

## Washington County Economic Development Commission

### Regular Commission Meeting March 13, 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), Jef Bohn (Secretary), Hugh Breslin, Ryan Daughtridge, Bob Jeffers, Ed Lough, Stu Mullendore, Kate Rader, Janet Stiles Fulton, Pete Thomas, and Wade Watson. Paul Crampton was excused from the meeting.

Ex-Officio members attending were Kristin Aleshire and Donald Munson, Council Members for the City of Hagerstown; Jill Frick, Economic Development Manager for the City of Hagerstown; Julie Rohm, General Manager of the Valley Mall; Greg Snook, President for the Hagerstown/Washington County Industrial Foundation, Inc. Also attending were Jeff Cline, Commissioner for Washington County; Greg Murray, Administrator for Washington County; Sarah Sprecher, Assistant County Administrator for Washington County; Tabitha Porterfield, Marketing Specialist for Washington County Public Relations and Community Affairs; 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* – Pete Thomas made a motion to approve the Order of Business for January 9, 20 14. The motion was seconded by Janet Stiles Fulton and approved unanimously.

*Approval of Minutes* – Pete Thomas motioned to approve the meeting minutes of January 14, 2014 as presented, the motion was seconded by Bob Jeffers and approved unanimously.

*Elected Officials' Comments* – Commissioner Cline expressed appreciation to EDC board members on their economic development efforts for Washington County. Council Members Munson and Aleshire commented on the City's Crime Free Ordinance and on a request by the Hagerstown Suns to extend the current stadium lease through 2015. Council Member Aleshire explained he is interested in resolving issues surrounding the MELP building; and noted preliminary budget discussions indicate the City is facing an 8% deficit (\$3M+) and appears they may be forced to raise taxes to balance the budget.

*Executive Committee* – During a discussion about changes being implemented to the EDC Ordinance, Dan Pheil reported members of the Executive Committee unanimously approved a proposal to reduce the number of Chamber, Greater Hagerstown Committee, and City of Hagerstown representatives on the EDC Board. *Jef Bohn made a motion to incorporate a change in the EDC Ordinance reducing the number of organizational representatives for the Chamber, Greater Hagerstown Committee and City of Hagerstown to one each, converting the second position to an At Large position based on need defined by the Skills Matrix. The motion was seconded by Stu Mullendore.* Discussion regarding whether or not the City of Hagerstown should continue to have two voting members and specific designation of an agriculture representative on the EDC Board ensued. *Jef Bohn and Stu Mullendore withdrew their motion and second respectively. Kate Rader made a motion to approve reducing the number of organizational representatives for the Chamber and Greater Hagerstown Committee to one each, while the City of Hagerstown maintains two representatives on the EDC Board. Bob Jeffers seconded the motion. Stu Mullendore called for a roll-call vote; Nays included Stu Mullendore, Wade Watson, Ed Lough, Janet Stiles Fulton, Dan Pheil, and Hugh Breslin; and Yeses included Pete Thomas, Bob Jeffers, Jef Bohn, Kate Rader, and Ryan Daughtridge.* The vote tally was Nays 6, Yeses 5, the motion was defeated therefore, the EDC Ordinance as it pertains to membership make up will not be changed as a result of EDC Board action noting the Board of County Commissioners have authority to make changes at their discretion. Mr. Pheil explained a national search for a Business Development Director utilizing economic development agency advertising outlets did not produce the results intended; therefore a new search has been

initiated concentrating in the Washington/Baltimore and Philadelphia areas.

*Ag Marketing Advisory Committee* – Leslie Hart reported the dairy industry is at odds regarding pasteurized milk versus raw milk. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns that consuming raw milk and its byproducts can be hazardous to your health and in some cases cause death. The FDA also notes there has not been any scientific evidence to substantiate a claim otherwise. Ms. Hart announced five new farms have begun operations in Washington County since January 2014. She noted legislators are discussing various agriculture-related items this session, including: medical marijuana growth; a Farm Bill supporting a feeding program for low income households; nutrient management; minimum wage; Sunday hunting; Bow hunting, Carry and Handgun; and Farm Tire Recycling in Washington County. She announced the Ag Expo Sneak Peak Preview at the Valley Mall will be held March 14-16, and Shenandoah Family Farms is holding a Press Conference and product launch event on March 18.

*City Center Committee* – Ed Lough informed members the City Center Report, as part of the Top 5 Strategic Priorities, is being finalized. He has decided to add two more projects for consideration; the Marsh Run Project; and an indoor sports/aquatic center to be located on the Summit Avenue site formerly proposed for the stadium project.

*Infrastructure and Site Development Committee* – Bob Mandley stated the committee will decide its future direction at a meeting next month.

*Marketing & Public Relations Committee* – Stu Mullendore stated a draft of the final Top 5 Strategic Priorities Report will be presented within the next two weeks and to the Board of County Commissioners thereafter. He inquired if the County is interested in pursuing legislature to create an Investment Zone program that would benefit Washington County. Greg Murray explained interest is there but time did not allow for adequate research and support this year and plans are to look into the program in the coming year.

*Small Business Development Committee* – Nothing to report.

*Workforce Development Committee* – Bob Jeffers reported the joint EARN grant application between Montgomery County College, Community College of Baltimore and HCC is progressing and is due by the end of March. DBED is working with Volvo on an EARN Grant application for a maintenance mechanic training program, application is also due by the end of March. Pete Thomas announced the Western MD Consortium recently completed an on-the-job contract with Duvinage, who plan to hire 12 additional workers in the near future. Southern Ionics has also been in contact with the Consortium regarding a similar training contract. Stu Mullendore stated HCC is searching for a new place to house their truck driver training program. He suggested the committee explore options to apply for an EARN grant to study the feasibility of developing a hospitality college in the downtown area. Mr. Jeffers suggested the EDC board meet with members of the Greater Hagerstown Committee to review their proposal for a college scholarship program.

*Celebration of Business Taskforce* – Hugh Breslin reported save-the-date postcards have been mailed, sponsorship is up this year, the keynote speaker is Kay Stimson, Director of Communications & Special Projects for the National Association of Secretaries of State (Julianna Albowicz's daughter), and formal invitations will be mailed in the coming week. The event will be held on April 15, 2014 at Fountain Head Country Club.

*Old Business* – Bob Mandley noted the County sent a letter of support on behalf of National Golden Tissue's application to receive Community Development Block Grant funds. Dan Pheil commented on a very successful Washington County Business Awards event. He explained there has been discussion on how best to determine Washington County's job loss and how to improve perceived shortcomings, noting 12% of the employees laid off from Manitowoc in Pennsylvania were Washington County residents.

*New Business* – Dan Pheil explained the annual Business Development Update at *Eggs and Issues* will be held May 7, and the Agriculture Update will be held July 9. Linda Spence announced the *2014 Business & Industry*

*Directory* has been published and is ready for distribution. Greg Snook stated CHIEF provided the City of Hagerstown with an endowment of \$25,000 last year to assist in bringing Wi-Fi to the downtown, and they are accepting recommendations to provide funding for a similar project this year.

*Closed Session – Bob Jeffers 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 Jef Bohn. 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 Bob Jeffers, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Kristin Aleshire, Jef Bohn, Hugh Breslin, Ryan Daughtridge, Jill Frick, Bob Jeffers, Ed Lough, Stuart Mullendore, Donald Munson, Greg Murray, Dan Pheil, Tabitha Porterfield, Kate Rader, Julie Rohm, Greg Snook, Sarah Sprecher, Janet Stiles Fulton, Pete Thomas, Wade Watson, Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Mandley and Linda Spence.*

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

Linda Spence  
Recording Clerk for the EDC