

**Economic Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 4, 2021**  
Via Zoom

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

Chairman Reza Jafari called the meeting to order at approximately 8 a.m.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Ted Bautz, Chuck Callahan, Cliff Coppersmith, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe, Reza Jafari, Amy Kreiner, Dana Newman, Sandi Pepe, Micah Risher, Donna Saathoff, Clay Stamp, Terenda Thomas, Cassandra Vanhooser, Debbie Walsworth, Scott Warner, Jean Weisman, and Jackie Wilson.

**Board Members Absent:** Walter Chase

**Staff Present:** Pam Keeton

**Guests:** James Bell, Derick Daly, Susie Hayward, Melissa Kelly, Nancy LaJoice, Cristy Morrell, Kelly Simonson, Tracy Ward, and Bob Zimberoff

**II. Guest Speaker:** Derick Daly, founder of Building African American Minds, briefed the EDC about the many programs he is working on in the town of Easton, including the F.E.E.D. Program offered by Polaris Village Ministries. F.E.E.D., which stands for Foster, Empower, Engage, and Develop, is a program designed to inspire continuous growth in families and individuals by providing opportunities for social, educational, financial, and spiritual attainment.

**III. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the January 7, 2021, meeting were presented. Ted Bautz moved the minutes be accepted as written. Micah Risher seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**IV. County Council Report:** Chuck Callahan gave an update on COVID-19 immunizations and the County budget process, which will feature a flat budget for FY2022. Upcoming projects include a new gymnasium at the Talbot County Community Center and a new site for the Sheriff's Office.

**V. Chairman's Report:** Mr. Jafari told EDC members that while we had hoped that the annual Business Appreciation Breakfast would be held in-person this year, this seems like an impossibility at this point. Though it was cancelled last year, he said that the event would be held virtually in 2021. The Business Appreciation Summit will be held on April 30. The EDC committee responsible for sponsorships will need to meet soon and work is underway on the new format.

- VI. Director's Report:** Ms. Vanhooser apologized for the bringing yet another grants update to the commission, but noted that all programs would be finalized by the end of February. The two remaining programs are the Talbot County Restaurant Relief Fund Grant and the Talbot County Hotel and Motel Relief Fund Grant. A final report will be submitted to the County Council on Tuesday, Feb. 9 at the regularly scheduled Council meeting.

As the grants project has evolved, so have the application process. Ms. Vanhooser noted that the recent grant applications have included survey questions for the businesses. She then asked Scott Warner, executive director of the Mid-Shore Regional Council, to give an update on the Eastern Shore COVID-19 Recovery Project, which began last July with funding from an Economic Development Administration grant of more than \$400,000. The project is gathering survey data to develop tools to gauge the economic recovery after disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The information will be used for analyzing trends and identifying needs.

A summary of the Emergency Legislation proposed by Gov. Larry Hogan was included in the materials distributed to EDC members. Mr. Jafari asked if EDC members wished to submit a letter of support for this legislation. No motion was made, and no action was taken.

Ms. Vanhooser added a final note, saying that Feb. 4 is her work anniversary. She has worked for Talbot County for eight years.

- VII. Maryland Department of Commerce:** Ms. LaJoice informed the commission that the Department of Commerce's ExportMD Program has grant funding to help with international marketing programs. <https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/exportmd-program>

- VIII. Town Reports:** Town representatives gave reports on happenings in and around their jurisdictions.

- IX. Comments from Board Members and Guests:** Other members of the EDC and guests reported on their activities.

Mr. Jafari asked participants to allow an extra 15 minutes in their schedule for the meeting in the event it runs past 9 a.m.

- X. Next Meeting:** March 4, 2021, at 8 a.m.

- XI. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 a.m.