

**Talbot County Economic Development Commission (EDC) Meeting**  
**Talbot County Government Building, 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton MD 21601**  
**August 4, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman, Timothy G. Jones; Vice Chairman, Al Silverstein; Jean Weisman; Gerald O'Mara, Jacqueline Wilson; Ron Engle, Craig Wanner and Ted Bautz

**Members Excused:** Scott Beatty, Peter Dunbar and Andrea Lev

**Ex Officio Members Present:** R. Andrew Hollis, Mike Henry, Dave Prossner (for Terenda Thomas) and Cassandra Vanhooser

**Attendees:** Jeremy Rothwell, Jennifer Shull, Laura Heikes, Debbie Bowden and Scott Warner

**Guest Speaker:** Dan McDermott, Executive Director of The Workforce Investment Board presented an update regarding Allan Harim's closing of their plant in Cordova. WIB began with Rapid Response on April 6<sup>th</sup> providing general information, orientation services and resources available to employees. WIB needed to intervene onsite as soon as possible as 20 – 25% of employees are known to engage with assistance early; otherwise, the intervention numbers drop to zero. WIB was pleased with the extensive joint effort from all the regional resource partnerships. Out of the 263 employees who came in for assistance, 38+ were from Talbot County. WIB provided a survey for employees to complete in order to narrow down their specific needs for assistance. WIB received 18 completed surveys from Talbot County employees. WIB brought in occupational training vendors and 16 employees from Talbot County were interested in participating. Additionally, The Chamber of Commerce organized several mini job fairs. Allen Harim moved 60 employees from Cordova facility to the Delaware facility in early June. Allen Harim closed the Cordova plant on June 20<sup>th</sup> with the severance date of July 11<sup>th</sup>. All former employees who receive unemployment insurance assistance will have to attend a Job-Search Workshop, which offers options for training as well as other services.

Andy Hollis, County Manager for Talbot County introduced Jeremy Rothwell from the Planning & Zoning Office who is leading the planning efforts for the reuse of the Allen Harim facility. Mr. Rothwell reported that the Planning Office is working to develop a strategy to fill the facility's void in Cordova. There is significant potential for the reuse of the site and the County wants to take the time to consider and evaluate all that will be appropriate for that specific site. Additionally, the County would like to provide the community with an opportunity to have a voice in the process before undertaking any projects. Although the site is a regional employment opportunity, it primarily affects the Cordova residents. Mr. Rothwell is working with many different resources concerning planning grant opportunities. Allen Harim is currently listing the 41-acre property where the plant is located and the 40-acre property where the treatment lagoons are located. Vice Chairman Silverstein suggested placing Allen Harim's listing on the Office of Economic Development's (OED) website. Several questions were posed and a discussion ensued; the County Manager indicated the OED would provide Allen Harim realtor's contact information to the EDC members.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, with a quorum, at 8:25 a.m.

**Approval of August Agenda and June Meeting Minutes:** Chairman Jones asked for a motion to approve the August agenda and the June meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Silverstein motioned to approve the August agenda and June meeting minutes; Mr. Bautz seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Business Environment Committee (BEC):** Mr. Bautz reported the next scheduled BEC meeting is September 20<sup>th</sup>. The committee membership needs to be addressed and Chairman Jones suggested the matter be placed on the EDC agenda for September 1<sup>st</sup>. The County Manager expressed interest in attending one of the BEC meetings once the meetings resume.

**Communications Committee (CC):** Chairman Vanhooser reported Kimberly Weller wrote the press release regarding the appointment of the two new members to the EDC. The press release was sent to the newspapers and to date the article has not been published. Vice Chairman Silverstein requested that Ms. Vanhooser forward a copy of the press release to the Chamber of Commerce to publish in The Chamber Compass. The next CC meeting is scheduled for August 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Correspondence:** The OED received a media release stating that The Henker Group was awarded two Bronze Stevie Awards for their work in marketing and communications.

**Action Items:** No report.

**Business Retention Report:** No report.

**County Manager's Report:** Mr. Hollis reported there was an article in The Star Democrat concerning the contract the County has with Pettinaro, owner of the Black and Decker property, for acquisition of the property. Settlement is not scheduled until December 2016. Mr. Hollis turned the meeting over to Mike Henry, General Manager of the Easton/Newman Airport. Mr. Henry reported the airport plans to move the runway 1,000 feet to the southwest and add 900 feet for the aircraft to stop safely. The load-bearing capability of the pavement is what determines the size of the aircraft. Currently, the runway pavement capability is at 100,000 pounds and the addition will be at 100,000 pounds, which sustains the kind of aircraft that has always been based at the Easton/Newman Airport. The purchase of the property is through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), which is through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant. The FAA is funding 90%, the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) is funding 5% and the other 5% will be funded by the Airport's revenue. No County funds will be used for the acquisition. The earliest this project could possibly develop is five years; the reality is the building will not have to be removed for closer to ten years. It all depends on the funding. There are opportunities to utilize the building prior to demolition. Mr. Engle mentioned that the county and town are seriously lacking sport fields, for little league and football, and could utilize the fields on the property now.

Mr. Hollis reported that Ms. Tilghman retired as director of Economic Development for Talbot County. The County Manager's Office has prepared the job description, the County Council will review it next Tuesday and then the advertisement will be submitted to The Star Democrat, in trade magazines, on the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) website as well as the Maryland Municipal League (MML) website. Mr. Hollis' only concern is that Queen Anne's and Dorchester Counties are also advertising for an ED director. Mr. Hollis reported that Mr. Silverstein has offered his assistance, Ms. Bowden with the State is on stand-by, Michele Hall is the immediate contact and Jessica Morris and Mr. Hollis will administer any matters that need to be addressed.

The Chesapeake Balloon and Wine Festival begins this Friday night at 5:00 p.m. at the Triple Creek Winery on Cordova Road, Cordova. They are expecting thousands of people according to the number of hits on their website.

**Chairman's Report:** Chairman Jones reported that Paul Makosky submitted his resignation to County Council President Pack. Therefore, a new member needs to be appointed to the EDC to take Mr. Makosky's place. Mr. Makosky represented At-Large. Chairman Jones indicated if any EDC members have any recommendations for consideration, to submit them directly to Mr. Hollis. Chairman Jones reported that there is no new information regarding Brownfields legislation. Mr. Hollis indicated that during the last joint meeting with the County Council and the municipalities, Ms. Tilghman briefed the parties present about the Brownfields legislation. The matter is still under consideration.

Chairman Jones reported the EDC/OED went before County Council on July 12<sup>th</sup> with the recommendation to update the strategic plan and the County Council approved the project. The plan is to hold meetings in each of the towns. The OED will coordinate with the towns' representatives and advise them of the intention of the meetings, ask them to invite their elected officials as well as request assistance with recruiting their local business community for their input. Chairman Jones expressed interest to work with the County Manager's Office staff on data collection and analysis. Chairman Jones asked Ms. Bowden if her office could provide the ten-year forecast. With that information, an outline could be produced for the town meetings. Ms. Bowden requested a list of items required in order to provide to her research department. Ms. Bowden indicated she might already have some information available. Mr. Hollis suggested Ms. Bowden provide what data she has available, and from that a determination could be made as to what other data is needed. Chairman Jones indicated employment data by industry sector is needed as well as a ten-year forecast. A discussion ensued regarding the EDC meeting dates. Chairman Jones asked the OED to coordinate with the towns regarding the dates and locations of the upcoming meetings. The goal is to get as much participation as possible. Chairman Jones posed the question to the EDC, that in order to persuade elected officials and the business community to attend the strategic plan meetings, would the first Thursday of the month and 8:00 a.m. be the best date and time to meet.

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

**Vice Chairman Silverstein, Chamber of Commerce:** reported he is working on a job fair scheduled for October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Talbot County Community Center from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Silverstein advised the EDC members to have any interested companies contact the Chamber, there is no charge for registration and additional information will be provided. The Talbot County Council is one of the sponsors of the event by providing the venue.

**Mike Henry, Airport:** reported Trident's training of the 245 Midshipman ends on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Airport Day is scheduled for Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00, with free admission and free parking. Mr. Henry noted that many fun activities are planned for the day.

**Gerald O'Mara, Agriculture:** reported the recent rains were good for the crop yields. Crop prices have gone down for various reasons. President Obama has signed legislation to label GMO foods.

**Ted Bautz, Commercial Real Estate:** reported office space absorption is picking up so people are moving in/expanding into town. Preston Auto has a subsidiary, the "iFrog Digital Marketing" group, which has opened shop in town with an anticipated 20 employees.

**Cassandra Vanhooser, Tourism:** reported the Tourism Board is meeting next week and they will vote whether or not the golf tournament, Tee Off for Talbot, will go forward in October 2016 or 2017. Ms. Vanhooser will report to the EDC in September regarding the board's final decision.

Talbot County is hosting the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) Annual Media Marketplace scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>. The Office of Tourism is bringing MATPRA travel journalists to Talbot County at no cost to them. The headquarters for the three-day event is The Tidewater Inn and the journalists will cover as much of the tourism related businesses in Talbot County as possible. Ms. Vanhooser warned she would be asking for volunteers at the September EDC meeting. Mr. Hollis commented that this is a huge marketing opportunity for the County and Ms. Vanhooser receives the credit for bringing MATPRA here and organizing the event. 49 travel journalists have already signed up, guest speakers are scheduled and there is a possibility that the editor of National Geographic will be available to speak. For further information, please see the MATPRA website:

<http://www.matpra.org/getattachment/About/About/MATPRA.pdf.aspx>

**Ron Engle, Town of Easton:** reported The Easton Club Golf Course is now closed. The new owner will be visiting Easton in a couple of weeks, at which time, the Town of Easton will find out what the owner's intentions are for the property. The owner of Miranda's is moving so the shoe store is closed; Studio 2 is moving their salon to The Tidewater Inn; Aldi is under construction on Route 50 and the Easton Town Council will review the annexation request for Easton Point. Mr. Silverstein mentioned that Caliber Collision opened where Mr. Tire used to operate on Route 50. Lastly, Bob Evans is planning to rebuild at their former location.

**Dave Prossner, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)** (sitting in for Terenda Thomas): introduced himself and explained that he calls on local businesses and posts their job openings on the DLLR website, the Maryland Workforce Exchange.

DLLR has developed a marketing flyer system that is emailed to 100 different job ports in the five counties. DLLR is also coordinating with Delaware regarding job opportunities. Mr. Prossner indicated there is a lot of hiring taking place at this time.

**Craig Wanner, Manufacturing:** indicated he would like guidance as to what reports he needs to present to the EDC meetings. Mr. Wanner reported that The Whalen Company is busy, nationally and internationally, and sees many opportunities for expansion and development.

**Jacqueline Wilson, Small Business:** No report.

**Laura Heikes, Shore United Bank:** No report.

**Scott Warner, Mid Shore Regional Council (MSRC):** provided updates on the Rural Maryland Prosperity Fund and the Maryland Economic Development Assistance Authority Fund. The MSRC is investing in a few different programs; one is Shore Gourmet, in partnership with the Chesapeake Culinary School; The Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC), with an Agricultural GIS Extension Program to help small farmers; and a Health Data Dashboard will be created in partnership with ESRGC. Pin Oak had a dinner meeting this summer, working with Mike Thielke, Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center. Four entrepreneurs from the region presented to investors, a total of 29 people were in attendance some from as far away as Pennsylvania.

**Debbie Bowden, Maryland Department of Commerce:** reported that she and her office are available to assist Talbot County with the absence of their Economic Development Director. Ms. Bowden announced the return of the Maryland Business Works Program, which provides training funds that can be used to upgrade the skills of current employees while creating opportunities for new hires in in-demand occupations and skills. Ms. Bowden also called attention to the Export Maryland Grant, which helps to offset some of the costs of marketing internationally for Maryland's small and mid-sized companies.

**Jennifer Shull, Town of Trappe:** reported the Town of Trappe has issued two permits in July for the construction of new homes. The Town of Trappe received a \$100,000 grant from the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for Nace's Park on Main Street, dedicated to Nace Hopkins. The Pascal Family Group is going to reopen Pizza Co., serving pizza and tapas. The Community Outreach Group in Trappe is sponsoring a free concert this Saturday at Veterans Park on Main Street. Spark in the Pan will play from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Ms. Shull reported Maurice Evens is working on the Best Fest event, for kids, by kids, which is scheduled on September 24<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the Olde Trappe Park on Main Street.

**Tim Jones, Chesapeake College:** Chesapeake College hired a new Vice President for Academic Affairs, Clay Railey. Dr. Railey will be focused on expanding workforce training and career technology education. Classes at the College begin in two weeks. Chesapeake College is working to expand their Online Courses. Chesapeake College's solar project is operational. Chesapeake College will be partnering with PEPCO to arrange a demand reduction software demonstration. PEPCO also introduced A.F. Mensah, to provide battery storage; Chesapeake will have a micro-grid on campus. Chesapeake College has partnered with MidShore Riverkeepers, they will be doing improvements around campus regarding watershed.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Vice Chairman, Silverstein motioned to adjourn, Ms. Wilson seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 9:25 a.m.

**Next Economic Development Commission Meeting:**

**September 1<sup>st</sup>,** Talbot County Government Offices, 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton, Conference Room 1.