

Northumberland County Economic Development Commission

Meeting: March 19, 2024

6-8 pm

1. The meeting convened at 6:00 PM and was called to order.
2. Roll Call - In attendance were Commissioners: Karen Pica, Melissa Carter, Dan Corder, Maurice Johnson, and Lynn Stuart; and Staff: Robert Bullard, Drew Basye. Charles, H. (Chip) Williams, IV, Board of Supervisor Member, District 5, John Kost, Planning Commission, Cory Rice, Spencer Headley, of Reedville, as part of the EDC Discovery Session. Ms. Pam Hagy, from Heathsville, Virginia attended.
3. Discovery Session – Dr. Pica presented the question to the Northumberland County Watermen, “what is your advice to start a business? If you wanted to expand, what would you need?” The following is a summary of their response:
 - a. Watermen’s business is expensive and costly to get started. Equipment and licensing costs the most.
 - b. Business can be lucrative at times.
 - c. Reedville had 5-6 new crabbers come in within the last 5-6 years, and there is little opportunity to expand because of the limited licensing available.
 - d. Crab License (250 crab pots) – 15-25K license, \$79/yr. \$190/yr. for waterman fee approx. \$1,500- \$3,000 upfront before the season begins.
 - e. The only method to get into this type of business is typically to buy a license from another Waterman.
 - f. VMRC started an apprenticeship program – trying to get the younger generation into the business.
 - g. Advertising – Recommend a branding to the product harvested within the County Waters to convey: “Northumberland County - one of the best places for <type of seafood marketing>.”
 - h. Looking at HB2 program separated from agricultural.
 - i. Blue catfish – farm raising: The challenges for farm raising, or processing seafood within the county would be to have a fulltime FDA inspector onsite, and available workforce to work at a processing site.
4. Agenda Review - The agenda was reviewed and approved.
5. Review of Meeting Notes: The minutes for the EDC’s February 2024 meeting were reviewed by the commissioners. Mr. Corder motioned for approval, Ms. Stuart second the motion and the Commissioners approved the minutes.

6. Strategic Planning. Dr Pica discussed dates to conduct the strategic planning session.
 - A. Set meeting date: 17 April 2024, 5-7 PM
 - B. Action items – Provide draft plan for the Strategic Plan with analysis on employment.
 - C. Use the information as a living document with end of year action plans

7. Commissioners' Corner
 - a. Mr. Corder – District 1 - Reached out to Stuart O 'Bier – hold up is getting tradesmen to get work done on the internal building. The store will be a deli/seafood store to pick up food, not an eat-in establishment. Mr. Corder received a permit to do a 138-site campground. Based on preliminary cost estimates they will pause any further work. There were no updates on the former Dairy Freeze facility.
 - b. Ms. Stuart – District 2 – No update
 - c. Ms. Carter – District 3 – No update
 - d. Dr. Pica – District 4 – No update
 - e. Mr. Johnson – District 5 – Vacation rental are at 30% occupation. This is an indicator of the external economy.

8. Executive Director Items
 - a. ARPA project status – no change on budget expenditure.
 - b. ARPA – received draft images for review, working on blog.
 - c. Coordinating on kayak brochure this week.
 - d. Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund – Grant opportunities for agricultural related opportunities. Ends March 25 and a Fall season campaign will occur. Seeking details for the fall campaign.
 - e. Drew Gruber from Civil War Trails
here: <https://www.civilwartrails.org/membership.html> reached out through Lisa Hull. Inquired about the Howland Chapel School (3560 Courthouse Rd) (3560 Knights Run Road) owned by TRUSTEES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH. Howland Cottage is one of those Civil War stories which has flown under the radar for far too long and is a story which travelers of African descent seem interested in. work with the County to add this site to the program. This would include not only adding a Civil War Trails interpretive sign, as is the final end-user product at each of our, [1500 sites](#) but include the VDOT directional "trailblazers" to get people to the site and placement on our print and digital marketing pieces. Now, we are collaborating closely with Virginia Tourism Corp. (VTC) on a brand-new paper brochure for Virginia.
 - f. Working Advantages/Disadvantages for having Business Register (Point Paper).

9. County Administrator Corner

- a. Digitized zoning map – Mr. McKenzie, Building and Zoning is working on a GIS version, but other priorities are slowing progress.
- b. No updates from VMRC on sunken boat.

10. New Business

- a. Dr Pica mentioned that Mr. Bullard is working with Mr. Tadlock to create a generic email inbox for the commissioners to use.
- b. Mr. Johnson – stated the zoning map is patchwork.
 - i. Since Callao is the entry point into the County we should consider creating a future map.
 - ii. Mr. Kost: Main issue is the sewage availability. Who would want to convert R1 to R2? We are focusing on what we have and determining if there is a demand for businesses.
 - iii. Mr. Corder: look at making split-zoned areas.
 - iv. Mr. Johson: Zoning needs to be flexible enough to accommodate recent changes/opportunities.

11. Citizen Engagement No issues presented.

12. Adjournment Ms. Stuart motioned for adjournment of the meeting and Ms. Carter second. The meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.