

**MINUTES
ESSEX COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
February 2, 2023**

A meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Essex County was held on the 2nd day of February 2023, with the following present:

Present:

Lisa Andrews, Chairman
William A. Croxton, Vice-Chairman
Tim Smith – Treasurer
Ronnie Sidney
David Holt
James Acors
Jamie Segar- online

Also present:

Beth Sharpe – Tappahannock Main Street
Chris Rhodes – Rappahannock Times
Kay Carlton – Tappahannock Town Council

Absent:

RE: CALL TO ORDER

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

RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Lisa Andrews asked for the approval of the minutes from the January 3, 2023 meeting. The date was wrong at the top and was corrected. David Holt made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and was seconded by James Acors. Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

RE: TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Smith reported that our current balance is \$31,054.08. Chairman Andrews stated that they are still looking at a CD with a good interest rate. James Acors made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Vice Chairman Croxton seconded. Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Old Business

Tappahannock Main Street (TMS) Report – Mrs. Beth Sharpe

Mrs. Sharp has been in discussion with potential business owners, developers, investors about the town. One thing that became evident is that we need to develop a "Pitch Page." This could be a cohesive one-page document on why someone would want to do business in Tappahannock and a

business guide showing data and trends about Tappahannock. Mrs. Sharpe stated that if anyone on the EDA and/or with the town is interested in assisting with the development of this document, that can likely be arranged.

Chairman Andrews stated that is likely high on the list of priorities. The EDA is developing a strategic plan and will discuss this as well.

Mrs. Sharpe also stated that she has been asked to work on a regional resiliency equity work group. This work group looks at current issues throughout the region. She has been asked to discuss living wages and economic development. If someone from the EDA wanted to join in with that group the meetings are virtual, once a month and last 60-90 minutes.

Mrs. Sharpe also stated they are working on the Downtown Investment Grant. TMS is transforming 315 Duke Street to a co-working, networking and entrepreneurship space.

Chairman Andrews asked if this would be like an incubator space.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that they don't have the programing for an incubator space, however, it could be coming in the future. Currently, TMS is working on a coworking space - one room would be a pod with working spaces for those that need a quiet place to work. The conference room would be upgraded to a smart conference room and the backyard would become outdoor coworking space. This grant would also allow for education tools.

The grant has been increased from \$25,000 to \$75,000. TMS will invest \$40,000 in to the project and the town will likely invest a similar amount. The project will cost roughly \$150,000-\$200,000 to be done properly.

Liaison Reports

- Lisa Andrews – BOS – With Mr. Smith being on our board and now being an employee of the county, we needed an amendment to the Industrial Development and Revenue Bond Act to allow a county employee to be on the EDA. The town and the county both approved supporting the amendment and presenting it to the General Assembly. We were able to get it to the House of Delegates in time for consideration this session. Both Del. Hodges and Sen. McDougle committed to shepherding the amendment through enactment. To date, the amendment has been approved by the House of Delegates and will be presented to the Senate. Hopefully it will be approved.
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- Bill Croxton – Town Council – The town received a \$250,000 grant that is supposedly going to the old airport area and he believes it may be better used in the downtown area. Ms. Carlton noted that the planning for the use of this grant has been focused on the old airport area revision long before the fire and the town is planning to use it for that purpose.
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- Bill Croxton – Chamber of Commerce – was unable to attend the meeting. But it is still in the reorganization phase.
- James Acors – Airport Authority – The airport budget has been completed. A grant was received for a new taxi way and a new service road will also be completed. They put the budget out there is also a new taxi way that has been awarded through a grant.
- Ronnie Sidney – Tonight there is a meeting to discuss planning a Chris Brown Appreciation day. Mr. Sidney is also trying to speak with the Town Council and the Board of Supervisors to get their input as well. As part of their process, they have reached out to Mr. Brown and he is excited about the community wanting to show appreciation for him. Some ideas as part of an appreciation day are having the school give him an honorary diploma, naming the high school gym after him, getting a star of fame on Prince St., and placing a mural on Church Lane.

Strategic Planning – Tim Smith

It is understood that the county will hire an economic development person in the near and Mr. Smith indicated that it was important for us to develop a coherent strategic plan. He presented copies of a proposed plan outline. He stated that we could begin getting the information that is in the outline so that we have the data that is needed.

Chairman Andrews stated that we can be the leader on this as there is a tremendous need for development. Fundamentally we need our story. She noted that the DAW has done a study and a lot of data they gathering could be used to help us so that we don't recreate the wheel.

Chairman Andrews asked for a few people to form a subcommittee for the strategic plan. Chairman Andrews, Ronnie Sidney, Tim Smith and Jamie Segar. They will start on Friday February 10th at 9AM at the Tappahannock Main Street Office.

New Business

There is a wine shop that is potentially opening within the next year.

There discussion that a vape shop may be coming to the old 7-11 building. This is would be the fourth vape hop in the area but is it not viewed as an economic stimulus for our County. There was additional discussion of vape shops and the status of gaming machines.

RE: NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 9:00AM.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn and seconded. All Ayes

Secretary, David Holt