

MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2008
Old Northumberland Courthouse
Heathsville

Welcome: Call to Order.

Chairman Lee Allain called the October 21st 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; Susan Christopher, Ambassador; and Joseph Madej, Executive Director. Also present was visitor Ron Herring, Owner of The Home Crafters, located in Wicomico Church.

Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the September 16, 2008 meetings were approved as revised. Motion, Kling: Second, Hanley. Vote unanimous.

Executive Directors Report:

- Project Progress
 - Mid-Bay Marine Center
 - It was agreed that this item no longer warrants discussion at the Commission meetings.
 - T-SYSTEMS corp.
 - T-SYSTEMS has not obtained any additional loans, but is manufacturing and shipping some product.
 - The Commission received a mailing from Richmond Economic Development Corporation advising that loans are available but for purchases of real estate or equipment. T-SYSTEMS was informed.
 - T-SYSTEMS was emailed information about an ad in the October 15th Echo that an investor is interested in buying a business.
- New Business / Project Opportunities
 - Project Pathfinder: The report developed by Chairman Allain was reviewed and discussed with the intent to define appropriate activities for the Commission. It was concluded that there were no activities which could be accomplished within the scope of the Commission. Motion, Hanley. Second, Bunns. Vote: 4 in favor, 1 in opposition.
 - Northumberland Health Center: The Director, Dr Irungu, of the Three Rivers Health District held a meeting on August 6th to assess the local public health system by discussing the capacity of local agencies, programs and individuals to provide the *Essential Public Health Services*. A report has been compiled and a meeting of the steering committee is to be scheduled within 30 days to identify areas which are high priority but low performance. This assessment phase is expected to be completed by early spring.
 - The video dealing with the economic development aspects of historic preservation still is being passed around to members of the Commission.
- Local Business Contacts / Support
 - Fish Farm: Prior to discussion the Commission went into executive session because items to be discussed are of a confidential nature.
 - Expansion is occurring with the installation of additional ponds/tanks.
 - The Jarvis Point site, mentioned for expansion consideration is reported to have been resold for housing.
 - Vertical integration possibilities are being considered.
 - The Economic Development Commission exited executive session.

- Visit to Business: “Carry-on Trailer” & “Rich’s Place”
- The owners of Dove Cottage were advised that the \$405 application fee was from the Health Department and that they have a mechanism to waive the fee for those who qualify.
- The Planning Commission public hearing agenda for October 23 was reviewed for possible comment by the Economic Development Commission. The Economic Development Commission did not find any items which might warrant comment.
- Liaison Highlights:
 - The Economic Development Commission wrote a letter in support of a grant request by the Northumberland County Historical Society with Northumberland County to renovate the old jail to be used as an information center for the Heathsville Historic District. Prior to finalizing the letter the Executive Director received four email votes for approval from Commissioners.
 - On October 9th the Executive Director reported the quarterly activities to the Board of Supervisors.
 - Several members of the Economic Development Commission participated in the Reality Store project on October 20th for Northumberland’s 9th and 11th students. The participants were Chairman Allain, Vice Chairman Kling, Commissioner Bunns, Ambassador Christopher and Executive Director Madej.
- Metrics Highlights
 - Employment: Northumberland County’s August unemployment rate of 5.6% is shown on the included chart of unemployment data from August 2007 to August 2008. Also shown is the average for Virginia (4.6%) and the United States (6.1%). Northumberland County’s unemployment rate for August 2008(5.6%) was higher than August 2007(3.3) and higher than the rate for July 2008(5.2%).
 - Building Permits: Included in the portfolio is a summary which tabulates the number of homes permitted and construction costs for the month of September and Year-to-Date. For September 2008, the number of homes (12) is more than the number of homes (9) permitted a year ago. The estimated value of these 12 homes is \$5.3 million; the estimated value of the 9 for September 2007 was \$5.2 million. The estimated cost year-to-date is \$48million versus \$58 million a year ago.
- News Articles:
 - An article in the Richmond Times Dispatch reported that Reedville Harbor unloaded more pounds of fish in 2007 than any other harbor in the United States except Dutch Harbor, Alaska.
 - The Economic Development Commission’s awarding of the plaque to Tonya Creasy; Regional Program Manager of the Northern Neck Adult Education Program was published in the Echo.
- Progress of Annual Objectives
 - First Grant: Farmer’s Market Pavilion: The Board of Supervisors approved the operating agreement with the Rice’s Hotel/Hughlett’s Tavern Foundation for the Pavilion at their meeting of 10/9.
 - Web Site: The Economic Development Commission Web site has been completely revised. See www.co.northumberland.va.us click on Government services then Economic Development. Commissioners were encouraged to personally thank Luttrell Tadlock and Dana Wilson for their work on the web page.
 - Sewer System Grant: The feasibility study for a sewer system in Heathsville has been completed.

- Community Events: 1. Big check ceremony with Congressman Rob Wittman. 2. Plaque presentation to Tonya Creasy.
- Hotel: A permit is outstanding for a hotel/restaurant/marina at Glebe Point. Bulkhead and piers have been installed as well as piles to support the hotel/restaurant.
- Upcoming Activities
 - 10/23 Northumberland County Planning Commission monthly meeting
 - 10/27 Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership & Planning District Commission Board meeting
 - 10/30 Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula Telemedicine quarterly meeting
 - 11/19 Northern Neck Migrant and Seasonal Workers Council monthly meeting
 - 11/20 Board of Supervisors monthly meeting

Ambassador Program Report:

Ambassador Christopher will have brochures distributed by volunteer ambassadors at holiday mailings and events.

Commissioners' Reports:

Kling:

1. Agenda for upcoming meeting should be emailed along with the reminders. Motion, Kling. Second, Hendrickson. Vote Unanimous.
2. Northumberland County should make forms to verify septic tank pump-out available.
3. The Northern Neck Migrant and Seasonal Workers Council is reorganizing.

Bunns: Will forward a copy of the sewer feasibility study to all Commissioners for discussion at the November meeting.

Public Comments: The Commission needs to do something about the recent spike in unemployment in the County's home construction portion of the employment force. The Commission should encourage the building of infrastructure such as additional sewer systems.

Chairman's Comments: Reminded that a new slate of officers will need to be elected at the January meeting.

Adjournment: 9:05 pm

Next Meeting: November 18, 2008

Minutes recorded by: Joseph J. Madej, Executive Director