



## 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 November 1, 2018**

**Members Present:** Chairman Al Silverstein, Vice Chairwoman Jackie Wilson, Ron Engle, Peter Dunbar, Tim Jones, Cassandra Vanhooser, Reza Jafari, Micah Risher, Craig Wanner, Gerald O'Mara, Andy Hollis, Jennifer Williams

**Members Absent:** Ted Bautz, Jean Weisman, Margaret Enloe, Scott Beatty, Terenda Thomas, Shannon Dill, Andrea Lev, Walter Chase

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

**Attendees:** Dana Newman, Scott Warner, Nancy LaJoyce, Susie Hayward, Kimberly Kratovil, Christina Acosta

**Call to Order:** Al Silverstein called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:04 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the October 4, 2018 meeting were presented. Mr. Jafari moved the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Engle seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

**Guest Speaker Series, Talbot County Free Library:** Ray Clarke, Talbot County Engineer

Mr. Clarke opened his presentation describing the Department of Public Works, what projects they are currently working on, and the impact this has on the economy of Talbot County. Some of the programs the Department is currently working on include; two Sanitary Districts, a Bio-Solids Facility, Transportation Infrastructure, Waterways and Wharves Improvements, Recycling, GIS Program, and Stormwater Management.

Mr. Clarke focused mainly on the Sanitary Districts and their impact on the local economy through sewer extensions. There are two Sanitary Districts, Region II, which serves St. Michaels, Royal Oak, and Unionville areas and Region V, which serves the Tilghman area. Future extensions to areas around Bozman, Neavitt, Sherwood, and Wittman are in the works. These sewer extensions generate capital charges, increase sewer revenue, preserve property values, and allow for renovations and redevelopment. This is a win for the property owners, businesses and the environment over former septic systems.



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He described the local government cooperation with the nearby towns. In the town of St. Michaels, they are working to replace roads while the sewer rehabilitation work is being completed. In Easton, they are securing Bay Restoration Funds for Talbot Commerce Park for sewer extension with a grant of \$250,000. The department is currently working with the town of Trappe to secure a grant of \$180,000 for the Howell Point Road sewer extension.

Some out of the box thinking, Mr. Clarke shared, includes evaluating a broadband strategy for Talbot County Sanitary District pumps, digital infrastructure mapping, and installing Radio Frequency ID's over force mains.

Next Mr. Clarke discussed transportation, which will present new challenges in the future. The last transportation study was done in 2006 which initiated road improvements along Black Dog Alley, Glebe Road, and Dutchman's Lane at the Route 50 intersection. At the same time, bridge replacement is a concern. There are six bridges and three major culverts in the County. Five bridges have been replaced using \$4.5 million of Federal Aid. Remaining work includes Leeds Creek Bridge and culvert rehabilitation and replacement. Costs are expected to be around \$9 million, with \$2 million in current funding. Another impact to the local economy is the improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road that leads to the future commercial development of Mistletoe Hall. Mr. Clarke said they continue to work with the County Council on funding for future road projects. One funding challenge, the County has gone without over \$27 million of Highway User Revenue Funding over the past nine years, which results in improvement projects needing to be funded with 20-100% of County funding. Some ideas to help with this funding loss include coordinating road improvements with sewer extensions, and evaluating alternative funding sources.

Mr. Clarke then addressed waterways and wharves project coordination and management. He pointed to the recent completion of the Knapps Narrows dredging which was completed in the summer of 2017. The department is looking at the future dredging of Tongers Basin and Dogwood Harbor, hoping to have the permits secured by the spring of 2019. Improvements to waterways and wharves impact the local economy by reestablishing depth in the Narrows for water vessels and dredging helps support businesses along the water. The dredging of Tongers Basin and Dogwood Harbor will assist residential property owners and businesses with their dredging needs. Future challenges include finding the funding for the dredging and locating dredged material placement sites.

In closing, Mr. Clarke stated the future challenges for the County Government include revenues, an aging workforce, increasing budgets, infrastructure expenses, and ability to attract new businesses.



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#### **Economic Development Week: Sam Shoge**

Mr. Shoge reported on Economic Development Week, which ran from October 22, 2018 to October 26, 2018. This is a state wide event sponsored by the Maryland Economic Development Association. One of the events was a radio interview on WCEI. A second event, Gears to Cheers, a manufacturing network event, was hosted by the Whalen Company and sponsored by Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership. The County Council issued a proclamation for Economic Development Week and lastly, many of the committee members enjoyed the opportunity to take a tour of the MEBA Engineering School.

#### **Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser**

Ms. Vanhooser thanked Mr. Clarke for being instrumental in obtaining a grant toward road improvement for the Mistletoe Hall Commerce Park. An event to launch Mistletoe Hall, which included a visit from Governor Hogan, was held on October 19. Mr. Shoge added that the department worked with Mr. Clarke and the town of Easton on securing funds for Celeste Industries, which produces cleaning chemicals for the airline industry, from the Bay Restoration Fund for a sewer extension.

Ms. Vanhooser reported work has begun on preparation for the 2019 Business Appreciation Breakfast at the Milestone. The tentative date is May 3, 2019. She also reminded members about Cocktails and Conservation, which will be held Friday, November 9 from 4:00 – 5:30, located in the tent next to the Bullitt House.

#### **Chairman's Report: No Report**

#### **County Council Report: Jennifer Williams**

Ms. Williams thanked Mr. Clarke for his presentation and noted the importance of infrastructure to economic development and the recruiting and retaining of businesses in the County. She noted Secretary of Commerce Mike Gill visited the County recently and participated in the first SED talks. Ms. Williams reported the Council is now taking applications for a Planning Commission membership as well as the Short Term Rental Board.

#### **Member Updates:**

Scott Warner – thanked Ms. Vanhooser for all her work on the Mistletoe Hall launch and thanked Mr. Shoge, who made a video of the event, which has had very positive feedback and is available for viewing on the Economic Development website page.



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Ron Engle – reminded members to go see the new pedestrian/bicycle bridge down Glenwood Ave.

Nancy LaJoyce – reported last week when Secretary Mike Gill was here he visited the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and got to see the museums plans for expansion. She noted there are two new tax credits available that are cyber security related for anyone interested in investing in a cyber security business or a business that is interested in making their company more cyber secure.

Dana Newman –the library has applied for a \$19,000 grant from the State Library which would allow the library to pay for 30 hot spots and 10 ipads for circulation. She also reported the STEAM Festival takes place the weekend of Nov. 3 at the library.

**Adjournment:** With business concluded Mr. Engle moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Jafari. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

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