



## Washington County, MD Economic Development Commission

May 11, 2017

The regular meeting of the Washington County Economic Development Commission (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Suite 1401. The following members were present: Julie Rohm (Chair), Ed Lough (Vice Chair), Michael Reyka (Secretary), Gary Bockrath, Mike Fitzgerald, Jim Herbert, Andrew Lobley, Theresa Shank, and Janet Stiles Fulton. Ex-Officio members in attendance included the Honorable Robert Bruchey, Mayor for the City of Hagerstown; Jill Frick, Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Hagerstown; and the Honorable Gregory Snook, President of the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation. Excused absence was Joshua Martin and Council Member Emily Keller, and absent was Commissioners Terry Baker, John Barr, and LeRoy Myers, Steve Blickenstaff, and Hugh Breslin.

Staff in attendance included Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, James Jenkins, Kassie Lewis, Bob Mandley, Lauren Pogue, Rob Slocum, Linda Spence, and Sarah Sprecher. Also in attendance were Commissioners Jeffrey Cline and Wayne Keefer, Robert Bower, and Andrew Sargent.

*Call to Order* – Julie Rohm called the meeting to order.

*Approval of the Agenda* – A motion to approve the meeting agenda for May 11, 2017 was made by Gary Bockrath, seconded by Andrew Lobley and unanimously approved.

*Approval of Minutes* – Theresa Shank motioned to approve the meeting minutes of April 13, 2017 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ed Lough and approved unanimously.

*Elected Officials' Comments* – Commissioner Keefer announced the Commissioners are scheduled to meet with members of the EDC on May 16. The purpose of the meeting is to provide EDC members with an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas with the Commissioners in order for the Commissioners to provide resources needed to better serve the county. Commissioner Cline is supportive of these meetings, as well as other boards/commissions in the county. Mayor Bruchey noted the City of Hagerstown continues to work towards an approved budget and unfortunately is looking at a 2.8 cent tax increase. He notes the City of Hagerstown will ensure that economic development incentive programs remain in the budget. The City of Hagerstown recently approved a financial incentive for the Hamilton Hotel project and expects a Fall opening date. The USM-H is hosting 70 Chinese students who are learning English as a second language. The City and County continue to work together on the Urban Improvement Plan (UIP). The City of Hagerstown has provided \$500,000 and set aside a total of \$1M for the project, the State of Maryland agreed to provide \$7M for the project, and the County is on board with their portion.

*CHIEF Presentation* – Greg Snook explained the Hagerstown-Washington County Industrial Foundation, Inc. was originally started as a food distributor for the needy by the Chamber of Commerce. The acronym CHIEF was derived from "County Hagerstown Industry Expansion Fund." It was formed in 1960 as a 501(c) 6 organization and its main goal is to work with both City and County governments to sustain long-term economic growth for the community. CHIEF has been instrumental in many projects such as the purchase and demolition of 30 old buildings downtown that were sold to the City for the purpose of constructing the downtown parking lot; the purchase and demolition of the former Plaza building next to the University System of Maryland-Hagerstown and sold to the City for what CHIEF paid for it; CHIEF holds the mortgage on the building beside of the Maryland Theatre and leased to the Theatre for \$0; they held the mortgage on the Fairgrounds Park until the City of Hagerstown was able to purchase it. In short, CHIEF buys and sells real estate. Mount Aetna Technology Park is their current major development project and is the organization's fifth business park they

assisted in starting. It consists of about 175 acres. A 20-year concept plan was presented to the group. It took five years to construct Yale Drive, the County constructed the road, at their cost and CHIEF tagged on to their bid and installed the infrastructure including water and sewer lines, electric vaults, and conduits for businesses to come in. CHIEF is working with the County on the second phase which is Professional Court. Engineering is expected to be completed this Fall, plans are to go out for bid by the end of the year and bid award by the first of next year. Construction will include the bridge and the connecting piece to Professional Court. Timeframe for Phase II is approximately 18-20 months. Road infrastructure will go from three lane roads to four lane roads. Infrastructure is expected to allow the County to continue to grow in that area over the next 25 years. The concept includes 750,000 square feet for build out and a 13-acre storm water management pond that CHIEF partnered with Meritus on. CHIEF is partnering with the County and Hagerstown Community College to create a detailed marketing campaign, and has reached out to John Hopkins to refer potential users of the park. Mayor Bruchey stated the City of Hagerstown will continue its support for CHIEF and the County to see this project come to fruition. Kassie Lewis noted she is working with Scheer Partners to identify companies who need or are best suited for wet labs. Information Technology, BioTech, medical and educational industries have been identified as potential businesses best suited for Mount Aetna Technology Park.

*Executive Committee* – Julie Rohm noted two additional candidates are required to be submitted with Michael Reyka’s request for reappointment to the EDC due to its being an At Large position. The Executive Committee reviewed a list of potential candidates, gauged their interest, and is recommending Jonny Barr and David Taylor be submitted for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners. *Janet Stiles Fulton made a motion to submit Michael Reyka’s name for reappointment to the EDC or to choose either Jonny Barr or David Taylor to fill the position. The motion was seconded by Jim Herbert and passed unanimously; Michael Reyka recused himself from the vote.* Ms. Stiles Fulton mentioned that she plans to leave the EDC prior to the end of her term and strongly encouraged members to maintain an agricultural member on the commission. She reached out to John Heizer of Mid-Maryland Dairy Veterinarians and he is very interested in serving on the EDC. Ms. Rohm encouraged members to consider serving on the Executive Committee. An election will be held next month for the Slate of Officers and selection will be made for three additional members.

*City Center Committee* – Nothing to report this month.

*Infrastructure Committee* – Jim Herbert noted the committee is focused on a Smart City grant, targeting a program that addresses opioid addiction. Opioid addiction is a major issue, nationally and locally and affects a broad range of community services. Interest in participating in the development of this grant includes the USM-H, Meritus Health, and Antietam Cable who has volunteered to be a major participant and will provide the communications infrastructure necessary. He plans to make a presentation in Washington, DC in June at a Smart City event. The National Science Foundation is sponsoring a grant program of more the \$1B. U.S. Ignite, a quasi-government has been allocated \$100M specifically for mid-sized communities as a lab for this type funding that include communities that have large broadband capabilities. He feels Hagerstown is the perfect fit for this program. Kassie Lewis noted that research has been done on other grants that have been awarded and it appears that opioid addiction is something that no one has tackled yet. This may be a big factor in terms of our attractiveness to be awarded a grant for such a horrendous national problem. If we were to receive funding, Washington County, MD could serve as a national model for other communities to undertake if we show success. Ms. Lewis noted the person involved in opioid addiction touches many agencies and there is no communication between them about the addicted person. Having this program in place through Smart City, agencies will be able to focus and share information to better serve and treat the individual. Julie Rohm requested that Council Member Emily Keller be included on the next meeting of the committee.

*Marketing Committee* – Julie Rohm stated there is nothing to report at this time but anticipates the committee to be revived in short order.

*Director’s Report* – Kassie Lewis noted the legislature recently closed and asked Andrew Sargent to give an overview of the newly passed More Jobs for Marylander’s Act 2017. Mr. Sargent stated this incentive program is for manufacturing jobs only. Currently distressed counties Allegany and Garrett counties, and Baltimore City

qualify for tax incentives under Tier 1, which would provide an tax incentive for the creation of five (5) manufacturing jobs, while other areas of the State would qualify for Tier 2, which need to create at least 10 (ten) manufacturing positions. Washington County, MD has not been designated at this time but Mr. Sargent will forward information as it is made known. Gary Bockrath requested permission to reach out to Secretary Gill to act on behalf of the EDC to urge his support to qualify Washington County as a Tier 1 participant in this new program. Mr. Bockrath would seek Andrew, Sarah Sprecher and Kassie Lewis' input prior to submittal. Members approved Mr. Bockrath's request.

*Old Business* – Nothing to report at this time.

*New Business* – Rob Slocum inquired if the EDC was involved in the Urban Improvement Project (UIP) and stated he will provide the group with an update at the July meeting.

*Project Status Report* – Bob Mandley stated a copy of the Project Status Report for first quarter 2017 has been distributed. He commented on the Dot Foods, Lanco Pennland, McKenzie, and Project River projects. In addition he and Jill Frick noted High Rock is nearing the close of the former Pangborn facility and are looking for possible county incentives. Leslie Hart reported planting season has begun. She reported on Elmwood Farms, Long DeLite Farm, the Farm@Stillwater (formerly Aliabaad Farm), and working with Trippetts who are expanding their beef operations. Ms. Hart is working with the county's Public Relations department in the development of an agricultural app for Washington County that will include a calendar of events, news, and so much more.

Jill Frick reported the City has recently inked a lease with the Valley Co-Op to manage the City's Farmers Market. She noted the Hamilton Building is under renovation that would include a 24-unit residence and the next phase of the Community Legacy Award is under way for an additional 8-20 student housing project. Ms. Frick explained the consultants who developed the 10-year Strategic Plan for the City of Hagerstown recently visited and were impressed at the progress being made.

*Adjournment* – Ed Lough made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Jim Herbert. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

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