

Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 2, 2021

8 a.m.

Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Reza Jafari called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Chuck Callahan, Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, Shannon Dill, Ron Engle, Margaret Enloe-North, Reza Jafari, Jimmy Jaramillo, Ken Kozel, Amy Kreiner, Micah Risher, Clay Stamp, Cassandra Vanhooser, Jackie Wilson

Members Absent: Walter Chase, Jeff Rhodes, Donna Saathoff, Terenda Thomas, Debbie Walsworth, Craig Wanner.

Staff Present: Krista Boothby, Pam Keeton

Guests: Abby Graves, Susie Hayward, Nancy LaJoice, Cristy Morrell, Dana Newman, Kelly Simonsen, Scott Warner

II. Guest Speaker

Councilwoman Laura Price explained what the Maryland Association of Counties is and how it works. She is president-elect for the organization. She reviewed the group's four legislative initiatives: 1) Reinvest in local transportation infrastructure; 2) Protect local officials against threats and intimidation; 3) Ensure funding fairness and county role in elections; 4) Reset emergency transport as a realistic recognition of care.

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the November 4, 2021, meeting were presented. Mr. Kozel made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Bautz seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

IV. County Council Report

Council President Chuck Callahan opened by recognizing Ms. Price's contributions to the county. He also announced that the County Council will conduct a survey developed by BEACON to gather input from the citizens about how the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds should be spent. The County will receive \$7.2 million. He also

congratulated Waterfowl Festival on a successful 50th festival, and he recognized the contributions of the festival to the region.

V. Chairman's Report

Mr. Jafari announced that the next Business Appreciation Summit will be held on May 6, 2022, and that a committee is forming to plan the event. He also announced that Economic Development Commission meetings will be held quarterly beginning in 2022 and will last approximately an hour and a half. Dates for the meetings are March 3, June 2, Sept. 1, and Dec. 1. Finally, Mr. Jafari announced that the commission will begin strategic planning in 2022, and he asked for volunteers to work on this initiative.

VI. Director's Report

Waterfowl Festival: Ms. Vanhooser followed up on Mr. Callahan's comments about the Waterfowl Festival, saying it was the best she's ever seen. She thanked the members who attended the Coffee and Conservation event on Nov. 12 at Waterfowl Festival, noting that the event shows the business community's support for the festival and acknowledgement of the environment as an important business segment. Ms. Vanhooser went on to say that her department partnered with the Waterfowl Festival on cooperative advertising with the Washington Post and content activation on the TourTalbot.org website. All metrics point to a successful campaign. She then asked Margaret Enloe-North, executive director of the Waterfowl Festival, if she wished to add to the discussion.

Ms. Enloe-North discussed the festival's many successes, this year and throughout the past 50 years. She then announced that she would be leaving her position at the end of the year, saying it was time to do something different with her own career. Ms. Vanhooser said that Ms. Enloe-North had exhibited great leadership during the pandemic; that there was every possibility the festival might now have survived. Ms. Enloe-North said that the many grants available from the government, from the state, county, and town, had been instrumental in seeing them through 2020 and 2021.

Surveys: Ms. Vanhooser also circled back to Mr. Callahan's request that she share additional information about the ARPA survey. The County is working with BEACON to develop a survey that will ask citizens to help set the priorities for using the money. The group has a solid draft and will be finishing it this week. She was not sure of the release date.

The Biannual Business Sentiment Survey that was created as part of the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery Project will be administered again in December. Ms. Vanhooser asked that all members take the survey AND share it with their networks.

Maryland Travel and Tourism Summit, Nov. 8-10: Tourism Board chairman Judy Bixler, Krista Boothby, and Ms. Vanhooser all attended the conference in November. The

department won an award for the best printed promotional material for its Frederick Douglass Driving Tour Map Guide from the Maryland Tourism Coalition.

Proposed Accommodations Tax Increase: Ms. Vanhooser said that she saved the bad news for last. The County Council will not act on the Tourism Board's proposal for increasing the accommodations tax as the Town of St. Michaels came out in opposition to having visitors pay more for the services they use. As a reminder, this is how the Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism is funded.

Election of Officers for 2022: Mr. Jafari was nominated at the November meeting to continue as chairman of the Commission, and Ms. Vanhooser said that no one had submitted another name for consideration. She opened the floor for nominations and, hearing none, called the voted. Mr. Jafari was re-elected.

Margaret Enloe-North, who is currently serving as the vice chairperson, said that she would like to continue, but is unsure of her position because of her job change. Ms. Vanhooser asked if anyone else wished to be considered, but no candidates emerged. She then asked Mr. Jafari if he would agree to defer the election for vice chairperson to the March 2022 meeting. He agreed. Ms. Enloe-North will continue to serve in this role until elections are held in March 2022.

VII. Town Reports

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

VIII. Upcoming Meetings

- March 3, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.
- June 2, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.
- Sept. 1, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.
- Dec. 1, 2022 – Economic Development Commission Meeting @ 8 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Engle made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Bautz. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.