

Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
October 26, 2022

**Meeting was called to order at 9:07 am**

**Present:** Chairwoman Terri Packard, Natoma Vargason, Ron Humbel, Tyler Hornbecker, Marie Oyster, Dana Healy, Ray Hanson, Paul Mantello, and Mayor Howard Long

**Guests:** Kathryn Gratton, Chuck Schwalbe

Town grant writer Kathryn Gratton presented an update. Boonsboro has been approved for the Sustainable Community designation – just waiting for the official announcement from the state. Then we will qualify for Community Legacy grant program. This program includes funding for façade improvement programs. We have already received \$30,000 grant, coming in 2023, to create a program in Boonsboro. Maryland Historic Trust gives these funds. There will be applications – can be private, community or commercial; reimbursements are made to the town, inspections are done, residents/owners are reimbursed – 1st year is a \$30K grant. We need to identify someone as a collection point; should not be a person/business that wants or needs funding.

Boonsboro's new Sustainable Communities designation allows us to apply for the Main Street Maryland program. The application can be filed after the first of the year and takes approximately one year to complete. There are 3 options for setting this up –

- 1) within town government
- 2) hybrid person – hired by town and works with non-profit (potentially BTA)
- 3) separate non-profit

The state gives approximately \$20,000 in grant funds annually toward this. Paul suggested that BTA structure this.

Chuck Schwalbe gave an update on the Boonsboro Museum of History. This collection is important and can be a destination for Boonsboro. They will be staying open until January 1<sup>st</sup> as they have seen increased visitation. Md Public TV contacted them to discuss doing a story on the museum. An author has approached them about doing a 1500-word story. Museum of History has a long-range plan for facility improvements, documenting the collection and designing exhibits. They are focused on applying for grant money and have formed a 501C3. The most urgent need is for repair of bowed walls, strengthening 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floor joists and installation of HVAC in the annex (former Bast Furniture building). Washington County Community Coalition is working to gather \$875,000 for the Capital Improvement Fund. Steve Reckert is recording the documents in the Bast collection, with many being one-of-a-kind. Senator Paul Corderman has pledged financial support. The Museum would like letters from local entities, addressed to Senator Corderman, outlining the value this unique asset adds to our town. He offered to host a Networking Event for EDC at the museum and it was mentioned that May might be a good month for this. Ron Humbel made a motion for the EDC to write the letter of support, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dana Healy and approved by all.

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes from the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 were reviewed. Motion to approve as submitted by Ron Humbel, second by Natoma Vargason. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ron Humbel presented the Treasurer's Report – Motion to approve by Natoma Vargason, second by Marie Oyster. Motion carried.

**Old Business:**

- a. **Grant Opportunities:** Tiffany Ahalt noted that the Maryland Beautiful grant application is due by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Paul said that the Environmental Commission takes care of this, and he will send to Cassandra.
- b. **Downtown Beautification Project:** Mike Van Fleet has an example of the design and knows we would like to include the traffic circle in this project. State Highway Administration is aware of this project. Frederick, Seibert & Associates is working on the plan for the downtown area. We will have to merge these plans together. Vargason mentioned that it is important to keep the National Road recommendations in mind during design.
- c. **Networking Breakfast Series:** Vargason suggested that we get the Main Street Maryland Coordinator from Middletown as a speaker for our next breakfast. Committee discussed the desire to host a Social Media Workshop in November. Kathryn Gratton will present at no charge. Vargason moved to host workshop in the Town Hall Annex on November 10<sup>th</sup>, to begin at 5:30 to 6 pm, light meal provided from Subway – no charge for BTA members and \$10 for non-members. RSVP by Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. Motion seconded by Marie Oyster; approved by all. We will not have a networking breakfast on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> due to Girls Night Out. The next breakfast date is January 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am at the American Legion.
- d. **Business Ribbon Cuttings & Recognition:** Ribbon Cutting for Spring Ridge Chiropractic is Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am.
- e. **Quarterly Rack Cards:** Deadline for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2023 will be December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Marie needs to send out request for information.

**Committee Reports:**

- a. **Food Truck Festival:** Committee will meet next week to discuss application fees and deadlines for 2023 FTF. Dana needs a place to store the numerous tubs of items to be used again next year. Natoma wants to get the food truck commitments much earlier and have all the forms on the town website.
- b. **Boonsboro Town Alliance:** Vargason moved to approve the ByLaws for the Boonsboro Town Alliance with one spelling correction and changing 'to' to 'from' in Section 7. Humbel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.  
The commission looked at a rough draft for the Boonsboro map rack card that Laura Oates is designing. Should it include professional services? Other ideas: QR code that links to a list of businesses; need to add Edelen Trees; add National Road icon; make Main Street wider; does not say Boonsboro, Maryland anywhere. Paul noted that the EDC logo not the BTA logo can be on the rack card at this point.
- c. **Appalachian Trail Community Task Force:** Tiffany Ahalt represented Boonsboro and made the presentation to the AT group. She feels we have a lot of work to do before we can get the designation, specifically in the areas of hiker amenities and educational programs. Feels the EDC needs to focus on what services/businesses we want in our town to appeal to hikers. We need to create a map of the area – including lodging, transportation services, showers, phone charging, etc - and have higher quality images for future presentations. Vargason reported that Katie will send a list of the adjustments we need to make. Fox Gap development could have huge potential for hiker amenities. Noted that Dominos will deliver to hikers and there is a hostile in the works for Zittlestown. We need rest stations, hostile, maybe a partnership with DNR.

The Feasibility Study for the cultural trail is a priority. An engineering firm will identify the most feasible path to the Washington Monument from Boonsboro.

- d. **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary JFK 50 Ultramarathon:** there will be a temporary sign marking the starting line for this year's race. Bronze markers, created by Tony Mendez, will memorialize the starting line on both sides of the street. Four sponsors have committed to cover the cost. Paul is waiting for State Highway permit to install these on the right-of-way. Vargason moved to give a maximum of \$1950 from our Tourism Development budget section to pay for 25% of this. Hornbecker seconded and the motion carried. It was mentioned that porta johns should not be setup on Main Street. Could they be in the alley? Mayor Long will read a proclamation at 6am on race day. Ray and Tyler plan to attend.
- e. **EDC Marketing Committee:** This sub-committee is on hold until we know if we have the rural Maryland grant funds. If that happens, we will need an RFP for website design. We can start to work on a draft RFP now and identify web designers to contact.

Ahalt asked about Hotel/Motel Lodging Tax Funds that the town receives. These are usually donated to emergency services (fire & rescue). Some of the funds have gone to the National Road Museum.

#### **New Business:**

- a. **New Business Activity:** second chiropractor is opening on Main Street in February; China Ocean continues to work on their location; Vanish hopes to be open by St. Patrick's Day; no update on the new Post Office location; Dunkin Donuts is working on storm water plan with State Highway; Ace Hardware has received their permits from State Highway; Vesta is in negotiations with two potential lessees.
- b. **Men's Night Out** will be December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- c. **Reimbursing mileage or other expenses for commission members:** Vargason asked if Ahalt could be reimbursed for the additional miles she traveled to attend the A. T. conference in NJ and make the presentation. Paul informed that volunteers and commission members cannot be reimbursed. The EDC would need to budget for this. And even then, there would be other requirements in order to receive reimbursement.
- d. **BooneFest followup:** Mayor Long suggests we contact State Highway (ask Linda Poffenberger) about closing Main Street from Ford Avenue to the square next year during this event. We would need Fire Police assistance. How would this effect the wagon rides?
- e. **EDC 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plaque:** the proclamation has been framed and will be hung in town hall.
- f. **Staff Liaison to the EDC:** this position will be offered to all town employees (internal advertising) with applications accepted for one month. There will be formal interviews to choose the liaison.
- g. **Misc –** Dominique DiMercurio is doing another movie in Boonsboro (has done I Like Me and Bad Witch). PBS is interested in doing a movie about the Heck Brothers. We should look up Doug Bast's Ghost Series on YouTube. Boonsboro is an official Small Business Saturday Community and there is free swag for businesses.

**Adjournment** – Vargason moved to adjourn and Humbel seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by –  
Marie Oyster, Secretary  
Terri Packard, President