

Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m.

Present - Terri Packard, Natoma Vargason, Ron Humbel, Nate Kraft, Dana Healy, Tiffany Ahalt, Marie Oyster, Ray Hanson, Bryan Wachtel, Mayor Howard Long, Drew Bowen

Secretary's Report – Approval of minutes from meeting of January 3rd, 2024 – Motion by Nate Kraft to approve, second by Natoma Vargason, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Terri Packard presented and reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Motion from Ron Humbel to approve, second by Natoma Vargason, motion carried. Terri did talk about a Business Boost Grant and will check the website for this grant. We must approve Fiscal Year 2025 Budget by May, Terri wants a separate meeting to discuss all things budget.

Council Liaison Report – **Ray Hanson** discussed the Comprehensive Plan a bit. He also gave an update on the Realignment of Campus Drive and said Highs may be moving forward. Environmental Commission wants to purchase a machine to do glass recycling. We received an invitation to be in the Sharpsburg Memorial Day Parade.

Drew Bowen, Town Planner, was our guest and came to discuss the Comprehensive Plan (Strategic Plan) for the Town. The question is "How big do you think you want to grow?" The Cable Company did contact Drew about the Post Office, so we feel this move will happen. Drew has met with commissions and different community groups, and they all agree on "Phased Growth." The Comprehensive Plan should be updated every 5 years – Boonsboro has not done one since 2009. There are no current Housing Projects slated for Washington County at this time. Jim Draper owns the Chase 6 property. EDC needs to look at Business Growth and decide, "What do we Want?" MDE, Water Reservoir Project needs to get approved. Boonsboro has plenty of water, just needs to repair the reservoir first before state will approve increased use. Focus on a long-term plan for the Town --- people die, but the town lives on. The Planning Commission Meeting is coming up and they will review meeting notes. EDC is Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan. Main Street America is a good resource for ideas.

Old Business:

- a. **Grant Opportunities: FAÇADE Grant** - \$30,000 was spent. Access to \$50,000 for year two, put on hold by Jared. Maximum grant will be \$10K per project (50% match). Bryan reviewed the projects that have been completed with year one funds. **RURAL MD** – will be used for bathrooms at Road Museum, getting ready to fix them, plans are done, waiting for approval. Cultural Trail Feasibility Study kickoff meeting in March. Website update – Spoke to Alison at Revize and will have a Kickoff meeting soon. We have funds in the budget for a branding package and will also have funds in the Website Package that could help. Tiffany Ahalt suggested getting branding set before building website. We should send out RFPs for branding. Natoma Vargason made a motion to create an RFP for our branding for the town of Boonsboro, this was seconded by Ron Humbel, motion carried. Tiffany said we need to put together a committee to vote on the branding package. Bryan will put in a request on the Rural MD Grant to review the

use to include new logo design. We need pictures and should collect them in our DropBox account. We should include town businesses and Town Calendar on the website.

- b. **Downtown Beautification Program**: there is \$18,000 for wayfaring signage from the Rural MD Grants. The next phase is to hire an engineer to add details to the drawings and present to State Hwy. Natoma Vargason made a motion to approve the Beautification Plan, contingent on any recommendations from the Park Board. Ron seconded and the motion carried. Natoma moved to conduct the downtown beautification project in phases, with Phase 1 being the traffic circle. Tiffany seconded and the motion carried.
- c. **Networking Series**: The next event is March 21st, 7:30 am to 9 am at Town Hall. This will include a Zoom Meeting and Panel Discussion about Main Street Maryland with Caitlyn Maroney and Deidra Robertson, Tiffany will moderate the meeting. What are our Questions? We will still allow time to do introductions. May idea – Dianna suggested San Mar hosting. This business has been in our community for 140 years. They are expanding to offer transitional housing for 18–21-year-olds. Dianna will contact them.
- d. **Business Ribbon Cuttings & Recognition**: March 21st at 4 pm for The Admiral Restaurant with owner, Steve Kemmett.
- e. **Quarterly Rack Cards**: Emails are sent, please add websites for the Museums and add QR Code in the future.
- f. **Main Street Maryland**: Terri Packard met with Jared. Terri will email us a copy of the whole application.
- g. **Miscellaneous**: Mayor Howard Long suggested a new sound system for park, EDC will talk to Park Board.

Committee Reports:

- a. **Food Truck Festival**: We are waiting for the final answer from Staff Infection to see if they are available. Natoma has confirmed a new Food Truck Vendor – Cousin Maine Lobster. Natoma needs to confirm times of music. Deadline is Friday for returning Food Trucks. She also had the idea of a “Fan Favorite” Food Truck Contest. There will be no Axe Throwing. We will follow-up on Hot Air Balloon in the field, there will be Hula Hoop, K-9 and possibly a Dunk Tank.
- b. **Boonsboro Town Alliance**: Legal Zoom cannot amend the application. Town’s attorney will create the restatement to make a Non-Profit. Ron Humbel will confirm with the State of Maryland.
- c. **Spring Jubilee**: Dana visited 17 Businesses and handed out forms about sponsorship opportunities. There is concern about amount to sponsor. We suggest that businesses split sponsorship expenses. Bryan Wachtel has done the application for Road Closure, it looks like it will be approved. We will not know the answer until a month before event. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church will be taking care of the Big Wheel event. Ron Humbel is working on the Reading Time, Touch a Truck or Car Event. The Beer Garden will be sponsored by Historical Society, 5 K is a go.
- d. **Marketing**: Tiffany Ahalt suggested Dave Barnhart for Marketing. The Flying Boxcars Opening Day is 05/03/2024. Should we do a ¼ or ½ page add in the program? No. There are 13 new LOVE YOUR LOCAL BANNERS – they will be up through the middle of May. 13 x \$150 is owed to Dan Murphy (we are waiting for invoice). Natoma wants us to use the swag and

- give prizes (and ideas of giveaways). We can move all of the swag to a location in the Community Center. Terri has a key.
- e. **DISC Golf Course** – fully sponsored by businesses. Audrey is applying for grants.
 - f. **Appalachian Trail Community Advisor Board:** Mead Hunt was awarded the contract, they will meet in March, suggested that we change vision of trail to something larger. Will celebrate National Trail Days on June 1st. Appalachian Trail Conservatory Board will hold annual board meeting on 03/16 and 03/17 at our Town Hall – 13 states will be represented. Happy Hour at NRM, 40-60 people. The Fairfield Inn & Suites gave discounted room rates.
 - g. **Welcome Center in NRM:** met last week. Ruben created a timeline with detail for grant use. The Opening is slated for October, need to get them check for \$3000 from funds budgeted in FY2024. Plan to be open on weekends starting in April.
 - h. **Miscellaneous:** Jim Draper with Chase 6 development says there are numerous Fast-Food restaurants with interest but no commitment until road begins. Howard Long gave an update on FoxGap property – the town has pulled the bond and now the bond company does the work and gets it completed. Highs applied for permits and owns their own property. Dunkin is moving forward with their plans.

Adjournment: Motion by Marie Oyster to adjourn, second by Diana Palmer, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Oyster, Secretary