

Middlesex County Economic Development Authority Meeting
Historic Courthouse, 877 Puller Highway, Saluda
March 17, 2022
Minutes

Attendance:

Gordon White, Chair
Janet Riggs, Vice Chair/Treasurer
Celane Roden, Secretary
John Anzivino, Member
James Reed, Member
Bill Cawthorn, Member
Hallie Holmes, Member

Staff: Heather Lewis, EDA Attorney
Holly Oliver, Staff (electronic attendance)

Call to Order: The March 17, 2022 meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Middlesex County (“EDA”) was called to order by Chairman White at 9:30 in the Boardroom of the Historic Courthouse, Saluda, Virginia. A quorum was determined by attendance roll call.

Approval of Agenda: Chairman White requested three amendments to the agenda: First: Old Business be revised to: Marina discussion to include federal vocational education funding in the Carl D. Perkins Act; Second, New Business be amended to add: ARPA request from Cynthia Beverly representing Game Changers; and, Third, New Business be revised to include: a possible vote on the hiring of an Interim Executive Director following the closed session. Agenda with changes was adopted without objection.

Minutes: February meeting minutes were accepted without objection.

Financial Report: Mrs. Riggs presented the January and February financial report. January Balance: \$587,680.98, Income: \$387.93 (interest) and Expenses: \$10,947.01 (supplies, payroll and \$9000 to Arts in the Middle from the VA Commission for the Arts (\$4500) marched by EDA (\$4500) for the 2021 AIM Festival). February Balance: \$595,240.02, Income: \$7632.55 (Interest and \$7631.85 lodging tax), and Expenses: Operating \$2435 (travel, technology, office and payroll). The EDA for 2022-23 is under discussion with the county. Mrs. Riggs will report on the budget when the work is final.

OLD BUSINESS: Tractor Supply Company (TSC) Contract Update -

Mrs. Lewis provided an update on the current status of the Tractor Supply project/development. It has been determined that the current zoning for the proposed location of Tractor Supply will need to be amended from Village Community to General Business. The Developer, TSC, has applied for a change of zoning with the Planning Commission. The application is tentatively on the Agenda for the Planning Commission meeting on April 14. If EDA members plan to attend the meeting, no more than 2 members should sit together as this will not be an official EDA meeting. The Planning Commission will review the application and pass their recommendation to the BOS for a final decision. Mrs. Lewis explained the process could be prolonged before final determination on the zoning request. Title research on the property revealed no problems. Nonetheless, TSC has requested a Deed of Confirmation to clarify EDA will continue to own the property until completion of the zoning and other requirements for development. Despite an MOU between EDA and BOS clarifying EDA ownership, TSC requests a guarantee that the original deadline for EDA development or return of property to BOS does not become a problem. The EDA and BOS will both need to a vote to accept the Deed of Confirmation. In response to a question from Mr. Anzivino regarding the need to change the Comprehensive Plan, Mrs. Lewis stated an amendment to the Plan would not be required.

OLD BUSINESS: Marina Discussion Update -John Anzivino

Mr. Anzivino's comprehensive research on issues related to a possible Marine Industrial Park furthered the February discussion on this issue. His work included the importance of understanding (1) the history and current status of the industry in Middlesex; (2) the contributions an Industrial Park would make to the County; (3) the challenges currently facing the Boatbuilding and Maritime Industry in Middlesex; and, (4) successful existing Marine Industrial Parks in other parts of the country from which we could learn. One of the major challenges to the local marine industry is the lack of a strong vocational training for area students. Chairman White shared information on the Federal Carl D. Perkins Act that provides subsidies for vocational education. Pointing out area high school preference for college prep over vocational education, Chairman White suggested such subsidies could be useful in training maritime industry related skills. He also suggested potential employees might consult with the schools to determine if Perkins Act funds could be tapped locally. Ms. Holmes shared her observation from a recent meeting at MHS that schools have shown interest in expansion of vocational training. Mr. Anzivino's observation: a Maritime Industrial Park would make good economic sense - generating revenue with use of undeveloped land and existing facilities in a way that fits local history and economic culture. Mr. Cawthorn asked how we could get started. It was suggested exploration on

this issue will continue with the hiring of an Interim and then full time Executive Director and the appointment of a committee of select EDA members and representatives of the local marine industry.

OLD BUSINESS: VTC Grant Submission - Whitney Walton Law

Whitley Walton Law, Consultant, described two grant applications with VA Tourism Commission grants. Her marketing company prepared the two grants (total \$30,000) to support marketing activities for (1) boating and (2) camping in Middlesex County. VTC will announce the grant recipients on April 15.

NEW BUSINESS: ARPA Grant

Dee Morris - Big Oak Cafe

Ms. Morris was not at the meeting for her presentation.

Bill Powell - Museums of Middlesex

Mr. Powell presented a \$30,000 request for ARPA funds to support the Museums of Middlesex ability to tell the rich history of Middlesex through a strengthened website, blogs and digitalized historical documents. \$15,000 would be used to upgrade the web presentations and create blog capability. The remainder would be used to digitalize materials and present them and the upgraded web information on cell phones and tablets, and generally enhance their social media capacity. Funding would include costs for a historical researcher and the goal of presenting our county's history to match the importance of the famed Triangle (Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown.)

Cynthia Beverley - Game Changers

Ms. Beverley introduced Game Changers, a new non-profit organization created to promote equality, strengthen community unity, and organize a local Juneteenth celebration, following the first annual 2021 Juneteenth parade in Saluda. She requested EDAQ support of \$5,260 to cover the costs of planned 2022 Juneteenth celebrations: Friday night Motown Food and Dance Party at St. Clare Walker Middle School and a Saturday Community Family Juneteenth Festival at Middlesex High School. Chairman White pointed out that ARPA funds may not yet be available for this request but the request could be from other EDA funds. The Authority will consider the request and make a decision in the April meeting.

CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made by Mrs. Roden, seconded by Ms. Holmes, to convene in Closed Session, pursuant to the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for personnel matters and for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, specifically the hiring of the Executive Director of Economic Development and Tourism; and pursuant to the

Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) for the discussion or consideration of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Authority. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

The Authority convened in closed session.

RECONVENE PUBLIC MEETING: A motion was made by Mrs. Riggs, seconded by Mr. Anzivino, to certify to the best of members' knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted in the motion by which the Closed Session was called were considered or discussed in the closed session. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting resumed in open session.

ACTION TAKEN: A motion to retain Bill Whitley as the Interim Executive Director, in accordance with a proposal dated March 12, 2022, was made by Mr. Anzivino, seconded by Mr. Cawthorn, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM REPORT - Holly Oliver Virginia's River Realm - Ms. Oliver presented VRR Analytics for February and reported her work for the past month with VRR.

Lodging Tax: Ms. Oliver reported the February, 2022 Lodging Tax paid to the county: \$4,981.96. EDA receives 3/5 of this amount.

Broadband Update: Kevin Gentry
Mr. Gentry reported that the 4-county broadband expansion is underway, beginning with installation of cable in Ivy Shores and Red Hill. The next area for installation will be Stampers Bay. Problems are occurring with permitting so it is difficult to know when this project will be complete but a mid-year completion is hoped for. The second project laying 137.8 miles of fiber has not yet begun. The contract negotiation was last month. The Broadband Authority is meeting this afternoon at 5pm. The meeting is open to the public.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Cawthorn moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Reed. Passed without objection.

NEXT MEETING: Special meeting tentatively scheduled for April 4, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. to interview Executive Director applicants. Next Regular Meeting: April 21, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Celane Roden, Secretary

Approved, Gordon White, Chair