

Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 4, 2023

**Meeting was called to order at 8:11 am**

**Present:** Chairwoman Terri Packard, Marie Oyster, Natoma Vargason, Ron Humbel, Dianna Crisci-Palmer, Tyler Hornbecker, Tiffany Ahalt, Ray Hanson, Bryan Wachtel and Paul Mantello

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes from the October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve as submitted by Tiffany Ahalt, second by Ron Humbel; Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ron Humbel presented the Treasurer's Report – Motion to approve by Natoma Vargason, second by Dianna Crisci-Palmer; Motion carried

**Old Business:**

- a. **Grant Opportunities:** Tiffany Ahalt did share that we are approved for the Maryland Beautiful Grant. Mantello announced that town applied for Strategic Demolition for Crawford's, and a \$30,000 Grant was received. Members received a copy of the Sustainable Communities grants that Boonsboro is now eligible for. We can apply for Main Street Maryland Program now – Kathryn Gratton will assist with this. Terri Packard discussed the Rural Maryland Economic Development Grant. Town of Boonsboro was awarded \$206,000 for 4 projects submitted by EDC and National Road Museum. Paul Mantello asked if the grant will be given as a lump sum or is reimbursable. Have not received details yet. The question was asked if the Boonsboro Town Alliance (BTA) could manage the funds from this grant? If funds were awarded to the town, then the town must administer. Ahalt wanted to know if there was a better process to handle grants, ie: forward them to Paul Mantello, Kathryn Gratton or possibly, Bryan Wachtel. Following discussion, it was agreed that potential grants should be forwarded to Bryan and he will create a master list/calendar of deadlines for future reference. Next, Tiffany brought up the George Edwards Grant, a \$50 Million Grant to be used over 4 years. It can be used for Business Development and Job Creation. Tiffany will forward information to Paul Mantello and Bryan Wachtel, deadline January 20<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested that we have a part-time person to manage projects and grant money. Paul said that the town currently has \$12.5 Million in grants and 20 projects going on at this time.

There was a lot of discussion around a Tourism Website with a Mobile App. Funds from the Rural MD Grant will be used to build this. Tiffany said that we would want to get the most bang for our buck and she will work on Website and Mobile App. Tiffany did ask for members to let her know if there are any Town Websites that we like and could be copied for Boonsboro. Tyler Hornbecker suggested we get a sponsor for the Website.

Can we hire a Main Street Manager? We should schedule Kathryn Gratton to walk us through this process, and talk to other Main Street Managers to get input and partner together.

- b. **Downtown Beautification Project:** The Site Plan is done. Mantello and Mike VanFleet met with Frederick Seibert & Assoc. They are putting ideas into a layout with a 3D Mock-up. We should

get this back next month. We will need to apply for grants and funding for this. Natoma Vargason suggested applying to the Nora Roberts Foundation for funding.

- c. **Networking Breakfast Series:** January 19<sup>th</sup>'s speaker will be Katie Allen with the Appalachian Trail Conservatory. March 16<sup>th</sup>'s speaker will be Becky Reich, Main Street Manager for Middletown, MD. May Networking Event will be an evening event, and Tiffany will talk to Chuck Schwalbe about hosting at the Boonsboro Museum of History. An idea for a future speaker for the Networking Events were a panel of speakers to discuss "How to Start a Business."
- d. **Business Ribbon Cuttings & Recognition:** China Ocean is already opened and operating, so it seems the time has passed. Jeovani's Pizzeria to open end of February. Josie's to celebrate their 10-year Anniversary in April. Talon Studio is moving to the A Cut Above location and will want a ribbon cutting. James Blanford, new Chiropractor on Main Street, should be opening soon. Vanish Brewery to possibly open in March.
- e. **Quarterly Rack Cards** – Marie has sent out emails requesting information, it has been slowly coming in and not a lot of activities for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. We will create the 4 x 6 post cards only and will add Future Happenings and Welcome to New Businesses in the open space on the back.
- f. **Food Truck Festival** – Date is September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Natoma Vargason said that the Application fee will increase to \$50, invitations were sent to all vendors who attended in 2022. There will be an online application (Google Doc) and want to offer online payment capability. Tyler Hornbecker suggested better parking for this festival with more signage and handicap parking. We need a map, walkie talkies to communicate, golf carts, communication on social media as to what lots are full. Tyler to come up with a plan for parking, volunteer times will be 10 am to 4 pm. It was suggested that we get gators for trash pick-up. Tyler suggested getting volunteers for parking for this event from the Boonsboro Lions Club, Fire Department, BABI, etc. Musicians confirmed – Elijah Myers, Prophets of the Abstract Truth. Sound man is confirmed. Activities confirmed – Soolah Hoops, Tony M., Dino (ukeleles). Do we offer entertainment to people waiting in lines at the Food Trucks, ie: jugglers, princesses, etc? Food trucks should be arranged so that some are closer to the garden tractor pull area. Garden tractor pull will be same as last year. Jeff Taulton contacted Natoma with the offer to move South Mountain Jam to a different date. There are a lot of reasons to agree to this – all music performed from bandstand, one sound system to manage, no need to rent a stage, if children's music activities are moved to the center under the town's tent then pavilion 2 and 3 would both be available for seating (especially important during inclement weather). We will accept his offer. Following some discussion it was decided to shorten the festival hours to 12pm-6pm. Mantello mentioned that the Public Safety Commission had some concerns about the location of the food trucks during the festival. Packard will contact their Chair, Kim Lebrush, and ask them to give us more detail.
- g. **Spring Jubilee** – Date is April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Question regarding Food Trucks, should we just invite them or charge them to come to this event?
- h. **Boonsboro Town Alliance** – the legal paperwork has been filed for the BTA and will take approximately 4-6 weeks for approval. Once approved, we will need to appoint officers and open a checking account for BTA.

- i. **Appalachian Trail Community Task Force** – Meeting with committee tomorrow, January 5th. Part of the application process required the creation of an AT-focused event. Plan is to hold this in conjunction with National Trail Days each year for increased exposure. The inaugural event will take place June 3<sup>rd</sup> at South Mountain State Park. In October, The Appalachian Trail Conservancy made some suggestions to strengthen our A.T. Community application. Educators and a representative from Dahlgren Chapel have been added to the Task Force. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy now informs Boonsboro that we will be the first town in State of Maryland to receive the A. T. Community designation once these recommendations are complete! Tiffany Ahalt will pitch Boonsboro becoming an AT community at a Legislative Day in Annapolis, January 20th. There will be a Designation Ceremony and the A.T. Conservancy would like to coordinate this with the National Trail Days event on June 3rd. An invitation list will be compiled and must be approved by the Conservancy. The Lucy School wants to be involved too. We will receive two signs showing the AT Designation.
- j. **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary JFK 50 Ultramarathon** – Tyler Hornbecker said the temporary signs marking the starting line were well received. Tyler ran in the race and was thanked by many for Boonsboro’s support. The permanent installation of the sign will happen soon.
- k. **EDC Marketing Committee** - Natoma Vargason wanted to vote to run a 1/2 page ad in the South Mountain Park Recreation Guide. Cost is \$795. Motion to approve was received by Natoma Vargason, seconded by Ron Humbel; motion carried. She then asked if the EDC was a current or past member of the Maryland Tourism Coalition (Lobbyist for Tourism). Natoma Vargason moved to join the Maryland Tourism Coalition at an annual cost of \$99, second was received by Ron Humbel; motion carried. Terri Packard passed around our ad for the 2023 CVB Visitors Guide. The ad was free this year for all that advertised in 2022. Natoma wants to use the same ad for the South Mountain Park Guide.

**New Business:**

- New Post Office was purchased by an investor in California
- Dunkin Donuts – fully permitted
- Ace Hardware – site plan being reviewed by consulting firm
- Vanish Brewery – working on construction
- Pet Groomer – possibly in future for Boonsboro

**Miscellaneous:**

- Paul Mantello is working on the State of the Town (7 pages long). Assistant Mayor Nally suggested adding reports from each commission. EDC should submit their current and future projects – Terri will do. This will be posted on Town of Boonsboro Facebook Page.
- National Road Museum – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor available for 3 to 4 staff
- Christine Cody – purchased Enkore Kids building – not sure what kind of business she will open

**Adjournment:** Motion by Natoma Vargason to adjourn at 10:45 am

Respectfully submitted:  
Marie Oyster, Secretary