

Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism



July 28, 2023
Regular Meeting Packet



Berryville / Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Agenda

10:00 am, Friday, July 28, 2023

Meeting Room AB Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia

	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Call to Order	3
2. Adoption of Agenda	4
3. Approval of Minutes	5
• April 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting	6
• May 24, 2023 – Closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711 (A)(1): Conduct interviews for the Economic Development and Tourism position	11
• June 2, 2023 – Closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711 (A)(1): Conduct interviews for the Economic Development and Tourism position	13
4. Set 2023-2024 Goals and Priorities	15
5. Economic Development & Tourism Update	16
6. Next Meeting	17
• October 27, 2023 – Regular Meeting	
7. Adjourn	18
Reports in Packet	19
• Memorandum of Understanding between Berryville and Clarke County	20
• 2022-2023 Established Goals	22

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of Minutes:

- April 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting
- May 24, 2023 – Closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711 (A)(1): Conduct interviews for the Economic Development and Tourism position
- June 2, 2023 – Closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711 (A)(1): Conduct interviews for the Economic Development and Tourism position

Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
April 28, 2023 Regular Meeting 10:00 am

At a regular meeting of the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism held on Friday, April 28, 2023, at 10:00 am in the Meeting Room AB, Berryville Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia.

Members Present: Jay Arnold, Berryville Mayor and Town Council Representative
Diane Harrison, Town Council Representative
Doug Lawrence, Board of Supervisors Representative
David Weiss, Board of Supervisors Representative

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Chris Boies, Indea Ford, Catherine Marsten

Press Present: None

Others Present: Bill Waite

1. Call to Order

At 10:01 am, Diane Harrison called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

David Weiss moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Diane Harrison	-	Aye
Doug Lawrence	-	Aye
David Weiss	-	Aye

3. Approval of Minutes

Jay Arnold moved to approve the minutes of January 27, 2023, with amendments as provided to staff. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Diane Harrison	-	Aye
Doug Lawrence	-	Aye
David Weiss	-	Aye

4. Discussion on Visitors Center at Barns of Rose Hill

Diane Harrison provided the following update on the visitor's center:

- Continuing to work on wayfinding signage for the visitor's center.
 - Chris Boies asked if there has been any discussion on a new location for a public restroom downtown.
 - Diane Harrison responded that a suitable location has not yet been identified; the visitor's center currently has all of the public restrooms.
 - Chris Boies added that a conversation with the barns of Rose Hill Executive Director, Sarah Ames, highlighted the need for some improvements to make the Visitors Center operate better. Ms. Ames has submitted a proposal to the Finance Committee for initial upfront funding for these improvements, as well as \$10,000 per year in additional operating funds to be able to staff the Visitors Center. The Finance Committee is reviewing whether it is financially feasible to keep the Visitors Center.
 - David Weiss added that there is no solid data showing how many people utilize the Visitors Center, and what brings people in. This makes it difficult to make an educated decision about the feasibility of keeping the Visitors Center. The location of the Visitors Center also posed somewhat of a problem for the Barns of Rose Hill staff, who are tasked with the daily operation.
 - Chris Boies added that general conversations showed people would use the visitor's center if it was easily visible, but wouldn't necessarily go out of their way to seek it out; wayfinding signage may possibly help with that. There were discussions about the County providing staff at the Visitors Center one day per week to ease the burden on the Barns of Rose Hill staff; this would also be a good way for the County to track data.
 - Diane Harrison added that the current design of the visitors center is not efficient for staff to work in; there has been some discussion about redesigning that space.
 - Doug Lawrence suggested that obtaining some data over the next few weeks would be useful and this can be reviewed at the next meeting.
 - Chris Boies added that some of the tourism ARPA funds had been set aside for improvements to the Visitors Center.
 - David Weiss added that for the next budget cycle it would be useful to bring a plan to the Finance Committee to help them make a decision.
 - Chris Boies added that there has been no discussion regarding the funding for improvements being in jeopardy; but we will look into this further.

5. Discussion of Previous Goal to Engage Stakeholders on the Feasibility of a Hotel in Berryville

Diane Harrison provided the following update:

- The feasibility studies for the hotel have been completed and the property that was being looked at is still available. However, due to staffing changes, it may be better to hold off for now.
 - Chris Boies added that the national data right now shows that hotels are exceeding their pre-COVID occupancy; however, the feasibility of a hotel in Berryville is not there at this time. Perhaps a way to offset that would be if the Town of Berryville is willing to contribute to the initial capital investment.
 - Jay Arnold responded that this might be something for the town to look into.

- Chris Boies added that in Lynchburg several warehouse buildings have been converted into boutique hotels and the city partly invested in this; the Battletown Inn looked like it was going to be available, but then it wasn't.
 - David Weiss added that it might still be available for the right price.
 - Diane Harrison added that the number of rooms at the Battletown Inn would be ideal, but a lot of major renovation work needs to be completed to bring the building up to fire code.
- Chris Boies suggested looking at some models where a locality has drawn up an incentive package.
 - Jay Arnold added that the town has previously done some incentives, so this might be a possibility.
 - David Weiss added that the county has projects coming to fruition that financial reserves will be put into; so whilst supportive, it is unlikely the county would be in a position to financially assist with the hotel endeavor.
 - Chris Boies responded that the IDA might be interested in helping with the issuance of debt.
- Diane Harrison asked Bill Waite if the IDA previously did a hotel study.
 - Bill Waite responded that it was done by Berryville Main Street and all opportunities were looked into. In Lynchburg, the EDA sponsored the hotel development; the Battletown Inn is perhaps a lower investment, enough to help Berryville.
 - Jay Arnold suggested contracting someone to actively look for hotels that may be interested and see what their needs are; that would provide an idea of what to work on.
 - Chris Boies responded that he previously spoke with the Manager of Guests Incorporated located in Strasburg, which owns hotels nationwide and helps develop new ones. The data showed that a hotel in Berryville would not be sustainable at that time.
 - Jay Arnold suggested that it might be worth reaching out to him again to see if the data has changed.

6. Economic Development & Tourism Update

Chris Boies provided the following update

- Economic Development & Tourism Director, Felicia Hart, resigned. Staff is looking for a new Director and will advertise the position next week. The job description needs to be reviewed in this meeting before the job is posted.
- The Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism served as the search committee for the previous Economic Development & Tourism Director and had participated in the interview process.
- It would be a good idea to have a member from both the IDA and EDAC to participate on the search committee with the four members of the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.
 - All members agreed with this plan.
- The job listing will be posted for several weeks with a date of first review about 2-3 weeks out.
 - Diane Harrison added that the section in the job description relating to the design and production of brochures should be revised, as the design aspect should be handled by an outside source or the Public Information Officer.

- Chris Boies responded that it could say “manages the delivery of brochures”.
- Doug Lawrence asked if physical requirements, such as standing and lifting could still be listed in a job description; what if a wheelchair bound person applied for the job?
 - Chris Boies responded that physical requirements were added to job descriptions by a consultant in 2014, in the event that somebody who is unable to meet those requirements were to apply for the job and not be selected for interview or hire.
- Diane Harrison asked if the property listing is going to be managed so that it is visible online.
 - Chris Boies responded that prior to Ms. Hart leaving, a vendor was working on a website redesign to combine both the economic development and tourism sites. We are awaiting an update on the progress of this.
- David Weiss asked if the current priorities list needs to be revised before posting the job or hold off and have the new Director provide their input.
 - Chris Boies responded that the current priorities allow for discussion during interview. If this list needs revising, it should be done before interviews begin.
- David Weiss suggested to move priority #7 priority #1.
- Doug Lawrence suggested changing priority 7B to 7A and 7A to 7C.
- Diane Harrison added that several of the websites listed are no longer active and should be updated.
- Jay Arnold asked who is currently managing the tourism Facebook page.
 - Chris Boies responded that Indea Ford is currently managing the page and has posts scheduled for the next few weeks.
- Diane Harrison added that the Berryville Grille will be closing down on May 1.
- Dough Lawrence asked if there is a plan to remove some of the parking meters in the next couple of years, as the current spaces make parallel parking a little difficult.
 - Jay Arnold responded that it is a challenge. However, the whole purpose of the meters is to keep cars moving around so that customers can find a place to park. Parking meter time enforcement is also a challenge.
 - Diane Harrison added that the wayfinding signage will help direct people to the larger, free parking lots.

Chris Boies continued with the update:

- A Clarke County Farm Markets brochure has been designed and is currently being proofed for print.
 - David Weiss asked if the content was run by the farm market owners for review.
 - Chris Boies responded that he is unsure, but that the proof will be sent to them for review before being printed.
- The Employer Expo is coming up and the County will be involved.
- The Economic Development Advisory Committee, along with Bill Waite, attended a tour of the Blue Ridge Technical College in Martinsburg on April 19. Clarke County High School students may enroll in trades classes or the culinary arts program.
- Working on updating the Experience Clarke County brochure; holding off on reprinting until the new website is complete so that the QR code can be updated.
 - Jay Arnold added that the double-sided maps need to be updated before reprinting as they are missing some of the new streets in town.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2023.

8. Adjourn

At 10:48am, Diane Harrison adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Recorded and Transcribed by Indea Ford

Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

Supervisor Lawrence further moved to execute the following Certification of Closed Session:

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, has convened a closed meeting on the date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3700 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, hereby certifies that, to the best of each members knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development. The motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jay Arnold - Aye
Diane Harrison - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

2. Adjourn

At 11:27 am, Diane Harrison adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Taken by Chris Boies and Transcribed by Indea Ford

Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

Supervisor Lawrence further moved to execute the following Certification of Closed Session:

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, has convened a closed meeting on the date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3700 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, hereby certifies that, to the best of each members knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development. The motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jay Arnold - Aye
Diane Harrison - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

2. Adjourn

At 11:11 am, Diane Harrison adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Taken by Chris Boies and Transcribed by Indea Ford

Set 2023-2024 Goals and Priorities

Economic Development & Tourism Update

Next Meeting:

October 27, 2023 – Regular Meeting

Adjourn

Reports in Packet:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- 2022-2023 Established Goals

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between The Town of Berryville and Clarke County
Regarding Economic Development and Tourism**

WHEREAS, the Town of Berryville and Clarke County have previously entered into a MOU regarding economic development and tourism and now wish to update that document; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Berryville and Clarke County over the past four decades have worked cooperatively to promote a unique and highly successful land use philosophy that focuses growth and development within the Town while preserving the County's natural, historical, and agricultural resources; and

WHEREAS, the County's small land area, close proximity to four surrounding urban growth areas, and limited access to public water and sewer capacity make the sharing of Economic Development resources a necessity; and

WHEREAS, the future of economic development – including business, retail, industry, agriculture, and Tourism – in Clarke County is dependent upon effective collaboration and cooperation between the Town and County;

AND WHEREAS, the Town and the County recognize that combining resources and creating unified points of contact for Economic Development and Tourism will enable our communities to more efficiently address the needs of new and existing businesses, streamline regulations and regulatory processes, and more effectively market our unique assets.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Berryville and Clarke County agree to work cooperatively to implement the following action items:

1. **Joint Management of Economic Development and Tourism.** The Town and County shall jointly manage the Economic Development and Tourism efforts in Clarke County and the Town of Berryville on an ongoing basis.
2. **Single Points of Contact for Economic Development and Tourism.** Both the Town and County agree that it would be best if the business community dealt with a single point of contact for Economic Development and Tourism. The point of contact will be the Clarke County Director of Economic Development & Tourism. The Town Director of Community Development will serve as the primary liaison to the County Director of Economic Development & Tourism for economic and tourism activities in the Town.
3. **Joint Committee for Economic Development and Tourism.** The Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee for Economic Development and Tourism shall consist of two members of the Board of Supervisors and two members of the Town Council. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually, rotating between the Town and County. For example, when the Chair position is held by an elected representative of the Town, the Vice Chair position shall be held by an elected official of the County. In the following year the Chair position would be held by an elected official of the County and the Vice Chair position held by an elected official of the Town. The Committee shall

Priorities:

approved September 2021

- 1) Complete redo of the Economic Development website
- 2) Set up quarterly meetings with the Berryville Main Street President and Barns of Rose Hill Director to discuss/work out
 - a. Partnership opportunities
 - b. Cross promotion of events (at the fair grounds and in the community)
 - c. Ways to gather data from our visitors
 - d. How they provide additional support to a broader business base
 - e. Ways to enhance the visitors' experience while at the Barns of Rose Hill
 - f. Regular Meet/Greet with businesses and another for new residents
- 3) Enhance our regional participation and opportunities with groups like
 - a. Economic Coalition of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
 - b. Shenandoah Valley Travel Association
 - c. Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership
 - d. Shenandoah Spirits Trail
 - e. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA)
 - f. Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)
- 4) Manage and maintain websites and social media highlighting Clarke County. This includes blog posts, stories and photography for sites including
 - a. YesClarkeCounty
 - b. Clarke Tourism
 - c. Clarke Connect
 - d. Virginia Tourism Commission
 - e. Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership
 - f. Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (2 sites)
 - g. Shenandoah Spirits Trail
 - h. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA), and
 - i. Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- 5) Enhance relationships between County/Town departments to more easily share information –
 - a. New business licenses
 - b. Current business licenses
 - c. Potential rezoning requests
- 6) Work with businesses to highlight employment and training opportunities. This could include
 - a. Social media listings/shares
 - b. Virtual Job Fair opportunities
 - c. Listings on the Virginia Employment Commission site
 - d. Listings on the Top of Virginia Job Opportunities site,
 - e. Introduction to the workforce training at Clarke County Schools, and
 - f. Any other outlets as needed/determined
- 7) Continuation of
 - a. Engaging stakeholders on potential hotel in Berryville
 - b. Continue efforts on business attraction, retention and growth – to include
 - i. Assistance
 - ii. Promotions
 - iii. Training and any needed support
 - iv. Potential co-op space
 - c. Continue dialogue with property owners of vacant properties and developable land
 - d. Continue relationship with Blue Ridge Association of Realtors