

**THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 2023 MEETING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY
IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
SALUDA, VIRGINIA**

Present: John Anzivino, Chairman
James Reed, Vice-Chairman
William Cawthorn, Treasurer
Celane Roden, Secretary
Gerald Crittenden
Joe Heyman
Hallie Holmes

Absent: None – All Members Present

Staff: Trenton Funkhouser, Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER

The August 17, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Middlesex County (the “EDA”) was called to order by Chairman Anzivino at 9:30 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Historic Courthouse, Saluda, Virginia. He noted all members were present and expressed his appreciation for same.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman asked for any changes to the Agenda. He noted Ms. Joann Murchison’s presentation is rescheduled for the September 21st meeting. Hearing no changes, agenda was adopted by acclimation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chairman noted minutes of the June 15 and July 20, 2023 meetings were completed and asked for any discussion or a motion for approval. Minutes of both meetings were approved unanimously on motion by Mr. Heyman, seconded by Mr. Reed.

TOURISM/MARKETING REPORT

Ms. Whitney Law reviewed two upcoming VTC grants a Micro Business Marketing grant (\$5,000) available to small business such as lodging or restaurants and a Destination Marketing grant (\$10,000) with a similar focus. She noted a VTC Drive 2.0 grant focusing on Outdoor Recreation and a possible option to promote the Deltaville Community Association facilities and the Sizzle Reel videography work associated with ARPA Tourism Grant and gathering info and gift items for the upcoming Urbanna Oyster Festival VIP Oyster Experience bags. She also noted continued social media and web advertising efforts and updated VRR pages on annual Girls Getaway promotion.

Mr. Anzivino commented on Half-Shell Grill closing in Urbanna. He also asked about the lack of Food Trucks in County and if there were any known regulatory or other impediments to their operation in Middlesex. Ms. Law was not aware of any specific issues other than general demand and assisting any people that did pursue start-ups or expansions in County.

Mr. Funkhouser noted a conversation with Zoning Administrator last year regarding zoning regulations for Food Trucks noting Middlesex ordinances are relatively permissive with typical administrative (staff) approval of zoning permit, VDH approval, business license, etc.

Mr. Heyman noted grants were available to various businesses and asked Ms. Law to provide some examples. Ms. Law noted most restaurants, lodging and retail businesses were eligible so long as they had a tourism-related focus. Ms. Roden noted a need to list possible businesses for specific promotions and Ms. Law agreed noting a particular need to seek out operators of short-term rentals. Mr. Funkhouser noted a need to get a current list of operators compiled by Planning Department, Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer per the recently adopted County ordinance requiring registration to ensure proper reporting of Lodging taxes. Mr. Anzivino noted grant programs should be posted on County web pages and emailed to eligible parties. The EDA generally discussed various levels of staff assistance from the Director, Ms. Law and others for private grant applicants.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Funkhouser noted the monthly summary of Savings, CDs and Checking Account information for July – highlighting the annual VRR contribution of \$25,000, receipt of one bond revenue check.

Mr. Anzivino noted he would like to see more detailed and regular information, provided at least quarterly, on monthly liabilities such as payroll and other accounts payable/receivable items.

Upon motion by Mr. Heyman, seconded by Ms. Roden, the EDA unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report.

OLD BUSINESS

A. None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment & Zoning Amendment Discussion – Mr. Anzivino noted the County's change through installation of water and sewer and the need for good land use regulations that are properly balanced to get a desired product developing in an attractive way. He asked the Director to brief the EDA on options to develop certain Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments for recommendation to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The Director noted the existing Comprehensive Plan language regarding EDA involvement in economic and community development and the need to pursue certain code amendments that could better define community expectations for certain uses and allowing more uses "by-right" in accordance with certain administrative requirements rather than a Special Use

Permit. He generally cited commercial examples as well as a need to allow higher-density multi-family housing in areas served by existing and planned water and sewer areas.

Mr. Anzivino asked the Director about “readiness for business” relative to current regulations. The Director noted certain amendments to address height regulations at the Airport were relatively easy to pursue while addressing any Special Use Permit regulations or other permit expediting efforts were more difficult to define and implement agreed options. Mr. Heyman agreed with the need to be more predictable for prospective businesses and also the need to be consistent and avoid being accused of being “arbitrary and capricious”. Mr. Anzivino and other EDA members agreed, the Planning Commission and Board should take the lead on these matters rather than the EDA or staff do more than offer ideas, suggestions and recommendations.

Mr. Anzivino asked EDA members to advise the Director of any specific issues or comments that could be compiled by the Director with follow up discussion with EDA and BOS/EDA Steering Committee. He asked the Director to remind EDA members and continue discussion of agenda item and the September 21st meeting.

REPORTS/INFORMATION

A. BOS/EDA Steering Committee – Mr. Anzivino noted the next meeting of the committee was scheduled for September 14th and asked any EDA members to note any topics he or Mr. Reed should discuss with the Committee.

B. Committee Reports – For Tourism Committee, Ms. Roden noted Ms. Law had covered the waterfront and other topics. Mr. Heyman noted a discussion with Ms. Law about better social media coverage generally and whether equity had improved in VRR coverage and she indicated yes, things were better and on an improved track.

For Aquaculture, Agriculture and Forestry Industries Committee, Mr. Crittenden noted he discussed the prospective Blue Catfish Industries grant from state with several processors and didn’t get much interest due to the relatively low proposed state incentives and need to define domestic and export markets. He also cited the current positive state of seafood industry as possibly leading to a reduced desire to start new business ventures with uncertain returns on investment/effort. EDA members generally discussed the need to provide market information and some degree of assurances for business ventures for Blue Catfish processors.

For Business and Community Development Committee, Mr. Anzivino noted a discussion at the last BOS/EDA Steering Committee on a need for workforce housing and affordable housing generally. He reviewed an option to work with Habitat for Humanity to develop housing on some County surplus properties.

For Workforce Development Committee, Mr. Reed reviewed his new position with the Middlesex County schools and a conversation with a new teacher on the school’s attempts to revive building trades classes and trying to get students interested in these professions generally and possible entrepreneurship opportunities for local students. He expressed a strong desire to have more

programs focused on student options to pursue building trade professions and start-up business information from businesspeople of the County and region. Members discussed how these programs could provide clear professional and occupational paths for students.

For Infrastructure, Business and Industrial Sites Committee, Mr. Crittenden noted receipt of maps and other information on properties from the Director and his review of these properties and possible things EDA could do with some of the properties.

C. Executive Director – Mr. Anzivino called on the Director for monthly report comments. Mr. Funkhouser noted cancellation of the Urbanna Main Street meeting, planned attendance at the Urbanna Business Association and good progress at defining MSX VA250 Committee events and possible fundraising associated with this commemoration period (through 2026). He also noted continued successful hire of an MWA/EDA Office Manager with an expected September 11th start date.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Mr. Anzivino noted several informational items included at his request in the meeting agenda package and the importance of sharing such items by and among EDA members for educational and awareness purposes.

He cited a GO Virginia grant support letter he provided for a Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Council for localities ranging from Gloucester to Stafford. He reviewed the GO Virginia Region 6 Young Entrepreneurs Project for schools, his professional knowledge of consultant, Miles Friedman, and the consultants attempts to expand current program from King George and Gloucester Schools to Middlesex County. The Director was asked to schedule Mr. Friedman for discussion at the September 21st EDA meeting.

Mr. Anzivino reviewed the King George Data Center Park article in agenda package and possible options to develop facilities in Middlesex if comparable electrical and fiber infrastructure exists or can be improved in Harmony Village area.

He noted the 5 & Dime Trail promotion recently started in Charles City and James City Counties to highlight restaurants, retail and sites along the Capital Trail (bike/pedestrian). Mr. Anzivino noted the need to highlight any existing or planned trails in Middlesex and developing similar advertising/publicity/promotion efforts for businesses located along such trails.

He noted the request by Board of Supervisors via County Administration seeking some subcommittee participation by economic development and business-related people to review some proposals by VPPSA to expand recycling and materials handling facilities/services. Mr. Anzivino requested volunteers from the EDA, noting he could serve until others may express an interest.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Anzivino asked if any Board members had any [further] comments and each member offered no additional comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Greg Grichtmeier noted possible school group options for business projects such as upscaling (recycling/refurbishing items for sale) – good training and applying skills towards a project or job. He noted some community “tech days” to be scheduled at various locations on Mondays to help businesses with specific topics, respond to any questions and/or assist with locating hardware/software vendors/services.

Mr. Lud Kimbrough, Board of Supervisors Chairman commented on importance of getting EDA input on Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance matters from a business perspective and the need to find ways to support striped bass fishery as well as grey trout, crabs and shellfish by supporting commercial efforts to reduce Blue Catfish population and threat to other seafood industries.

Don Harris, Board of Supervisors member commented on how BOS and EDA are “now on the same page”, making positive progress and attending the EDA meetings has been informative and helpful to his job on the Board and the Steering Committee meetings have been great to share information and discuss a variety of economic development and community development topics. He stated he really appreciated the diversity and experience of the EDA and how valuable members were to helping the County with its future direction in growth and change.

CLOSED MEETING

Following general review of Closed Meeting and FOIA requirements by the Director, Mr. Anzivino cited a sample motion for EDA consideration to convene in Closed Meeting.

The EDA convened in Closed Meeting at 11:50 a.m. by unanimous vote following motion of Mr. Heyman, seconded by Ms. Roden to consider the following two items:

- A. Public Property - Pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where such discussion in open meeting would adversely affect the EDA’s bargaining position or negotiating strategy.
- B. Personnel – Pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia to consider the annual evaluation and performance of the Executive Director

The EDA ended the Closed Meeting at 12:15 p.m., reconvened and unanimously adopted, by individual voice vote, on motion of Ms. Holmes, seconded by Mr. Reed, Standing Resolution SR-1, a resolution to certify compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regarding meeting in closed meeting and conformity of the meeting in accordance with §2.2-3712 D. of the Code of Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. by acclamation of members.

John Anzivino, Chairman
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority

Celane Roden, Secretary
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority