbot County Free Library: Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, President, Chesapeake College

Dr. Coppersmith introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his recent tenure as Dean of City College in Billings, Montana and prior to that, Pennsylvania College of Technology and Utah State University. Dr. Coppersmith updated members on what is currently happening at Chesapeake College. This spring they awarded 369 degrees, including the first two-year Associates Degree in Agriculture. Chesapeake has launched a new certified addiction counselor program. They have had record participation in their dual enrollment program this past year and expanded it to include CTE courses for students in Caroline County. The women's softball team and men's baseball team were Maryland Junior College Athletic Conference Champions this year. Dr. Coppersmith stated the college will continue to support the community, sponsoring conferences and events that saw over 24,000 participants this past year. He pointed out one of his main priorities is to move the needle forward in workforce development to help provide that resource for our local employers as well as provide opportunity for both graduating high seniors and transitioning adults who may be trying to enter a new field. Furthermore, Chesapeake will



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continue to focus on recruitment and retention of students toward completion. Finally, the college is committed to their outreach to the community, and will continue to serve as a cultural resource in the arts, music, history, and as an enrichment center for our retirement community.

Workforce Development Conversation: Sam Shoge

Mr. Shoge thanked Dr. Coppersmith for his participation and for the partnership that exist between Chesapeake College and the business and government communities. He spoke of the difficulty local businesses have in finding qualified workers and how critical collaboration is between the college and business community to mitigate this concern. Mr. Shoge distributed a snapshot of the labor market on the Mid-Shore over the past two years, with data supplied by The Maryland Workforce Exchange, showing the number of job opportunities available largely out weighing the number of available workers. Mr. Wanner questioned how many open jobs are not being filled due to lack of qualifications or skill sets. Mr. McDermott, who supplied the data, responded that although this data is limited, it is a good starting point despite the data not distinguishing what type of jobs are included in the numbers. Additional data, such as age of population in the county and commuter data, are some of the key criteria that need to be explored. Mr. Jafari added this is not just a Talbot County problem, but a problem throughout the country. Al Silverstein pointed out the Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Talbot County Schools on two programs, Free Enterprise Program and Manufacturing, Engineering Partnership for Excellence (MEPE) to make teachers and guidance counselors aware of businesses and job opportunities in the community to aide in retaining students in Talbot County after graduation. Mr. Wanner added we need a public/private partnership to solve the problem. Ms. Vanhooser said when we break down the job opportunities in Talbot County, a large portion of jobs are in the healthcare industry, retail, accommodations, and administrative services. She went on to report tourism businesses are hurting in the county this summer due to a shortage of applicants to fill openings. Andrea Lev reported on the growing need for healthcare workers as healthcare becomes the largest growing industry in the country. In Talbot County alone there are over 16 healthcare companies. Mr. Hollis reminded the members, government alone can't solve this problem and that it needs to be a collaborative effort. Dave Prosner said two key fields that are in critical shortage of trained workers are welding and carpentry. Dave Harper, Academic Vice-President for Workforce Development and Academic Programs at Chesapeake College, noted Chesapeake has recently changed its welding program to non-credit to shorten the time needed to complete the course.

Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser

Ms. Vanhooser reported on a Maryland Opportunity Zone Conference scheduled for Tuesday, July 31, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. at The Hotel at the University of Maryland. Also, the



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Department of Economic Development and Tourism is again partnering with the Avalon Foundation to sponsor the “Farm-to-Table” dinner for the 4th Annual Plein Air artist event. It will be Monday, July 16 at 5:00 p.m. at Triple Creek Winery in Cordova. Ms. Vanhooser then announced the impending departure of Ryan Snow, Project Manager. Ryan will be taking a position with Governor Hogan’s administration as the Eastern Shore Intergovernmental Affairs Representative.

Chairman’s Report: Alan Silverstein

-Reminder: No meeting in August.

County Council Report: Jennifer Williams

Ms. Williams reported the County Council held public hearings on raising the tax revenue, no votes were taken, the record will remain open until July 24. The Council introduced Next Step 190 and the Noise Ordinance, public hearings will be held on July 31 at 5:30 p.m. at the Talbot County Free Library. The Council is working with the Town of Easton concerning future commercial development at Mistletoe Farm, land owned by the town that is currently planned as a future growth area.

Member Updates:

Gerry O’Mara reported local crop production will be down due to the extreme amount of rain and then drought the Shore has experienced.

-Dr. Helga Einhorn reminded members of the program “Career Pathways Initiative” offered by Talbot County Schools and recognized by the Maryland Dept. of Education.

-Mike Henry noted the Environmental Assessment has been completed at the airport. The FAA should render a decision by the end of September. The airport is celebrating its 75th year of operation with an even on Friday, July 20 at 10:00 a.m. with a look back at the history of aviation in Talbot County.

-Dana Newman – The library will be offering several free classes this fall, including Spanish Conversation. Contact the library for more information.



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-Tracy Ward – update on Chesapeake Harvest, under Jordan Lee’s leadership, they have launched Chesapeake Harvest Direct (chesapeakeharvestdirect.com) so buyers and producers can meet online.

Adjournment: With business concluded Mr. Silverstein moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Ms. Vanhooser. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

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