



Washington County Economic Development Commission Board

May 12, 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: Hugh Breslin (Chair), Julie Rohm (Vice Chair), Ed Lough (Secretary), Paul Crampton, Dawn Hatzler, Bob Jeffers, Michael Reyka, and Janet Stiles Fulton. Ex-Officio members in attendance included 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 for the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation.

Others in attendance were County Commissioner Jeff Cline, and County staff Leslie Hart, Kassie Lewis, Tabitha Porterfield, Linda Spence, Sarah Sprecher, and Aaron Stoner.

Call to Order – Hugh Breslin called the meeting to order. He reported Jef Bohn, Jim Herbert, and Joshua Martin were excused from the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda – A motion to approve the meeting agenda for May 12 was made by Bob Jeffers, seconded by Julie Rohm and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes – Ed Lough motioned to approve the meeting minutes of April 14, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Crampton and approved unanimously.

Elected Officials' Comments – Council Member Munson announced the Mayor and Council recently voted in favor of recommending local developer, Michael Fitzgerald to serve as the City of Hagerstown's representative on the EDC Board. He noted the City is working with a balanced budget, legal issues with the Municipal Electric Light Plant (MELP) have been settled and torn down in short order, and construction on the Walking Trail along Baltimore and Antietam streets has begun. Mr. Munson thanked Washington County Commissioners for support of the Hub projects and for their recent property acquisitions directly behind the County Administration building. Commissioner Cline commended the City on its Urban Development Plan and felt the plan is a great tool in bringing vitality and energy to downtown. Janet Stiles Fulton inquired about regulations requiring sprinkler systems in replacement mobile homes significantly adding to the cost to the owner. Aaron Stoner stated he would investigate the matter further and follow up with Ms. Stiles Fulton. Hugh Breslin reported that he and Julie Rohm attended a meeting between the City and County and was very pleased with the commitment expressed for downtown projects. Sarah Sprecher mentioned an informative booklet distributed at the joint meeting would be sent to EDC Board members.

Executive Committee – Ed Lough noted a Maryland Municipal League member has yet to be identified. Paul Crampton motioned to submit Michael Fitzgerald's candidacy to serve as the City of Hagerstown's representative on the EDC Board. He also motioned to approve submittal of three candidates for each of two (2) At Large positions, in rank order: 1) Gary Bockrath, a development partner and mobile industries representative; Jonny Barr, VP of Ellsworth Electric; and Nathaniel Moore, Business Development for Aerotek; 2) Andrew Loble, President of Hagerstown Kitchens; Sassan Shaool, President of Washco Development; and Robert Garver, former EDC Ex-Officio member and former representative of the MD Department of Business & Economic Development. The motion was seconded by Janet Stiles Fulton. Having no further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously. Hugh Breslin noted the Executive Committee's new Slate of Officers will take office at the Annual Meeting in June. The officers being proposed are Julie Rohm, Chair; Ed Lough, Vice Chair; and Michael Reyka, Secretary. In addition to the Slate of Officers, three additional EDC Board members are needed to fill the Executive Committee. If interested, please let Mr. Breslin know.

Education and Workforce Development Committee – Bob Jeffers reported the Career Exploration Day at North Hagerstown High School is scheduled for May 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The focus will be on the 10 career clusters. Businesses will provide students with a broad view of career opportunities available. He thanked Leslie Hart for assistance in ensuring the agricultural industry will be well represented. Mr. Jeffers announced Dawn Hatzler agreed to Chair the committee in July.

Marketing and Communications Committee – Julie Rohm reported National Small Business Week was held May 1-7, 2016. The Board of County Commissioners presented municipality nominated small businesses with Certificates of Appreciation and the municipalities were well represented this year. She outlined numerous sponsorship opportunities available for the *Business Breakfast Appreciation* event and challenged each member to sponsor. The event will be held September 23, 2016 at the Hagerstown Regional Airport.

Old Business – There was no Old Business to report this month.

New Business – Leslie Hart reported on agricultural legislative issues such as raw milk, Arabian horse races, bees, habitat plans, deer poaching fines, preservation/conservation laws, and bear kill permits for farmers. Kassie Lewis noted the Washington County Job Creation and Capital Investment Real Property Tax Credits policy is being firmed up. Meetings are being held with the Department of Permitting and Licensing to educate them on business financing and incentives available in Washington County so they may inform folks at the time a permit application is submitted. Julie Rohm presented members with an overview of the retail market and trends. She indicated consumers have weak confidence in the economy due to the upcoming elections. At the Valley Mall, H&M will take over 21,000 sf of space, American Eagle increased the size of its store, Sears is shrinking its footprint from 123,000 sf to 50-70,000 sf and the tire center will go away, Amazon will install lockers as a test location in the mall, and there is interest by more than 5 major stores to take over the now vacated Macy's facility. Additionally, Giant Foods (Martins) merged with Food Lion, Dollar Tree merged with Family Dollar, and Bob's Discount Furniture is going in the building in front of Kohl's.

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

Open Session – On a motion made by Paul Crampton to return to Open Session and seconded by Ed Lough, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Hugh Breslin, Jeff Cline, Paul Crampton, Jill Frick, Leslie Hart, Dawn Hatzler, Bob Jeffers, Kassie Lewis, Ed Lough, Donald Munson, Greg Murray, Tabitha Porterfield, Michael Reyka, Greg Snook, Aaron Stoner, Linda Spence, Sarah Sprecher, and Janet Stiles Fulton.

Adjournment – Paul Crampton made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Michael Reyka. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

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