

**Talbot County Economic Development Commission (EDC) Meeting**  
**Talbot County Government Office Building, 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton MD 21601**  
**April 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Vice Chairman, Al Silverstein; Ted Bautz; Peter Dunbar; Paul Makosky; Gerald O'Mara, Ron Engle and Jacqueline Wilson

**Members Excused:** Chairman, Timothy Jones; Jean Weisman; Scott Beatty and Walter Chase

**Ex Officio Members Present:** Andy Hollis, Jennifer Williams, Shannon Dill, Mike Henry, Terenda Thomas and Cassandra Vanhooser

**Attendees:** Dan McDermott, Tracy Ward, Jennifer Shull and Debbie Bowden,

**Dan McDermott, Executive Director of the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (WIB),** provided an update regarding the Allen Harim Family Food closure and the transition of 325 workers at the Cordova, Maryland production facility. Mr. McDermott distributed handouts to EDC members outlining Allen Harim's present circumstances, WIB's services, direction and timeline. By the end of July, the Allen Harim plant in Cordova will be closed. Allen Harim is trying to move as many Cordova employees to their Harbeson DE production facility to keep up with their schedule. Mr. McDermott reported Mr. Silverstein and Ms. Tilghman have been helpful with identifying employers in the area who are hiring to absorb those workers who will not be transferring to the Delaware facility. Mr. Silverstein, as President of the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, is developing mini job fairs. Allen Harim has cooperated with WIB to work out of their mobile career center at the Cordova facility. The Division of Rehabilitation Services, Chesapeake College, Healthcare Exchange, DLLR and Talbot Department of Social Services are partnering to provide adult education and GED training, job retraining for new careers and information for unemployment insurance. Once WIB has concluded their services at the Cordova plant in July, they will shift their service delivery from Cordova to the surrounding counties where former employees live and continue working with dislocated workers until they have secured employment or other options.

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Silverstein called the meeting to order, with a quorum, at 8:20 a.m.

**Approval of March 3, 2016 Minutes:** Vice Chairman Silverstein reported there was a lapse in the recording of the March meeting minutes and they were prepared with the best accuracy from written notes. Vice Chairman Silverstein asked for a motion to approve the March minutes. Mr. Makosky motioned the recommendations and Ms. Wilson seconded the motion; it carried unanimously.

**Business Environment Committee (BEC):** Ted Bautz, Chair reported both the County and the Town of Easton have experienced a rapid increase in permit applications. In the county, it is mostly residential; in the town, it is more commercial. The Committee has identified two training needs; a Trade Training Course for Codes and a Building Permit Procurement Course. The Talbot County Office of Permits and Inspections will likely host both courses. Brent Garner, Manager of Permits and Inspections has joined the BE committee. The next BE committee meeting will be held on May 24 at the Bay Street Government Offices.

**Communications Committee (CC):** The Communications Committee's Plan, drafted by Chair Vanhooser, circulated at the last meeting. The plan included the committee's goals, objectives and strategies, which will positively affect public perception about economic activity. The Communication Committee will meet again on April 19 at 8:30 at the Bay Street County Government Offices.

**Correspondence:** The director reported that Craig Wanner, COO from the Whalen Company; Cissy Stone, Executive Director from Candle Light Cove and Andrea Lev, Executive Director from Integrate Bayleigh Chase were invited to provide their information to the County Council for consideration of appointment to the EDC. The County Council will have their decision in the near future.

The director reported Maryland Senate Bill 496 Poultry Litter Management Act was brought for consideration by Mr. O'Mara at the March EDC meeting and the EDC approved the issuance of a letter in opposition to the legislation. A letter was drafted and mailed to the Eastern Shore Delegation expressing opposition of Senate Bill 496. The County Council reinforced the opposition by submitting an opposition letter as well. Senate Bill 496 has been pulled for the time being.

Mr. Dunbar raised a few concerns regarding EDC procedures. Mr. Dunbar reported he did not have an opportunity to review the opposition letter to the Eastern Shore Delegation prior to it being finalized. Mr. Dunbar reported he regretted having to leave early from March's meeting; however, he was not informed of the position of the EDC via email or phone call. Mr. Dunbar did not see Bill 496 on March's agenda. If the EDC has a policy issue with the legislative office and decides to represent a position of this commission, Mr. Dunbar requested the EDC be more formal with how issues are discussed and voted on. Finally, if the commission wants to work with the legislators, work needs to be conducted early in December/January, not March. The commission needs to be current with information.

Vice Chairman Silverman spoke to Mr. Dunbar's concerns and assured that items like this letter will be placed on the EDC agenda in the future. The EDC is an advisory board to the County Council and the EDC will advise the Council when the EDC has voted on a particular issue. In turn, County Council will take a position whether they oppose an issue or not, and the Council may authorize the EDC to draft a letter. The County Council may decide to write a letter as well. Additionally, any letter drafted will be circulated to the members of the EDC for their input before being finalized. The director made amends for not having the opposition letter circulated to the EDC members prior to being finalized. All draft letters will be circulated to EDC members in the future.

**Business Retention Report:** The director reported the OED has been working with Harrison's Chesapeake House, CQD<sup>®</sup>, Composite Yachts and Sea Watch International. The OED met with several Trappe business owners to discuss many topics including visibility/signage on Route 50.

**Director's Report:** The director reported the Business Appreciation Breakfast invitation has been distributed. There are 135 reservations to date and 14 businesses have chosen to sponsor the event. A professional photographer was hired to take pictures of the

Talbot County community as they work. These photographs will be displayed as banners and the program for the breakfast. Additionally, the photographs will be used in the upcoming 2015 Economic Development Report. The keynote at the breakfast will be Congressman Andrew P. Harris. Mr. Dunbar reported his concerns with the keynote as the Congressman is in process with reelection. Vice Chairman Silverstein commented the EDC would accord any sitting elected official the same courtesy. The County Council endorsed this selection.

The director reported the OED budget has been submitted for review with a marginal increase from last year's budget due to a drop in income revenue projections. The OED reported the placement of a Talbot County Advertisement in March's Site Selection Magazine, which is published to approximately 40 to 50 thousand site selectors and developers nationally and internationally. This marketing opportunity is the result of collaborating with Ms. Vanhooser in the Office of Tourism, who has helped the OED with professional ad layout, photographs, and getting the message out. Vice Chairman Silverstein advised the EDC that the link to the Site Selection Magazine would be forwarded to them. <http://siteselection.com/digitalEdition/2016/mar>

The director reported Brownfields certification was recommended to County Council in October. There is a draft of that legislation with our county attorney pending a work session to be scheduled.

The MEDA Annual Conference will be held on May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge [www.medamd.com](http://www.medamd.com). One of the speakers is Anirban Basu, Chairman and CEO Sage Policy Group, Inc.

The director met with Jake Day, Mayor of Salisbury and extended an invitation for him to present to the EDC at the June meeting regarding economic development and projects in Salisbury. The EDC members agreed. The CORE Group meeting will be held on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm at the Bay Street County Government Offices.

**Councilwoman Jennifer Williams, Liaison to EDC** reported the County Council has been very busy with the Comprehensive Plan and the County Budget. The revenue for the current 2016 budget came in close to \$2 million less than anticipated, partly due to income taxes. They do not expect to see much change in 2017, so when budget requests were sent out, County Council asked the departments to provide a flat budget. The requests came back considerably more, so Council had to find places to get back to a flat budget.

#### **Town & Member Reports:**

**Peter Dunbar, Town of Oxford:** reported the Town of Oxford authorized the purchase of the Mews Building. Development of the County Park has begun activity.

**Paul Makosky, Member at Large:** reported on his generator project and his experience with the permitting process.

**Mike Henry, Airport:** reported Easton Hangar LLC's corporate hangar is under construction. The lower T-hanger taxi lane design project and is prepared to go out for bid. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is coming on the 15<sup>th</sup> to inspect Easton Airport, a process to become a gateway airport, which will allow flights into Reagan National Airport. Air traffic for March was up 15%, over last year, which is reflected in the fuel sales as well. The airport received notification from Michael Baker Corporation; they signed a contract with MD Environmental Service (MES) to conduct aerial surveillance with drones of all the landfills in Maryland.

**Ted Bautz, Commercial Real Estate:** reported the general real estate market is on the up-take. Mr. Bautz and others, including Council President Corey Pack, met with Governor Hogan and discussed projects in Talbot County. The Governor is supportive of the projects and is committed to helping the Eastern Shore become revitalized, supporting recruiting efforts, tax policies, etc. Governor Hogan is very pro growth with smart growth. They anticipate Governor Hogan will be able to spend more time in Talbot County later this spring.

**Jennifer Shull, Trappe Town Planner:** reported business owners were advised yesterday State Highway has agreed to install sidewalk along Route 565, also known as Main Street or Old Trappe Road, from Home Run Baker Park to White Marsh Elementary School. The Talbot Smokehouse has opened a market for daytime carryout. There is a community outreach group in Trappe whose goal is to focus on Trappe's quality of life, in the hopes of attracting and retaining Trappe residents. The director reported Maurice Evans, from Piggyback Promotions, has asked the Town of Trappe to plan a fair in the park on September 24<sup>th</sup> for young people between 12 to 20 years old. The fair, named Best Fest is a countywide program to turn around drug abuse. The fair will be managed and marketed by the kids.

**Ron Engle, Town of Easton:** reported the Route 33 Orion/Standard Fuse annexation issue is coming up at Easton's next Council meeting. During the last meeting, the citizens were not happy about the annexation because of potential traffic hazards. The State has not yet provided the town with a traffic light; it is hoped the traffic light will be installed before Harris Teeter opens for business.

**Cassandra Vanhooser, Office of Tourism:** reported this week is Restaurant Week and she encouraged everyone to eat out, as participating restaurants will have special pricing. The Launch Party for Restaurant Week, at the Tidewater Inn on Sunday, was very successful. This is the event's 7<sup>th</sup> year and 300 tickets were sold.

**Gerald O'Mara, Agriculture:** reported the Sustainable Agriculture (SAG) program will be implemented this fall at the Chesapeake College. Mr. O'Mara provided an outline of the program. Corn prices have taken a dip because of the huge supply. Shannon Dill will receive an award from the Women and Girls Fund for the great work she accomplishes.

**Jackie Wilson, Small Businesses:** No report.

**Terenda Thomas, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR):** reported DLLR is participating with assistance to the Allen Harim closure.

**Andy Hollis, Talbot County Manager:** reported he met with Pat Bilbrough, President of Talbot Bank, to discuss the development review process. Mr. Bilbrough had some good insights and suggestions that the county is moving forward with, as well as continuing the focus on customer service.

**Debbie Bowden, Department of Commerce:** reported her office has been asked by the Secretary to conduct business appreciation calls. Ms. Bowden will be calling businesses in her four-county territory simply to thank them for doing business in Maryland and employing Maryland's citizens. Ms. Bowden reported she and the director met with Sea Watch International and one of their concerns was the ban on shellfish being imported in Europe. Ms. Bowden's office is working with an Industry Sector Representative to see what can be done to rectify the ban.

**Shannon Dill, Agriculture:** reported Annapolis was successful as far as agriculture is concerned. There were a number of anti-agriculture bills and farmers are becoming comfortable attending the sessions in order to testify. There are still misunderstandings about farm practices. Cover crops are on the fields. Poultry litter application has to be incorporated within 48 hours; when poultry litter is applied, it has to be run over with a turbo tiller so nitrogen is not lost. This is a better use for poultry litter and the environment.

**Tracy Ward, Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC):** reported the EEDC Board chose a site for Chesapeake Harvest and entered into a purchase agreement. The site is in Commerce Park on Bryan Drive. Chesapeake Harvest is actively searching for a general manager.

**Vice Chairman Silverstein** reported there is an annexation hearing on April 18<sup>th</sup> to hear Standard Fuse and other properties. Should the property be annexed it would become a PUD, which would allow County Council to make a decision how it would be shaped. There is concern about not having direct access to Route 33 and instead using an internal road onto Marlboro Avenue. In speaking with several engineers, they suggested using one access lane heading west on Route 33 to allow some traffic out, heading to St Michaels. Vice Chairman Silverstein met with the residents, as well as the engineers and encouraged the State to install the traffic light prior to the opening of Harris Teeter.

The Air B&B issue is still under review, the legislation needs additional work.

Vice Chairman Silverstein asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Dunbar motioned to adjourn and Mr. Makosky seconded the motion; it carried unanimously.

**Upcoming Economic Development Commission Meetings:**

**June 2<sup>nd</sup>** at the Talbot County Government Offices, 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton; Conference Room 1; No Meeting in July.