

Washington County Economic Development Commission

Regular Commission Meeting October 10, 2013

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

Ex-Officio members attending were Terry Baker, Commissioner 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; Sandy Mehalko, Regional Director for the Small Business Technology & Development Center (SBTDC); and Julie Rohm, General Manager of the Valley Mall. Also attending were Greg Murray, Administrator for Washington County; Sam Devaram, Washington County Counselor of SBTDC; Tabitha Porterfield, Marketing Specialist for Washington County Public Relations and Community Affairs; Phil Ridenour, Director of the Hagerstown Regional Airport; Sarah Sprecher, Assistant County Administrator for Washington County; and Washington County Department of Business Development staff Carmen Harbaugh, Bob Mandley, and Linda Spence.

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Jef Bohn. Mr. Bohn welcomed Fred Frederick to the meeting who will provide members with an overview of the final *Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report*.

Approval of the Order of Business – Jef Bohn made a motion to approve the order of business for October 10, 2013, modifying the order to move the *Infrastructure and Site Development Committee* report directly following the *Approval of Minutes*. The motion was seconded by Paul Crampton and approved by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes – Pete Thomas motioned to approve the meeting minutes of September 12, 2013 as presented, the motion was seconded by Paul Crampton and approved unanimously.

Infrastructure and Site Development Committee – Fred Frederick announced the final *Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report (INAR)* is 99.9% complete. The INAR is a snapshot of 9 regions throughout Washington County, MD detailing available and in some cases, lacking infrastructure such as roads, rail, water, sewer, gas, incentives, zoning, etc., and is considered a foundation for future development. Stu Mullendore made a motion to adopt the *Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report* as presented; Ed Lough seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Frederick stated the report would be presented to the BOCC for review and approval the evening of October 15, 2013, at the Maugansville Ruritan Club. At the conclusion of the *Infrastructure and Site Development Committee* report, Mr. Frederick departed the meeting.

Elected Officials' Comments – Council Member Aleshire reported the Hagerstown City Council is taking a proactive review of the upcoming budget, exploring the possibility of constructing a third parking deck in City Center; and inquired about the EDC's procedural change in the way it presents their Project Status report. Council Member Munson commented on the grand re-opening of the Washington County Free Library.

Executive Committee – Jef Bohn reported the Vice Chair's position on the Slate of Officers is currently vacant and Paul Crampton agreed to enter his name for candidacy. On a motion made by Stu Mullendore and seconded by Pete Thomas, Paul Crampton was nominated to fill the unexpired term of Vice Chair; and the motion unanimously passed. Upon acceptance, Mr. Crampton announced he would relinquish his seat on the *Marketing and Public Relations Committee* and on the *Celebration of Business Taskforce*. Greg Murray stated the BOCC recently approved a reorganization plan for several county departments including the EDC. The staff component of the EDC will now be recognized as the "Washington County Department of Business Development," while the volunteer board remains the Economic Development Commission. The BOCC also

approved hiring a director of business development consistent with positions already in place such as the business development specialist(s) and a business support specialist. Residency of Washington County, MD is required for the director. Jef Bohn announced the EDC is looking to fill an At Large vacancy on the board and encourages the BOCC to utilize the board member skills matrix to determine the best candidate. In addition, there are opportunities for current members to serve on various EDC committees and taskforces.

Ag Marketing Advisory Committee – Janet Stiles Fulton reported Leslie Hart, along with the owners of Hoffman’s Quality Meats were currently visiting a high school in Prescott, WV to learn about their butchering program and to determine if such a program could be offered or successful in Washington County. Ms. Hart has also been working with Kaplan University’s Workforce Development Department in hosting several Chinese representatives as they learn about Washington County’s agricultural community and farm markets. For awareness, Ms. Stiles Fulton explained the farming community is very concerned with a recent ruling by a U.S. District Court Judge to uphold the Chesapeake Bay cleanup rules. The ruling has dangerous implications for farmers and many others in the Chesapeake Bay area. It would allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to dictate where farming will be allowed, where homes can be built and where businesses can be established. EPA will work with six states (Maryland, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia) and Washington, DC to set and enforce standards to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment that drains from rivers into the bay and harms ecology of the nation’s largest estuary. The farm community plans to appeal the judge’s decision.

City Center Committee – Ed Lough informed members the committee identified six (6) key issues they will concentrate their efforts on; 1) construction of a commercial business center with an attached parking deck to the rear located at the Columbia Bank lot, 2) extend the Maryland Theatre facility out to the sidewalk, 3) support the transformation of the former Barnwood Books property, 4) expansion of the University System of Maryland – Hagerstown, 5) support the purchase of the building between the Barbara Ingram School of the Arts and the Maryland Theatre for expansion, and 6) investigate pending sale of the Alexandria House and support its sale to a private developer.

Marketing & Public Relations Committee – Stu Mullendore stated goals 1 and 5 of the Top Five Strategic Priorities are complete and will continue to develop a tactical approach in developing an EDC marketing plan, which will now include Fort Ritchie.

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.

Workforce Development Committee – Bob Jeffers explained the group is focusing on getting businesses more involved with education and assisting Hagerstown Community College in their application for an EARN Grant. Mr. Jeffers noted Washington County Superintendent Clayton Wilcox asked for assistance to identify local STEM professionals who might be willing to participate in a new program that will provide support to teachers and students and will strengthen STEM teaching and learning. Washington County Technical and Williamsport high schools have been designated as STEM Innovation Schools which allows them first access to programs, resources and services provided by Maryland’s STEM Innovation Network. More high schools will be included as funding and capacity allows. Commissioner Baker informed members about upcoming tours of the Washington County Technical High School and invited all those who are interested in participating to feel free; dates will be forwarded following the meeting.

Celebration of Business Taskforce – Paul Crampton reported the *Washington County Business Roundup at Rodeo Jam* event held on September 28 was very successful. Of the more than 8,700 businesses invited by the EDC, 190 people representing 54 businesses attended. The *Celebration of Business* event has been scheduled for April 15, 2014 at Fountain Head Country Club. The taskforce is now gearing up and looking for volunteers to help and is looking for an EDC board member to chair the taskforce.

Old Business – Jef Bohn mentioned the Department of Business Development held an Open House on October 1 and received a proclamation from the BOCC in recognition of Economic Development Week. He noted he and Bob Mandley met with the County’s legal department regarding the *Washington County Real Property Tax Credit Ordinance for Small Business* because of unclear language. Specifically, in order for a facility to qualify, the facility must be previously “unused.” It was determined “unused” ultimately means “a newly constructed building” is eligible for the tax credit, and the building owner, not the business owner, would receive tax credit. It appears, not many businesses will be able to take advantage of this tax credit. Due to time constraints, discussion about the allocation of the Hotel/Motel Tax disbursement has been moved to the November meeting.

New Business – Greg Murray stated changes to the EDC Ordinance are being considered. Language will be clarified to ensure the Economic Development Commission understands its “advisory” role. Other changes discussed during the Executive Committee meeting included reducing the number of Executive Committee members from six (6) to five (5); reducing partnering agency representatives (City of Hagerstown, Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Hagerstown Committee), from two (2) each to one (1) each upon term expiration; maintaining one (1) representative from the Maryland Municipal League; and increase the number of At Large representatives from five (5) to eight (8) members. Board members suggested reconsideration of reducing the number of City of Hagerstown representatives due to its being the largest municipality member; stipulate one representative from the agricultural community and consider a cottage industry (“the arts”) representative. Members noted the skills matrix is a great resource to identify and filter candidates to fill vacancies. Upon further discussion, ex-officio members asked for their role to be expanded to possibly include a voting role, enabling them to make a larger contribution.

Closed Session – Kate Rader motioned to go into Closed Session to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State in accordance with Section 10-508 of the Maryland State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The motion was seconded by Bob Jeffers. Hearing no discussion the motion to go into Closed Session was approved by unanimous vote.

Open Session – On a motion made by Hugh Breslin to return to Open Session and seconded by Kate Rader, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Kristin Aleshire, Jef Bohn, Hugh Breslin, Paul Crampton, Ryan Daughtridge, Jill Estavillo, Bob Jeffers, Ed Lough, Sandy Mehalko, Stuart Mullendore, Donald Munson, Greg Murray, Tabitha Porterfield, Kate Rader, Julie Rohm, Sarah Sprecher, Peter Thomas, Carmen Harbaugh, Bob Mandley and Linda Spence.

Adjournment – Stu Mullendore made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Bob Jeffers. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Linda Spence

Business Support Specialist for Washington County
Department of Business Development and
Recording Clerk for the Economic Development Commission