

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 5, 2021

8 a.m.

Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Reza Jafari called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Clifford Coppersmith, Shannon Dill, Ronald Engle, Margaret Enloe-North, Reza Jafari, Amy Kreiner, Micah Risher, Clay Stamp, Terenda Thomas, Cassandra Vanhooser

Members Absent: Chuck Callahan, Walter Chase, Jimmy Jaramillo, Donna Saathoff, Deborah Walsworth, Craig Wanner, Jackie Wilson

Guests: Susie Hayward, Kimberly Kratovil, Dana Newman, Tracy Ward, Scott Warner

II. Guest Speaker: Margaret Enloe-North, Executive Director, Waterfowl Chesapeake

Ms. Enloe-North briefed members on the Economic and Cultural Impact Study conducted by Rockport Analytics for the 2019 Waterfowl Festival. The study showed that the festival enjoys enormous support from visitors and the community. Highlights of the presentation include:

- In 2019, the total economic impact of the festival to Talbot County was \$2.6 million. Festival-initiated activity supported a total of 48 full- and part-time jobs resulting in \$1.6 million in wages.
- A total of 15,120 attendees spent nearly \$3 million on goods and services in the county. Of the total attendees, 6,680 or 45% were defined as visitors, those who traveled from 50 miles or more to attend the festival.
- Shopping accounted for the largest share of total spending by visitors followed by food and beverage. Some 83% of residents believe that the festival is very important or essential to stimulating the local economy.
- Of all festival attendees, 89% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the festival.
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS), an indicator of those most likely to visit again and to promote the festival to others, was 74 for visitors and 62 for residents. An NPS of 60 is considered “very good.”

- III. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the June 3, 2021, meeting were presented. Micah Risher made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ted Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
- IV. County Council Report:** Clay Stamp presented the County Council Report. There are a significant number of road projects going on throughout the county and a new emergency services building is planned for the northern part of the county.
- V. Chairman's Report:** Mr. Jafari announced that the Chamber of Commerce Economic Symposium will be held on September 2, 2021. The Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism is a sponsor.
- VI. Director's Report:** Ms. Vanhooser gave a presentation about the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery Project, an online suite of tools that provides insights into the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy. The project was funded with a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and involved a number of agencies including the Mid-Shore Regional Council, the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, and the economic development directors from Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot counties.

Ms. Vanhooser also reported that her staff has distributed the grant funds from the Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Community Development. However, the department just got notice that they will receive an additional \$30,000 to help businesses that expanded online sales or transitioned to telework during the pandemic.

- VII. Maryland Department of Commerce:** No report.
- VIII. Town Reports:** Ron Engle reported on several developments in Easton.
- IX. Comments from Board Members and Guests:** No comments.
- X. Upcoming Meetings:**
- September 2, 2021 – Talbot County Chamber of Commerce Economic Symposium
 - October 7, 2021 – Talbot County Economic Development Commission Meeting
- XI. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 a.m.