



Washington County Economic Development Commission Board
Regular Meeting
February 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Washington County Economic Development Commission Board (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Room 255. The following members were present: Paul Crampton (Vice Chair), Jef Bohn (Secretary), Ryan Daughtridge, Ed Lough, Julie Rohm, Janet Stiles Fulton, and Pete Thomas. Excused members include Hugh Breslin, Bob Jeffers, Dan Pheil, and Wade Watson. Jim Herbert was not present.

Ex-Officio members attending were Jill Frick, Economic Development Manager for the City of Hagerstown; Greg Snook, President for the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation, Inc.; and Vickie Swink, Western Region Representative for the MD Department of Business & Economic Development. Commissioner LeRoy Myers was excused from the meeting. Commissioners Terry Baker and John Barr, and Council Member Kristin Aleshire were not present.

Additional attendees included County staff, Carmen Harbaugh, Kassie Lewis, Bob Mandley, Greg Murray, Tabitha Porterfield, Linda Spence, and Sarah Sprecher.

Call to Order – Paul Crampton called the meeting to order.

Approval of the Agenda – Ed Lough motioned to approve the February 12, 2015 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Pete Thomas. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes – Pete Thomas made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 14, 2015 as presented. Ed Lough seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Elected Officials' Comments – Council Member Munson commented on Proctor & Gamble's announcement to locate a new facility in Martinsburg, WV. The project consists of a \$500M capital investment, 400+ acres, and is expected to create 700 jobs. "A project of this magnitude is a huge win for the entire region," Council Member Munson stated. He suggested Mayor Gysberts reach out to Martinsburg Mayor, George Karos, so they can encourage their respective Governors to work collaboratively in putting citizens to work. Council Member Munson expressed frustration and disapproval of recent discussions by the Maryland State Delegation to give local control of the Washington County, MD Hotel/Motel Tax to the County. He stated this action would "gut" the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and diminish its ability to attract tourism dollars to the community. Greg Murray explained Washington County intended to seek the delegation's approval to reduce the county's contribution to the CVB from the Hotel/Motel Tax to 40% from 50%, funding would not exceed the current rate and would not be less than the current rate. The 60% then would be utilized for brick and mortar projects. The delegation felt giving local control for a local tax would allow the County more flexibility to fund economic development, tourism, cultural, and recreational projects. Council Member Munson thanked Mr. Murray for the explanation and noted he felt more comfortable about the Delegation's pending change in how Washington County's Hotel/Motel Tax is handled.

Director's Report – Kassie Lewis followed up on the Proctor and Gamble (P&G) discussion agreeing the project will have a positive regional impact. Vickie Swink mentioned MD DBED received an inquiry nearly two years ago about a search for a 400+ acre parcel of land for sale by an anonymous client. DBED was unable to identify a parcel(s) large enough to meet the client's requirement and although the client was unknown at the time, DBED suspects the client was P&G. Ms. Lewis detailed how property searches are conducted. She reported that she will work closely with the Berkeley County, WV Economic Development Director, Steve Christian to ensure Washington County, MD is kept abreast of available opportunities as this project continues forward. Greg Murray explained DBED Secretary Michael Gill expressed desire to keep Governor Hogan aware of projects across the State. He announced plans for the County's Department of Public Relations & Community Affairs team to highlight positive attributes the P&G project will have for Washington County. Washington

County, let alone the State of Maryland, does not have available funds to compete with economic development incentives such as that provided by WV to P&G. However, Washington County, MD has asked the delegation to amend the Tax Increment Financing Fund (TIFF) to allow for the purchase and demolition of property; and allow projects of \$10M+ to receive a tax credit that can be used to help finance their debt or assist in purchasing their property over a six year period.

Executive Committee – Jef Bohn commented on the EDC meeting with the Board of County Commissioners and was surprised in the lack of two-way communication. Executive Committee members will request a meeting with the Mayor and Council to seek their input on where they feel the EDC could support City Center. In addition, the DBD and EDC would like to invite Secretary Gill to visit Washington County, MD and present him with an overview of the County and to ensure him we are open for business. At some point in the future, the DBD will also host a luncheon with DBED staff in Baltimore for the purpose of educating them on what our potential is here in Washington County.

City Center Committee – Nothing to report.

Education and Workforce Development Committee – Pete Thomas noted members continue to work with the Washington County Public Schools to learn how best to educate students and parents on all available career avenues. Members are also working closely with the Greater Hagerstown Committee on its efforts with the “Cradle to Career” program. Greg Snook mentioned Hagerstown Community College will host the State Superintendent of Schools as they continue conversations about the proposed “middle college” program.

Marketing and Communications Committee – Julie Rohm reported plans for the April 14, 2015 Celebration of Business is well underway. More than \$13,000 has been received in sponsorship commitment so far, and noted a second round of sponsorship requests were recently sent.

Old Business – Nothing to report this month.

New Business – Nothing to report this month.

Closed Session – Jef Bohn motioned to go into Closed Session to consider a matter concerning the proposal of a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State; or any personnel matters in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland. The motion was seconded by Ryan Daughtridge. Hearing no discussion the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Open Session – On a motion made by Janet Stiles Fulton to return to Open Session and seconded by Ed Lough, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Jef Bohn, Paul Crampton, Ryan Daughtridge, Jill Frick, Carmen Harbaugh, Kassie Lewis, Ed Lough, Bob Mandley, Don Munson, Greg Murray, Tabitha Porterfield, Julie Rohm, Greg Snook, Linda Spence, Sarah Sprecher, Janet Stiles Fulton, Vickie Swink, Pete Thomas.

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

Linda Spence, Business Support Specialist
Washington County Department of Business Development