

## Washington County Economic Development Commission

### Regular Commission Meeting April 10, 2014

The regular meeting of the Washington County Economic Development Commission (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Room 225. The following members were present: Dan Pheil (Chair), Paul Crampton (Vice Chair), Jef Bohn (Secretary), Hugh Breslin, Ed Lough, Stu Mullendore, Janet Stiles Fulton, and Pete Thomas. Those absent from the meeting included Ryan Daughtridge, Robert Jeffers, Kate Rader, and Wade Watson.

Ex-Officio members attending were Terry Baker and William McKinley, Commissioners for Washington County; Kristin Aleshire and Donald Munson, Council Members for the City of Hagerstown; Jill Frick, Economic Development Manager for the City of Hagerstown; Sandy Mehalko, Regional Director for the Small Business Technology & Development Center (SBTDC); Julie Rohm, General Manager of the Valley Mall; and Greg Snook, President for the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation, Inc. Also in attendance were Tabitha Porterfield, Marketing Specialist for Washington County Public Relations and Community Affairs; Sarah Sprecher, Assistant County Administrator for Washington County; Vickie Swink, Western Region Representative for the MD Department of Business & Economic Development; and Washington County Department of Business Development staff Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley, and Linda Spence.

*Call to Order* – The meeting was called to order by Dan Pheil.

*Approval of the Order of Business* – Paul Crampton made a motion to approve the Order of Business for April 10, 2014. The motion was seconded by Stu Mullendore and approved unanimously.

*Approval of Minutes* – Pete Thomas motioned to approve the meeting minutes of March 13, 2014 as presented, the motion was seconded by Janet Stiles Fulton and approved unanimously.

*Elected Officials' Comments* – Commissioner Baker announced the Technical High School's student trades will begin building their 21<sup>st</sup> student-built home. The 2,800 sf home will be built on Maugans Avenue, next to the Sprint store and ready for sale in the next school year. Council Member Munson noted the City is moving forward with Urban Partners' recommendation for 8 catalytic projects/programs for further study. He stated the City of Hagerstown is looking at possible zoning ordinance changes to help curb loitering and excessive noise in City Center. Commissioner McKinley commented on a radio commercial he recently heard regarding Sun Air and the Hagerstown Regional Airport. He stated the Airport Commission restructured itself increasing the number of board members by two. This change will allow them to develop working committees similar to that of the EDC board, and devote more time to work on moving the Airport Marketing Plan forward, as well as other projects. Commissioner McKinley reported Standard & Poors (S&P) increased the County's bond rating to AA+, which speaks volumes to the County's ability to manage debt and be great fiscal stewards of tax payer's money. Sarah Sprecher explained S&Ps' decision to upgrade the County's bond rating is as a direct result from the current Board of County Commissioners' ability to reduce the County's debt by \$1.5M more than the previous BOCC had done. Commissioner McKinley noted the BOCC is working to address public concern on the location of a methadone clinic in the Williamsport area. He announced the BOCC recently approved a full funding request from the Washington County Fire & Rescue Association. Council Member Munson reported the City of Hagerstown has yet to settle its contract negotiations with the City fire union. Council Member Aleshire explained he opposed the City Council's decision to raise property taxes by \$.11 per \$100 assessed value; and he did not agree with all 8 project recommendations presented by Urban Partners.

*Executive Committee* – Dan Pheil noted the EDC Ordinance does not include a provision on electronic voting as a means to conduct business. Committee members felt a special provision was not necessary because staff has the ability to send documents via email with voting capability if necessary. He reminded board members the

Greater Hagerstown Committee is making an informational presentation to EDC board members on April 23 at 7:30 a.m. regarding their proposal to fund continuing education at HCC for all new graduating high school students. Mr. Pheil noted the final Top Five Strategic Priorities draft has been completed and under County staff review, and will be presented to the May board meeting.

*Ag Marketing Advisory Committee* – Janet Stiles Fulton explained that due to current weather conditions, farmers are having difficulty growing their hay and small grain silage. She commented on the continuing controversy surrounding raw versus pasteurized milk usage. WOO HOO...Leslie Hart reported Farmers Markets will be cropping up in the next 45 days, and the number of equine farms in Washington County is increasing. Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22 with a kick-off event at Bester Elementary School. A new mobile trailer dedicated to agriculture will be on hand to help educate school children. Ms. Hart reminded members the South Mountain Spring Festival will be held April 26-27. Commissioner McKinley noted more than 3,600 acres of farm land has been approved for permanent agriculture preservation. Stu Mullendore stated Shenandoah Family Farms (SFF), located in the former Unilever facility, has reached 200 customers and will soon begin producing ice cream and ice cream products. Janet Stiles Fulton commented that none of the milk bottled or used to make ice cream at SFF are from local farms. All of their milk comes from Virginia-based farms.

*City Center Committee* – Ed Lough informed members the City Center Report, as part of the Top 5 Strategic Priorities has been finalized and is under County staff review.

*Infrastructure and Site Development Committee* – Paul Crampton reported the committee has been placed on hold until a need presents itself in the future. Dan Pheil noted a recent Outreach visit to Dynamark Monitoring (Atlantic Security Systems) revealed a concern in the availability of last-mile broadband to their Northern Avenue location. Stu Mullendore stated the County has an opportunity to bring a powerful new broadband network to the community and is in communication with the provider. He noted Washington County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the State for having the most broadband. Sandy Mehalko encouraged participation in Tri-County Council for Western MD's survey being conducted as part of a Regional Economic Development Study. The study seeks to understand your views on the opportunities and threats associated with the region's economic growth and development.

*Marketing & Public Relations Committee* – Stu Mullendore reiterated the final Top Five Strategic Priorities draft is under County staff review.

*Small Business Development Committee* – Jef Bohn, on behalf of Kate Rader, reported the committee recently developed a needs matrix addressing industry sectors indicating needs for expansion or relocation in Washington County. The matrix was based on recommendations outlined in the Strategic Economic Development Plan.

*Workforce Development Committee* – Pete Thomas stated members were involved in assisting Volvo Group Trucks and Hagerstown Community College in developing and submitting an EARN Grant application. He encouraged members to attend the Board of Education's Open House and tour of their new central office facility, located in the former Potomac Edison building on April 25 at 9:00 a.m.

*Celebration of Business Taskforce* – Hugh Breslin reported the Celebration of Business event is coming up next Tuesday, April 15 at Fountain Head Country Club. Members who have not already RSVPd should let Carmen Harbaugh know following the meeting. He requested EDC board members arrive at 5:30 p.m. to assist greeting our guests.

*Old Business* – Dan Pheil reminded the group the annual Business Development Update at Eggs and Issues will take place on May 7.

*New Business* – Dan Pheil noted the Maryland Economic Developers Association’s (MEDA) Annual Conference is being held April 27-29 in Cambridge, MD. Greg Murray, Sarah Sprecher and DBD staff, Leslie Hart and Linda Spence will attend.

*Closed Session* – Jef Bohn motioned to go into Closed Session to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State in accordance with Section 10-508 of the Maryland State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The motion was seconded by Hugh Breslin. Hearing no discussion the motion to go into Closed Session was approved by unanimous vote.

*Open Session* – On a motion made by Ed Lough to return to Open Session and seconded by Stu Mullendore, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Kristin Aleshire, Terry Baker, Jef Bohn, Hugh Breslin, Paul Crampton, Jill Frick, Ed Lough, Bill McKinley, Sandy Mehalko, Stuart Mullendore, Donald Munson, Dan Pheil, Tabitha Porterfield, Julie Rohm, Greg Snook, Sarah Sprecher, Janet Stiles Fulton, Pete Thomas, Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley and Linda Spence.

*Adjournment* – Ed Lough made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Paul Crampton. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Linda Spence  
Recording Clerk for the EDC