

Hagerstown-Washington County Economic Development Commission

Regular Commission Meeting September 12, 2013

The regular meeting of the Hagerstown-Washington County Economic Development Commission (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Room 225. The following members were present: Dan Pheil (Chair), Ron Bowers (Vice Chair), Jef Bohn (Secretary), Hugh Breslin, Paul Crampton, Ryan Daughtridge, Bob Jeffers, Stu Mullendore, Kate Rader, Janet Stiles Fulton, and Pete Thomas. Ed Lough was absent and excused from the meeting.

Ex-Officio members attending were Terry Baker and William McKinley, Commissioners for Washington County; Kristin Aleshire and Donald Munson, Council Members for the City of Hagerstown; Jill Estavillo, Economic Development Manager for the City of Hagerstown; and Julie Rohm, General Manager of the Valley Mall. Also attending were Greg Murray, Administrator for Washington County; Tabitha Porterfield, Marketing Specialist for Washington County Public Relations and Community Affairs; Sarah Sprecher, Assistant County Administrator for Washington County; and EDC staff Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley, and Linda Spence.

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Dan Pheil. Mr. Pheil welcomed and introduced new EDC board members; Hugh Breslin of WHAG, representing the Greater Hagerstown Committee; and Ryan Daughtridge of Bustin’ Boards and Bikle’s Ski Shop, representing the City of Hagerstown. Both members announced they were both administered the “Oath of Office” by the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Approval of the Order of Business – Jef Bohn made a motion to approve the order of business for September 12, 2013 as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Crampton and approved by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes – Ron Bowers motioned to approve the meeting minutes of August 8, 2013 as presented, the motion was seconded by Pete Thomas and approved unanimously.

Elected Officials’ Comments – Commissioner Baker commented on a recent business visit to F&D Apiaries and a tour of the former Unilever building that was recently acquired by Shenandoah Family Farms. Commissioner McKinley noted Stu Mullendore is scheduled to present the Commissioners with an update on the implementation of the top five strategic priorities as part of the Strategic Economic Development Plan on September 24. Council Member Munson commented on the future of the Hagerstown Suns, plans for the former Municipal Electric Light Plant (MELP) facility, and economic development opportunities for downtown. Council Member Aleshire reported the City of Hagerstown will take an early look into the budget as they anticipate a \$3.8M shortfall, and a meeting with the Hagerstown Suns owner and investors revealed they were not interested in a downtown stadium location but rather, they favored an east end location.

Executive Committee – Dan Pheil reiterated an update on the top five strategic priorities would be presented to the Commissioners on September 24 but the time has yet to be determined. He mentioned Executive Committee members and staff would attend the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development appreciation luncheon in Baltimore following the meeting.

Ag Marketing Advisory Committee – Janet Stiles Fulton reported attending a recent quarterly meeting, and remarked how well Leslie Hart interacts with the agriculture community. Ms. Hart reported the *Farm to School* event will be held on September 23 at Pangborn Elementary School. Volunteers will teach agriculture and read agriculture-related books to more than 815 students. She also reported on the *Start Up Maryland* event scheduled for September 25, grant writing opportunities, *Kids Growing with Grain* event, and researching an opportunity to host a Clay Shoot fundraiser in the Spring to benefit Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H programs.

City Center Committee – Carmen Harbaugh noted committee membership has been confirmed and includes her and Ed Lough, also co-chair Brien Poffenberger, Mary Baykan, Mary Ann Burke, Rich Daughtridge, Jill Estavillo, Terri Leiter, Kate Rader, and Mike Zampelli. Discussion included strengthening City Center, continued support of the construction of a multi-use event center, and the grand opening of the Washington County Free Library scheduled for October 5.

Infrastructure and Site Development Committee – Ron Bowers reported the *Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report* is nearly complete. They are in the process of doing final edits on the document(s) and plans are to make it available for discussion by the next board meeting.

Marketing & Public Relations Committee – Stu Mullendore noting the *Strategic Economic Development Plan* (SEDP) is part of the Marketing & Public Relations Committee gave a condensed update on the implementation progress of the Top Five Strategic Priorities; the *Infrastructure Committee* is in the process of finalizing its *Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report*; the *Workforce Development Committee* recently prepared a “Scope of Work” report and it will be utilized to determine action items within the SEDP; City of Hagerstown staff are working on plans to improve downtown and have provided documentation on those efforts; a tactical marketing plan would be prepared rather than a comprehensive marketing plan; the EDC’s current staff and committee structure is at its most effective and involves more community stakeholders than in years past.

Small Business Development Committee – Jef Bohn reported the extended focus group is looking to create a web page on the EDC’s website to feature its newly developed entrepreneurial resources and anticipates its completion by October 22. The committee will research solutions to business operational issues discussed during visits to local businesses as part of the *Washington County Business Outreach Program*. Bob Mandley suggested the committee use information gathered from business visits conducted by the City of Hagerstown and the Downtown Alliance as another resource for a more comprehensive look into business operational trends.

Workforce Development Committee – Bob Jeffers distributed a copy of the *Workforce Development Committee*’s “Scope of Work” document which stated workforce development issues faced in Washington County are not unique from other communities across the country. There are two main issues, skills gap in manufacturing and other highly skilled disciplines; and a lack of “soft” skills. The committee will focus on four areas to address these two issues: 1) Facilitate increased participation in the educational system by local employers, 2) Facilitate the enhancement of “soft” skills training for our future workers at the high school and community college level, 3) Develop efforts to educate the working public to the benefits of continual, life-long learning, and 4) Work with local educational institutions and businesses to develop and win an EARN legislation grant designed to enhance a broad spectrum of workforce training for multiple employers. They discussed the perception that there is a need to advocate for increased funding for training and workforce development programs but noted it may be necessary to look at who is receiving benefits and advocate for adjustments as to who is actually benefitting from funding programs. “The message is clear,” Council Member Aleshire stated, “the community wants people here who want to work and we want to train and develop that workforce. But on the other side, as a community, we need to start reflecting on dis-incentivizing those who don’t want to work and take a real hard look at the proliferation of programs we offer, largely in the City, that continue to expand that populous.” The group also discussed internships, externships, parental conditioning, the need for a hospitality school, use of under-utilized facilities, and benefits of creating a vibrant downtown.

Celebration of Business Taskforce – Paul Crampton mentioned the *Washington County Business Roundup at Rodeo Jam* event is being held on September 28. Invitations were mailed to more than 8,755 registered Washington County businesses listed in Hoovers. He distributed a sign-up sheet and encouraged members to select a time during the day to help greet business guests.

Old Business – Dan Pheil noted board members recently participated in a *Maryland Economic Developer’s Association’s* Past President’s Council meeting as part of an educational opportunity for EDC board members. Bob Mandley explained the *Washington County Real Property Tax Credit Ordinance for Small Business* discussion tabled last month is up for discussion this month. During the 2012 legislative session, bills were

passed to allow Frederick and Washington counties to enact an ordinance to provide a tax credit to small businesses that mirrors that of incentives for locating in an Enterprise Zone, but without the lofty hiring requirements. Mr. Mandley stated he and the County Attorney's office concur and would like to move forward with presenting the Ordinance to the BOCC for review and approval. *Ron Bowers made a motion to move forward with presentation of the "Washington County Real Property Tax Credit Ordinance for Small Business" to the County Commissioners. Stu Mullendore seconded the motion. The motion passed by a majority vote, noting Jef Bohn and Janet Stiles Fulton opposed the motion.* Mr. Bohn noted some language in the Ordinance left too much room for interpretation and agreed he would seek clarification from the County Attorney. *Ron Bowers made a motion to create a taskforce to review and recommend changes regarding the dissemination of Washington County's Hotel/Motel Tax. Paul Crampton seconded the motion.* During the ensuing discussion Kate Rader and Hugh Breslin opposed the motion. Greg Murray explained 50% (approximately \$800,000-\$900,000) of the Hotel/Motel Tax is given to the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) annually and the remaining 50% goes towards economic development projects, cultural or recreation programs, and to municipalities. Julie Rohm, residing CVB Board President, stated she would provide each member with an electronic copy of the CVB's Annual Report. *Ron Bowers moved to table the creation of a taskforce until after all related Hotel/Motel Tax documentation is reviewed as aforementioned and further necessary review presents itself. Hugh Breslin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

New Business – Bob Mandley reported he was aware project liaison Terry Irwin has worked extensively over the past few weeks with John Hammond on a project to bring water service to a location just outside of Williamsport. Mr. Hammond recently sent a letter requesting support for the project to the EDC. Since that time, he has reached out to many folks, including EDC board members, County Commissioners, and the Mayor and Hagerstown City Council. Mr. Mandley reported zoning for the parcel Mr. Hammond wants to develop does not support the project and numerous other issues were presented. Janet Stile Fulton made a motion to respond to Mr. Hammond's request "unfortunately the EDC is unable to support the request for support at this time and welcome an opportunity to assist in identifying another location should it be required in the future. Ryan Daughtridge seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session – Pete Thomas motioned to go into Closed Session to discuss the relocation or expansion of industry, and, buildings and site matters in accordance with Section 10-508 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The motion was seconded by Jef Bohn. Hearing no discussion the motion to go into Closed Session was approved by unanimous vote.

Open Session – On a motion made by Pete Thomas to return to Open Session and seconded by Ron Bowers, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Kristin Aleshire, Jef Bohn, Ron Bowers, Hugh Breslin, Ryan Daughtridge, Jill Estavillo, William McKinley, Stuart Mullendore, Donald Munson, Greg Murray, Daniel Pheil, Kate Rader, Julie Rohm, Sarah Sprecher, Janet Stiles Fulton, Vickie Swink, Peter Thomas, Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley and Linda Spence.

Adjournment – Jef Bohn made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Kate Rader. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.



EDC Business Support Specialist and Recording Clerk