

**MINUTES  
ESSEX COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
November 3, 2022**

A meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Essex County was held on the 3rd day of November 2022, with the following present:

Present:

William A. Croxton, Chairman  
Lisa Andrews, Vice-Chairman  
Tim Smith – Treasurer  
Ronnie Sidney  
David Holt

Also present:

Chris Rhodes  
Tommy Blackwell  
Kay Carlton

Absent:

Jamie Segar

RE: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Croxton called the meeting to order. A quorum was met.

Keith Hodges, VA House of Delegates

Mr. Hodges wanted to talk about economic development in the Middle Peninsula. 75% of the work force drives out of the district. The largest employer is the government. Healthcare, Walmart, Papermill, Cannon, Food Lion, Hardees and some lumber yards are where people are working and staying in the district. Mr. Hodges wanted to see how to address this. He believes that retail is not meaningful economic development. For every negative there is a positive. The biggest asset is the waterfront but is also our biggest challenge.

When you look at resiliency for waterfront, you need to look at living shorelines. Those are costly at \$650 a linear foot. We are looking at 22 different companies considering Virginia by tweaking the definition of "living shorelines." We are also looking at dredging. We can turn negatives into positives and create jobs. He is also looking at processing blue catfish to pull them out of the river so that they do not eat all the menhaden and other species.

Vice-Chairman Andrews asked him to explain more about the resiliency center. Is it more of a scientific research facility or development? Mr. Hodges stated it would conduct research as well as provide policy recommendations. It would involve recommendations to update the Chesapeake Bay Act. Vice-

Chairman Andrews asked if the Chesapeake Bay Foundation was in support of this. Mr. Hodges stated that they have finally come to the table and are working with him.

Mr. Hodges also talked about the failed septic systems. He has talked to a couple of companies that work with a new type of septic that is good for the water shed. It will be a game changer for this area in areas that don't perk or have flooded where these systems could work.

#### Blakely Smith, Hometown Realty

Mr. Smith passed around a brochure about a new section of homes at Hobbs Hole. They plan to break ground soon on the model home. The plans for the homes are focused on accessibility with mostly single-level living and no or few steps for entry. Prices begin at about \$350,000.

This new section of the Hobbs Hole development will have 39 new homes in this section that has been approved with an additional 41 section in the future which will bring the total to 80.

#### RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Croxton asked for the approval of the minutes from the October 6, 2022 meeting. A Motion was made and seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

#### RE: TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Smith reported that the checking account currently has \$2,225.35. That is after the check for the DAW. What is outstanding is the \$1,000 façade grant for FITZ. In our 12 month CD we have \$2,583.78. Our 13-26 month \$30,944.61. Totaling \$35,753.74. Chairman Croxton stated that they have 10 days to renew the 12 month CD. We can pull a little money out and roll it over or we can get another .5% to take it to 2%. Vice Chairman Andrews suggested that they not renew it and invest elsewhere. The penalty to take it out is about \$100. Vice Chairman Andrews stated that we should look at a money market accounts to get a higher percentage. We should take the 12 month CD and cash it. Chairman Croxton stated that it is the 13-26 month CD that is the one up for renewal. The recommendation is to take the \$30,944.61 and put into the checking and find another place for the rest of the money. Vice Chairman Andrews offered to find alternative investment vehicles that offer a better return. She moved to terminate the 12 month CD, not renew the 13-26 month CD, and move them both into the checking account. Mr. Smith seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

#### New Business

##### Beth Sharp

Ms. Sharpe spoke of a business forum on January 23 for an advanced social media course' April 24 they would like to have the business coach back; July 24 for finance and taxes, and then on October 23 to focus on collaborative marketing and promotion. Jim Acors also wants to start a networking session for business owners.

##### DAW Theater

Chairman Croxton stated that they were very appreciative of the grant they received to help with the façade.

### Façade Grant – Blossom Day Care

Owner Lousia Ochoa sent the grant application by text but Chairman Croxton also has a letter from Julie Strock endorsing the Blossoms Day Care center. They are doing the work themselves but need help with supplies. Chairman Croxton would like to see things done slightly differently. She has presented receipts for \$1500 but would like to have assurance on the \$1000 grant before continuing. She has completed the application. Vice-Chairman Andrews is for supporting the grant provided the application is modified. It was suggested that one of the Board Members sit down with her to help out. Vice Chairman Andrews would like to see them make changes to the application as opposed to making exceptions. They would like to change it so that it reads if they can demonstrate a need, then they can get an advance in the grant money.

Vice Chairman Andrews made the motion to modify the program guidelines to permit applicants to receive funds in advance if need is demonstrated.

There was further discussion on the application process and the façade grant.

Vice Chairman Andrews made the motion to change the language for non-profits organizations and persons with demonstrated need to request payment of invoices received for approved improvements or for advance up to 50% of the estimated cost. It was seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

### Old Business

#### Grant Review: 528 Prime Steak

Chairman Croxton stated that he has pictures and about \$10,000-\$15,000 in receipts from Luigi which is what he was missing from his application. The motion was approved to approve the request. It was seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

#### Closed Session

Did not record in minutes.

#### RE: NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 1, 2022.

#### RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn and seconded. All Ayes

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David Holt, Secretary