

Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 2, 2020
Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Vice Chairperson, Reza Jafari called the meeting to order at approximately 8 a.m.

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Scott Beatty, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe, Andy Hollis, Reza Jafari, Tina Jones, Sandi Pepe, Micah Risher, Donna Saathoff, Terenda Thomas, Cassandra Vanhooser, Craig Wanner, Jean Weisman, Jackie Wilson

Board Members Absent: Walter Chase, Chuck Callahan, Al Silverstein

Staff Present: Candace Harris, Pam Keeton

Guests: Kimberly Kratovil, Kelly Simonsen

II. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the June 2, 2020, meeting were presented. Ted Bautz moved the minutes be accepted as written. Reza Jafari seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

III. Director's Report

Ms. Vanhooser reported on the Talbot CARES Small Business Grant program. Approximately 105 applications have been received at this time. The group has suspected accepting new applications until the ones they have received have been processed and there is a final count of how much money has been distributed. A total of 15 applications have been sent over to the Finance Office. Ms. Vanhooser noted that many of the applications were incomplete when submitted, indicating that business have a lack of understanding about what is required.

She also expressed her sincere thanks to the EDC members on the grants task force, including Jackie Wilson, Ron Engle, Sandi Pepe, Jean Weisman, and Walter Chase. Ms. Vanhooser thanked her staff for all their hard work on the grant applications. She reported that the county attorney has put together a grant agreement with the guidelines that will be signed before checks will be distributed.

Ms. Enloe asked are there any kind of trend in the applicants applying for the grants. Ms. Vanhooser reported that applications have been received from a wide range of businesses including hospitality, service businesses, and consulting firms. There have also been a number of inquiries after the application process closed. Once the grant process is finished, an analysis will be conducted to find out which type of businesses were helped

in Talbot County. One trend that Ms. Vanhooser has noticed is that most people who applied for the grant had already applied for PPP or EIDL.

Mr. Jafari asked what is the range of the amount of the grant. Ms. Vanhooser stated that some applicants have asked for exactly what they need, but most asked for the maximum amount of \$10,000.

Ms. Vanhooser said because she knows many of the businesses who have applied for the grant. She believes that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism has expanded its reach with this program and reinforced its relationship with the business community.

In other activities, Ms. Vanhooser reported that she moderated a call with Senator Cardin with the state's tourism directors on June 29 and there is talk that there may be another round of funding. She also reported that the weekly private-sector calls will continue, but just once a week instead of twice a week. The TalbotWorks.org newsletter is back on track and is scheduled to be released on the first of each month. .

IV. Town Reports

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

- V. County Council Report:** Andy Hollis filled in for Chuck Callahan, who was not able to make the meeting. Mr. Hollis offered his personal thanks to Ms. Vanhooser and her team including the committee members for the fantastic job they are doing on the grant program. He said that he agrees with Ms. Vanhooser that the CARES money may run out before the end of the year and with the positivity rate in Talbot County numbers rising that is causing some concern. He reported that they met with the town of Easton on July 1, 2020, regarding using the Courthouse greens for the Washington Street closing.

- VI. Comments:** Ms. Kratovil reported that Senator Cardin mentioned another round of funding during the Tourism call on Monday, June 29, 2020. Senator Cardin proposed to extend the PPP funding from the June 30 deadline to the beginning of August. With regard to additional funding, the senate goes on break on July 20 and it will be voted on in the Senate at the earliest. There was not much interest in votes prior to that date.

Ms. Saathoff gave a report about agriculture in Talbot County. Ms. Dill reported that Family Affair Farm was highlighted on ABC News during a report on agriculture rebounding in Maryland. Ms. Jones gave a report on Chesapeake College. Ms. Thomas gave a report on unemployment.

- VII. Adjournment** Jackie Wilson adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be held on September 3, 2020, at 8 a.m.