

MEETING MINUTES
June 17, 2008
(Revised December 31, 2008)
Old Northumberland Courthouse
Heathsville

Welcome: Call to Order.

Chairman Lee Allain called the May 20th meeting of the Northumberland County Economic Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were: William Kling, Vice Chairman/District II, Kathleen M. Hanley, Secretary; C. Bruce Andrews/District V; John A. Hendrickson/District IV; Melissa Bunns, District III; and Joseph Madej, Executive Director..

Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the May 20, 2008 meetings were approved as mailed. Motion by Hendrickson. Second by Hanley. Unanimous acceptance.

Executive Directors Report:

- Project Progress
 - Mid-Bay Marine Center
 - The Commission will continue to support the oyster hatchery project. Presently oyster hatchery capacity is limiting the availability of “spat”. A hatchery study is underway to determine the feasibility of an additional hatchery to be located in the Northern Neck.
 - Incorporation papers have been submitted to Virginia State Corporation Commission. Application was to be made to the IRS for 501(C) 3 status. Dr. Greg Haugan will be asked for an opinion on how to close this project.
 - T-SYSTEMS corp.
 - A loan has been denied by the Bank of Lancaster, The Bank of Essex, Sona Bank and Wells Fargo Bank. The Commission has asked the Va. Economic Development Partnership for help in finding a source for a loan or a partner.
 - George Thompson attended the meeting to ask The Economic Development Commission for additional help in obtaining a loan, cosigner or partner. The Commission will continue attempting to help and recommended that George contact Joe Curry.
- New Business / Project Opportunities
 - Farmer’s Market Pavilion: Carol Seymour expects this request will be approved imminently. Judy Mooers (spinning, knitting & weaving) will help recruit Myrtle Phillips, also a spinner, knitter & weaver, to help recruit African/American vendors and customers.
 - Opportunity exists to produce fish food in Northumberland County, but must be “organic”.
 - With the success of Bluff Point Road Fish Farm, the opportunity exists for others to enter the business of growing fish.
 - Fish grown on Bluff Point Road are to be processed in Richmond. The opportunity for local fish processing exists.
 - The video dealing with the economic development aspects of historic preservation is being passed around to members of the Commission.
- Local Business Contacts / Support
 - Fish Farm: The fish farm will begin supplying three types of fish labeled “organically grown in the Northern Neck”. The Kelly Seafood facility will be considered as a site for processing fish before shipment to Richmond.
 - Visit to Business: “Old Dominion Soap Company” & “Signs by the Shore”
 - Request to rezone 1.2 acre parcel in Glebe Point from Business to Residential:
 - The Board of Supervisors denied the request 5-0.

- The Economic Development Commission wrote a letter explaining that a hotel/restaurant is more economically beneficial to the County than 28 condominiums.
- Citizen Joe Madej opined that a market for condominiums does not exist in the Northern Neck based on the projects at Windmill Point and Branson Cove.
- Local Artists' Reception: Exhibit of fabric art by Sally Vinroot and Barbara Shine. They will be delighted to be part of the new Farmers Market and to help recruit others.
- Liaison Highlights:
 - The Quarterly Report of the Economic Development Commission's was delivered to the Board of Supervisors on June 12, 2008.
 - The Birthing Center broke ground in Lancaster County on June 8th.
 - The Farm Museum opened on May 24th. Open Sundays from 1 to 4 and every third Saturday 10 to 2.
 - The Public Budget meeting was held on May 29th. A \$.04 tax increase was advertised.
 - A letter supporting John H. Lee's request for a Conditional Use Permit was sent to the Board of Supervisors by the Economic Development Commission. In addition Commissioner Hendrickson interceded for Mr. Lee at the Board of Supervisors meeting.
 - A letter of support for the formation of a coalition of business has been written and forwarded to David Fine. The coalition would reevaluate the feasibility for a container ferry operating from Reedville to the eastern shore.
- Metrics Highlights
 - Employment: Northumberland County's April unemployment rate of 5.4% is shown on the included chart of unemployment data from April 2007 to April 2008. Also shown is the average for Virginia (3.3%) and the United States (4.8%). Northumberland County's unemployment rate for April 2008(5.4%) was higher than April 2007(4.5) but lower than the rate for March 2008(6.8%).
 - Building Permits: Included in the portfolio is a summary which tabulates the number of homes permitted and construction costs for the month of May and Year-to-Date. For May 2008, the number of homes (9) is less than the number of homes (11) permitted a year ago. The estimated value of these 9 homes is \$4.7 million; the estimated value of the 11 for May 2007 was \$4.7 million. The estimated cost year-to-date is \$24.4 million versus \$28.8 million a year ago.
- News Articles
 - "Future of oystering in Va. may lie with private sector" Richmond Times-Dispatch 6/16/08. Sales of aquaculture-grown oysters: 2005- 843,842; 2006-3,145,282; 2007-4,800,000.
- Progress of Year 2008 Annual Objectives:
 - Mid-Bay Marine Center: Project to be closed
 - Sewer system grant: Fairport grant not approved. Heathsville system to be considered.
 - First grant: Farmers Market Pavilion grant approval imminent
 - Hotel: Needs discussion with County Executive.
 - Commission Web Page: Page established but needs improvement.
 - Community event: Considering financial literacy or fish farming.
- Upcoming Activities
 - 6/19 Northumberland County Planning Commission monthly meeting
 - 6/23 Opening ceremony for VECTECH office in Planning District Commission Office Complex
 - 6/23 Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership quarterly meeting & tour of M-TEQ
 - 6/26 Westmoreland Medical Center Advisory Committee

7/7 Vision 2048 "Better Models for Development" Committee monthly meeting
7/10 Board of Supervisors monthly meeting

Ambassador Program Report

Prior to the meeting Susan Christopher reported to the Executive Director that she placed 200 brochures in the Hilton Hotel in Alexandria. Also that she had refreshed supplies in George Washington Birthplace and "Back in Time" bed n breakfast.

Commissioners' Reports

Andrews: Progress is continuing at the cabinet shop in Burgess.

Bunns: The Commission should award a plaque to Tanya Creasy. The Executive Director will investigate.

Hanley: Will keep the Commission informed on progress at the Fish Farm.

Public Comments:

George Thompson of T-SYSTEMS asked the Commission for additional help in obtaining a loan, cosigner or partner.

Adjournment: 9:20 pm

Next Meeting: July 15, 2008

Minutes recorded by: Joseph J. Madej, Executive Director