

**Talbot County Economic Development Commission (EDC) Meeting**  
**Talbot County Free Library, 100 West Dover Street, Easton MD 21601**  
**June 2, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman, Timothy G. Jones; Vice Chairman, Al Silverstein; Paul Makosky; Jean Weisman; Andrea Lev; Gerald O'Mara, Jacqueline Wilson; Peter Dunbar, Ron Engle, Craig Wanner and Walter Chase

**Members Excused:** Ted Bautz and Scott Beatty

**Ex Officio Members Present:** R. Andrew Hollis, Jennifer Williams, Mike Henry, Cassandra Vanhooser and Terenda Thomas

**Attendees:** Jennifer Shull, Laura Heikes, Debbie Bowden, Scott Warner, Kelly Simonsen and Tracy Ward

**Guest Speaker:** The Honorable Jake R. Day, Mayor of the City of Salisbury provided a summary of plans for the redevelopment of Salisbury and a new era of investment in youth, neighborhoods and the downtown economy. He referred to the importance of a strategic plan in guiding the development process and identifying priorities for investment over time. Accomplishments to date include the relocation of Salisbury University offices and classrooms to Main Street and collaboration with the university to offer the crew team a boathouse and base of operation on the river to attract university competition. Mayor Day identified several parking lots, formerly owned by the Town of Salisbury and recently sold for mixed-use development. The Mayor served as the former Director of the Center for Towns, under the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. As Mayor, he reports to the Commission on all current and ongoing revitalization plans and projects in the City of Salisbury.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, with a quorum, at 8:40 a.m. Chairman Jones introduced the newest member to the EDC, Craig Wanner, Chief Operating Officer at The Whalen Company. Mr. Wanner reported The Whalen Company purchased the building across the street from their current location on Glebe Park Drive, which will be renovated to accommodate an expansion in retrofitting aging heat exchange units. The Whalen Company is exploring areas to open a new facility as well, which in five to ten years will become as large as The Whalen Company is now. The Whalen Company presently employs 110 people. Chairman Jones outlined how Chesapeake College is working with employers with the challenge of hiring qualified people.

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

**Business Environment Committee (BEC):** In Mr. Bautz' absence, the director reported that the committee met on May 24<sup>th</sup> and reviewed ongoing projects, including Don Richardson's report that the town of Easton is working on 120 different permitted projects. The BEC continues to identify where improvements need to be made in the permits and expansion process to ensure efficiency and communication between departments, utilities, businesses and the development community.

**Communications Committee (CC):** Chair Vanhooser reported the CC met on May 17<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the results from the media coverage of the Business Appreciation Breakfast on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The consensus was that the breakfast received good coverage regarding the businesses and the message regarding the impact of "economic development" in Talbot County with the recognition of large projects and accomplishments. Kimberly Weller will be drafting a press release regarding the appointment of the two new members to the EDC.

**Correspondence:** The director reported the OED notified the County Manager's office regarding the technicality of the two new members' terms. They have just been appointed to the EDC yet their terms expire in June because they replaced Mr. Oxnam and Mr. Loran. Additionally, there are EDC members who have not been attending meetings nor have they provided notice; the director would like to draft letters to those members regarding their decision for future participation on the EDC.

**Action Items:** The director reported the OED has been approached by the Office of Tourism to support their **golf tournament** by partnering with them for the event. There is an opportunity for the offices of tourism and economic development to combine forces and interact with the entire business community. Ms. Vanhooser reported the tournament is scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>. Vice Chairman Silverstein reported the tourism golf tournament does not conflict with the Chamber's golf tournament. Vice Chairman Silverstein made a motion that the EDC join with the Tourism Board to host the golf tournament on October 11<sup>th</sup>; Mr. Chase seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Strategic Plan Recommendations to County Council:** Chairman Jones reported that a timeline for updating the strategic plan, and presenting before County Council, was provided to the EDC members. Chairman Jones reviewed the process with the EDC and opened the meeting for general discussion. The original strategic plan was completed in 2013. The director reported a summary has been prepared that will be forwarded to the EDC members for review and input. The three recommendations were to adopt business friendly initiatives; aggressive pursuit of target industries for retention and attraction by creating resources for economic development; and, a pragmatic approach to the property tax credit for commercial and industrial businesses. After the EDC's general discussion, Chairman Jones requested a motion to present the request for an updated strategic plan to the County Council for their review and input. Mr. Makosky made the motion, Ron Engle seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The director reported the next Quarterly Update to the County Council is scheduled on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Jones requested the EDC members forward any additional comments regarding the strategic plan to him and the director, to add to the agenda for the Quarterly Update to the County Council.

**Business Retention Report:** The director reported the OED continues to monitor the closure at Allen Harim in Cordova. The last day of production has been moved up to June 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. McDermott and Ms. Mackey, from the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), are still actively assisting Allen Harim employees. The final data regarding employment status will be available from Allen Harim after the closure scheduled for July 08, 2016. The director met with the new Marketing and Communications Manager of Easton Utilities, Kelly Simonsen; and, with Craig Wanner, COO of The Whalen Company, in addition to several business communications. The OED has

been advised by the Planning Department of an interested aquaculture investment in Tilghman Island. The OED continues to monitor two local expansions. Avon Dixon is breaking ground at Talbot Commerce Park.

**Director's Report:** The director reported the OED's FY 17 budget was approved. A moderate amount, adjusted for marketing, provided for a total budget with a slight increase to operations for a total of \$56,626. A work session to discuss a proposal for Brownfields legislation with the County Council was held on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The Office of Law provided legislation and information. The County Council deliberated on whether they wanted to add a real property tax credit for Brownfields development as an incentive. Ms. Williams reported that the County Council was interested in Brownfields and would like additional and specific information on various parcels that may be impacted. The director reported an outline of the Brownfields program would be provided to the towns, for their review and discussion, at the Incorporated Towns Meeting with the council, scheduled on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in the Easton Library. The Council made no decision on adopting Brownfields legislation until after their meeting with the towns. Mr. Henry, General Manager, Easton Airport, arranged for a tour of the Sussex Delaware Airport and a meeting with their Tourism and Economic Development Offices. Ms. Vanhooser and the director toured the airport and visited a manufacturer that refurbishes luxury jets at the airport. The OED toured the PNC building in St. Michaels where condominiums are being leased and sold. The director attended the Maryland Capital Enterprise "Women in Business" Conference in Salisbury, which was well attended. The Federal Lab Consortium had its second forum at Washington College on the subject of Mapping, Sensors and Images. The director attended the Talbot County Public Schools' Business Appreciation Breakfast and noted it was wonderful to see how many businesses collaborate with the TCPS.

**Chairman's Report:** No additional report. Due to the limited amount of time reserved in the library's meeting room, Chairman Jones asked the members if they had anything urgent to report, if not the EDC meeting would adjourn.

**Town & Member Reports:** Mr. Makosky reported he had a copy of the 2013 report generated from the Land Use Sub Committee. This report could be reviewed for accuracy in today's business climate and updated accordingly. The director indicated she would work with Talbot County GIS Manager, Mark Cohoon, to update the existing study of land use to be included in the revised strategic plan.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Vice Chair Silverstein motioned to adjourn, Mr. Makosky seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 9:30 a.m.

#### **Upcoming Economic Development Commission Meetings:**

**No Meeting in July; August 4<sup>th</sup>,** Talbot County Government Offices, 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton, Conference Room 1.  
September 01, Trappe, tbd; October 06, St. Michaels, tbd; November 03, Oxford, tbd; December 01, Easton, tbd