



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 September 5, 2019

Members Present: Chairman, Jackie Wilson, Vice Chairman, Reza Jafari Ron Engle, Cassandra Vanhooser, Ted Bautz, Donna Saathoff, Tim Jones, Jean Weisman, Scott Beatty, Shannon Dill, Al Silverstein, Margaret Enloe, Andrea Lev, Micah Risher

Members Absent: Chuck Callahan, Terenda Thomas, Andy Hollis, Walter Chase, Peter Dunbar, Craig Wanner

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

Attendees: Dana Newman, Cristy Morrell, Deena Kilmon, Scott Warner, Susie Hayward, Gordon Fronk, Kelly Simonsen, Nancy LaJoice

Call to Order: Jackie Wilson called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the July 11, 2019 meeting were presented. Mr. Jafari moved the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Guest Speaker Series: Dr. Freida Wadley, Talbot County Health Department

Dr. Wadley began her presentation by noting all business and community leaders are interested in economic growth for their community. To have economic growth you need a prepared workforce. She said employers are seeing a lack of work ethic in many of the younger workers just entering the workforce. Dr. Wadley referenced listening to the CEO of Honeywell Industries questioning, how do we get a prepared work force. They realized starting to prepare students in high school to enter the workforce is too late. Dr. Wadley stated it starts in kindergarten, obtaining those readiness skills. The students that do not achieve them then are always playing catch up.

Dr. Wadley noted that the children being born in Talbot County today are at a higher risk of not doing well in school because of exposure to unemployment, incarceration, mental health problems, and addiction problems. She referred to a 1990's study of middle class adults that found 28% reported experiencing physical abuse as a child. One in four females reported sexual abuse as children. Many reported mental health problems in the family, as well as substance



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abuse. Dr. Wadley said the 90's were the beginning of prescription opioid deaths. These early childhood experiences can also increase the risk for heart disease and cancer.

Dr. Wadley said children being born today are experiencing more adverse childhood experiences (ACE) than their parents. These early experiences can effect proper brain development. She believes hope lies in how we help children learn to deal with adversity. She listed protective factors, such as having at least one caring adult for children to learn resiliency. Therefore, the Talbot Health Department, Social Services Department, and Talbot Public Schools have joined together to create Talbot Children's Initiative. The object is to provide services to the child and family that will help them thrive, to have early intervention for children's behavioral problems, mental health, and addiction services for youth and the parents. Dr. Wadley concluded, it all starts with protecting our children.

Department Report: Sam Shoge

Mr. Shoge cited two local business closures, the Coca-Cola warehouse and Fastenal, both located on Commerce Drive. The Coca-Cola warehouse is consolidating to Salisbury in October, and Fastenal, an industrial supply company, will be moving its operation to the Cambridge Fastenal location. The Easton Coca-Cola location employed approximately 40 to 50 employees, many of whom have accepted jobs at the Salisbury location. The Easton Fastenal branch employed one full-time and two part-time employees, who will be relocating to Cambridge.

Mr. Shoge reported on the Economic Development Departments recent business retention efforts. He noted several local businesses are reporting bright futures ahead. These include Jasco, which produces analytical testing instruments and accessories, and Caloris Engineering, developers of dryer technology for the dairy and wastewater treatment industries. The department also visited Critchlow-Adkins, Chesapeake Multicultural Center, Turnbridge Talbot, Konsyl Pharmaceuticals, and IFrog, an automotive marketing and advertising company that has just moved into renovated offices on Bay Street, and will be having a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 10.

Mr. Shoge then reminded members of the Economic Development Resource Fair on September 18 with representatives available from the Enterprise Zone, the Opportunity Zone, a representative from PACE, and a representative from the Easton Business Alliance to talk about the recent Arts and Entertainment District designation in Easton.

Finally, Mr. Shoge spoke about the department's tour of the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) located at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, which develops innovative technology and research in aquaculture. He stated the future Cordova aquaculture



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project will be leveraging technology developed at IMET. Mr. Shoge feels this relationship will create business attraction potential for related industries to Talbot County.

Director's Report: Cassandra Vanhooser

Ms. Vanhooser reported the Cordova Master Plan is underway and the first public meeting has been held with over 100 people attending to learn more about the Plan and American Aquaculture Holding, LLC. She announced Talbot County has been invited to host the MEDA fall conference on Monday, October 21, to kick off Economic Development Week at the Tidewater Inn. The topic will be Community Identity. She said as soon as they get registration information it will be sent out to members.

Ms. Vanhooser stated the Economic Development Dept. will again be partnering with the Waterfowl Festival and will host Coffee and Conservation. The Department of Natural Resources is the sponsor for the event on the opening day of Waterfowl with the Secretary of DNR, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, as the guest speaker.

Ms. Vanhooser was privileged to attend the Talbot Goes Purple film screening, which was shown at the Avalon Theater. She added the Dept. is working with the 22 tenants at the Talbot County Business Center to transition them to becoming tenants of Easton Airport.

Chairman's Report: Jackie Wilson

Ms. Wilson reminded members they are charged with identifying guest speakers for the monthly meetings. She stated she would like to have scheduled speakers through the end of the year.

County Council Report: Chuck Callahan

No Report

Department of Commerce Report: Nancy LaJoice

Ms. LaJoice reported on recent Anniversary Citations from the Dept. of Commerce, which include Hair of the Dog Wine and Spirits at 15 years, Campbell's Boatyard at 25 years, Two If By Sea Restaurant 10 years, Atelier 11 Ltd., 25 years, and Bountiful Homes on September 20 for 20 years in business in Talbot County.



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Town Reports

Town of Easton – Ron Engle

Mr. Engle reported the town has met with SHA regarding their concerns over coordination of the lights on Route 50 at Chapel Rd. and the addition of a traffic light at the new school at Port Street. He noted renovation of the Easton Marketplace Shopping Center, including the McDonalds and the addition of Verizon cell towers to improve cellular service.

Town of St. Michaels – Jean Weisman

Ms. Weisman reported on a successful tourism summer in St. Michaels. The former Acme building (Town Center) has two new tenants, Chesapeake Outfitters and Charisma have moved from their previous location in town, leaving two empty sites. She noted accommodations revenue was up 7% from the last fiscal year.

Town of Oxford – Gordon Fronk

Mr. Fronk reported the renovation of the MEWs continues to move along. He noted the rear-shed addition has been removed and the remaining 1500 sq. ft., 2 story building has been lifted and shored up and has a new crawl space. The shell should be ready for a developer within the next month to purchase it and complete construction for retail space on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. Mr. Fronk added that the wastewater plant nears completion with the state picking up a large percentage of the cost. He said they are researching the best way to prevent the current erosion of the beach along the Strand.

Town of Trappe – Walter Chase

No Report

Adjournment: With business, concluded Mr. Silverstein moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Bautz. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Next meeting will be Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at 100 W. Dover Street (TCFL)