



Washington County Economic Development Commission Board

July 14, 2016

The regular meeting of the Washington County Economic Development Commission Board (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Suite 1408. The following members were present: Julie Rohm (Chair), Ed Lough (Vice Chair), Michael Reyka (Secretary), Gary Bockrath, Michael Fitzgerald, Andrew Lobley, and Joshua Martin. Ex-Officio members in attendance were Donald Munson, Council Member with the City of Hagerstown; Jill Frick Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Hagerstown; and Greg Snook, President of the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation.

County staff in attendance included Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley, Tabitha Porterfield, Linda Spence, Sarah Sprecher, and Aaron Stoner. Also in attendance was Andrew Sargent.

Call to Order – Julie Rohm called the meeting to order. She reported Hugh Breslin, Janet Stiles Fulton, and Kristin Aleshire were excused from the meeting; Jim Herbert was absent. Ms. Rohm officially welcomed Gary Bockrath, Michael Fitzgerald, and Andrew Lobley as the newest members on the EDC Board.

Approval of the Agenda – A motion to approve the meeting agenda for July 14 was made by Ed Lough, seconded by Michael Reyka and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes – Joshua Martin motioned to approve the meeting minutes of June 9, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ed Lough and approved unanimously.

Elected Officials' Comments – Council Member Munson reported many good things are occurring in Hagerstown. A Housing Summit will be held on July 19. Concerns expressed by the MDE regarding demolition of the former MELP building will be satisfied within the next 30 days thereby allowing for its tear down. The Walking Trail from the Arts & Entertainment District, extending to the City Park is progressing very nicely. Council Member Munson expressed gratitude for the job being performed by Botanica Landscapers.

Executive Committee – Julie Rohm noted the committee discussed the need for all board members to become involved in committees and taskforces. Each member was encouraged to select a committee of interest and to set goals complimentary to those staff have outlined for FY '17. Ed Lough mentioned the Maryland Municipal League (MML) representative to the EDC Board is still vacant. The MML will discuss a possible representative at their July 23 meeting. It was reported Dawn Hatzer recently resigned from the Western Maryland Consortium and therefore was not reappointed to serve on the EDC Board. Mr. Lough stated he would work with Michael Reyka to identify three potential candidates to fill Ms. Hatzer's vacant At Large position. Ms. Rohm noted a sixth member to fill the Executive Committee is also needed. She explained Kassie Lewis recently drafted a letter for her signature in support of combining Eldorado Stone's Pennsylvania manufacturing site to their site in Washington County, MD. It appears Eldorado is in the late stages of planning in Antrim Township however Bowman Development continues to work to expand Eldorado's location here. Members discussed the recent article appearing in the Herald-Mail newspaper (from the Editor) urging the Governor to authorize the widening of I-81 in Washington County, MD. Jill Frick announced the City of Hagerstown recently submitted a letter of support for this project. EDC Board members are willing to write a letter in support but want the expansion to go to the I-70 interchange and not stop at Exit 1. Gary Bockrath suggested a partnership with Franklin County, PA. Joshua Martin noted Volvo plans to meet with the State Highway Administration on September 2 to push I-81 widening and are willing to lend its support. Andrew Sargent explained that not only is Secretary Gill aware of the hazards of traveling on I-81 through Washington County, but is aware of the fiscal impact this narrow stretch of highway has on truckers and businesses.

City Center Committee – Nothing to report this month.

Education and Workforce Development Committee – Julie Rohm noted that due to Dawn Hatzler's resignation, a chair is needed for this committee.

Infrastructure Committee – Nothing to report this month.

Marketing and Communications Committee – Julie Rohm reported Economic Development Week this year is September 19-23. The week starts out with the *Loves My Business* campaign and Prize Patrol-style visit to more than 25 local businesses throughout the County. The week will conclude with a *Bacon Business Breakfast* event on September 23, being held at the Hagerstown Regional Airport. There are plenty of sponsorship opportunities available; please see Linda Spence.

Old Business – The Hagerstown Regional Airport will host a business appreciation luncheon for airport businesses on August 31 at noon, at the terminal. Board members are invited.

New Business – Tabitha Porterfield noted the most recent edition of the *Journal* newsletter was distributed and is available in electronic format. She commented on recent meetings with staff to discuss a digital marketing campaign to potentially go nationally with geo-targets, entrepreneurial hubs, site consultants, and pre-roll video for quality of life highlights.

Closed Session – Michael Reyka 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 Ed Lough. Hearing no discussion the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Open Session – On a motion made by Michael Reyka to return to Open Session and seconded by Ed Lough, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Gary Bockrath, Mike Fitzgerald, Jill Frick, Andrew Loble, Ed Lough, Bob Mandley, Joshua Martin, Donald Munson, Greg Murray, Tabitha Porterfield, Michael Reyka, Julie Rohm, Andrew Sargent, Greg Snook, Aaron Stoner, Linda Spence, and Sarah Sprecher.

Miscellaneous – Greg Murray reported on several urban improvement projects the County has been committed to and supportive of including expansion of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, expansion of the Maryland Theatre and an Arts & Entertainment Complex, the Museum/CVB, and the USM-H's potential to expand into the vacant Walnut Street facility to house a Physician's Assistant program (need capital commitment). He discussed the recent announcement the County made regarding the redevelopment of Fort Ritchie. The purpose is to move development forward and encourage international investment. There have been several MOIs with South Korean investors received to bring health service universities to the Fort, with several businesses to compliment the development. A redevelopment seminar will be held next week to ease concerns with current residents at the Fort. The County anticipates a Live, Work, Play atmosphere at the Fort that would provide a sustainable tax base.

Adjournment – Gary Bockrath made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Joshua Martin. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Linda Spence, Business Support Specialist
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and
Recording Clerk for the Washington County Economic
Development Commission Board