

MEETING MINUTES
May 20, 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; John A. Hendrickson/District IV; Melissa Bunns, District III; Susan Christopher, Ambassador; Kenneth Eades, County Administrator and Joseph Madej, Executive Director. Also present was guest David Fine.

Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the April 15, 2008 meetings were approved as mailed.

Executive Directors Report:

- Project Progress
 - Mid-Bay Marine Center
 - The results of the meeting held at VIMS were reported by Chairman Allain. The Commission did not receive support from VIMS. Without support from VIMS the project cannot continue.
 - The Commission will continue to support development of an oyster hatchery(s) located in Northumberland County.
 - U.S. Senator Jim Webb's office forwarded a notice about a private grant program by AT&T. The grant payouts range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and for retaining at risk students in high school. This activity is not within the Goals and Objectives of the Commission.
 - A recent article in the Chesapeake Bay Magazine recommended that a different approach to cleaning-up the bay is needed because the existing approach isn't working.
 - T-SYSTEMS corp.
 - Loan requests have been denied by the Bank of Lancaster, Bank of Essex and Wells Fargo Bank. Loan requests will be made to other banks for a home equity loan.
 - The Economic Development Commission has asked its members to help find a private investor.
 - New Business / Project Opportunities
 - The Commission has applied for a grant to erect a farmer's market pavilion. The County's grant writer, Carol Seymour expects this request will be approved shortly. She is concerned that we will have no African/American vendors or customers and will be viewed as not meeting the grant criteria. An email was written to Carol explaining that at the appropriate time The Commission will take steps to comply with the grant criteria.
 - Local Business Contacts / Support
 - Visit to Business: "R. W.'s Sport Shop" & "Bay Landscaping"
 - Request to rezone 1.2 acre parcel in Glebe Point from Business to Residential:
 - The Executive Director wrote a letter to the Planning Commission explaining that a hotel/restaurant is more economically beneficial to the County than 28 condominiums. The planning Commission voted to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the rezoning request. The rezoning request will be considered by the Board of Supervisors on June 12th. The executive Director was instructed to write a similar letter to the Board of Supervisors but to have it reviewed by all Commissioners before finalizing.

- Liaison Highlights
 - Delegate Albert Pollard presented the formula for calculating Northumberland's Composite Index for funding public education at a meeting on Tuesday May 13. The charts presented at that meeting were reviewed.
 - Delegate Albert Pollard presented to the Va. Waterman's Association a report which identified the percentage of pollution caused by each type of polluter. Number 1 is agriculture. The three saturation areas are: Eastern shore-poultry litter, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania-pig farms and Shenandoah Valley-dairy cattle.
 - The Three Rivers Health District has begun the processes of assessing the health needs of Northumberland County as well as all the other counties in the Three Rivers Health District. The first meeting was held on May 17 and was attended by the Executive Director.
 - The executive Director wrote a letter of support for the Adult Education Center under the letterhead of the Economic Development Commission.
- Metrics Highlights
 - Employment: Northumberland County's March unemployment rate of 6.8% is shown on the included chart of unemployment data from March 2007 to March 2008. Also shown is the average for Virginia (3.9%) and the United States (5.2%). Northumberland County's unemployment rate for March 2008(6.8%) was higher than March 2007(5.7) but lower than the rate for February 2008(7.7%).
 - Building Permits: Included in the portfolio is a summary which tabulates the number of homes permitted and construction costs for the month of April and Year-to-Date. For April 2008, the number of homes (12) is less than the number of homes (16) permitted a year ago. The estimated value of these 12 homes is \$5.1 million; the estimated value of the 16 for April 2007 was \$4.7 million. The estimated cost year-to-date is \$19.7 million versus \$24 million a year ago. Note one of these homes is 8242 square feet and another is 9207 square feet.
- Progress of Annual Objectives
 - An Economic Development Commission web page has been established as part of the County's web site. The Commission recommended adding 9 pages of Community Profile, 12 months of Meeting Minutes, contact information for each commissioner, instructions for contacting the Commission, information on starting a business courses, the brochure, the Commission's Mission statement and links to the Employment Commission and the Planning Districting Commission.
- News Articles
 - An update of the Economic Development Commission article for the 2008 edition of the Chamber of Commerce Guide was not submitted in time to make The Guide's deadline.
- Disclosure: The Executive Director's property was visited by Department of Environmental Quality in response to a complaint. They recommended obtaining advice from The Soil and Water Conservation District on erosion control which was obtained and followed.
- Upcoming Activities
 - 5/24 Farm Museum opening ceremonies
 - 5/29 Public meeting Northumberland County Budget
 - 6/2 Vision 2048 "Better Models for Development" Committee monthly meeting
 - 6/10 Employment Commission workforce development meeting
 - 6/12 Board of Supervisors monthly meeting & EDC quarterly report
 - 6/12 Va Economic Development Partnership Allies semi-annual meeting
 - 6/19 Northumberland County Planning Commission monthly meeting
 - 6/23 Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership quarterly meeting & tour of M-TEQ

Ambassador Program Report

- Keeping brochures supplied to existing locations
- Discussed Kid's Financial Literacy program with new extension agent Kathleen Watson.
- Collected for 1st.Baptist Church Day Care; books, folders, paper & pencils

Commissioners' Comments:

Bunns: Mid year is time to check progress against annual goals.

Hendrickson: Requests support letter to Board of Supervisors for John Lee of Wicomico Church. Motion passed. Four in favor. Executive Director will write and get reviewed by all Commissioners before sending.

Kling: 4 waterman's associations are working together and with CBF to clean-up the bay.

County Administrator's Comments:

- A VECTECH satellite office will be located in the Planning District Commission Office.
- Verizon broadband will be available everywhere Verizon cell service is available by 6/30.

Public Comments

David Fine asked for The Economic Development Commission to write a letter supporting his efforts to form a collation of local companies to reevaluate a mid-bay container transportation system. A motion in favor of such a letter passed.

Adjournment 9:05

Next Meeting: June 17, 2008

Minutes recorded by: Joseph J. Madej, Executive Director