

Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism



October 27, 2023
Regular Meeting Packet



Berryville / Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Agenda

10:00 am, Friday, October 27, 2023

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

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Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
101 Chalmers Court
Berryville, VA 22611

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of Minutes:

- July 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting

Doug Lawrence moved to approve the minutes of May 24, 2023, as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Doug Lawrence moved to approve the minutes of June 2, 2023, as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

4. Set 2023-2024 Goals and Priorities

- Remove item 4g. Shenandoah Spirits Trail as the site no longer exists.
- Diane Harrison asked Chris Boies for a progress update on the Clarke County Tourism website
 - o Chris Boies responded that Michelle Ridings Brown is currently working with the procurement office to secure a vendor to build the new website.
 - Michelle Ridings Brown added that she is looking to find a company that can also include digital marketing and videography and has been vetting local vendors. Michelle added that the name of the Clarke County Tourism Facebook page has been changed to Experience Clarke County as it is more engaging, and Indea Ford is currently creating the content for the daily social media posts for the page.
 - Doug Lawrence asked if additional social media platforms would also be used.
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown responded that she has had discussions with Cathy Kuehner about setting up an Experience Clarke County Instagram Account.
- Michelle Ridings Brown requested that the committee approve Economic Development be added as a landing page on the Clarke County website instead of creating a new stand-alone website.
 - o Chris Boies added that doing this would keep costs down and focus funds on developing the tourism website.
- David Weiss asked Michelle Ridings Brown if the current list of priorities is ok and if there is a method by which she would like to prioritize.
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown responded that tourism branding and creating a website is the top priority at this time in order to lay a good foundation for tourism. Michelle continued that she has already met with some of the local business to start developing those relationships. The Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership increased their dues from \$5000 to \$10,000; it would be a good idea to look at the return on investment before continuing to pay the membership.
- Christy Dunkle asked if item 4b. Virginia Tourism Commission should be changed to Virginia Tourism Corporation.

- o Michelle Ridings Brown responded yes. We will be purchasing brochure slots through Virginia Corporation for different welcome centers, including Clearbrook, Manassas, Northern Virginia and Williamsburg.
- Christy Dunkle added that partnerships are important but building relationships with Lucketts and the Ruritan Club to be included in their marketing would be very beneficial.
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown agreed and added that she has reached out to Lucketts to set up a meeting.
 - o Doug Lawrence added that the Ruritan Club got bids to repave the East entrance up to the top of the hill, which will hopefully be completed within the next year. This will improve traffic flow at events and allow left hand turns to be made, guiding people towards town.
 - o Diane Harrison added that creating a seasonal packet to share with Lucketts would be a great way to market Clarke County events.
 - Michelle Ridings Brown agreed that co-marketing for events is very effective and added that she has also been working with Betsy Pritchard on marketing for the fairground events.
- Michelle Ridings Brown agreed that whatever needs to be done to make the business licensing process easier, should be done.
 - o Doug Lawrence added that historically there has been the perception that Clarke County does not want certain types of new businesses and the process has not always been followed, as it should.
 - Michelle Ridings Brown added that controlled growth is necessary in certain areas.
 - Diane Harrison added that creating a business package to hand out would be helpful, and include it under the Economic Development website page.
- Michelle Ridings Brown added that she would like to continuing working with property owners of vacant commercial properties.
- Doug Lawrence suggested that when the Hermitage sub-division is completed it would be a good idea to hold another meet and greet for new residents to show them what is available in Berryville.
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown suggested that opening up the meet and greet to everyone would be a good idea, especially once the tourism branding is developed.
- Michelle Ridings Brown added that once the tourism brand is built, the local business need to know about it and be able to use it as a resource.
- Michelle Ridings Brown added that the World of Works (WoW) event is coming up in September, at which 8th grade students from several localities can explore possible careers.
 - o Jay Arnold added that several years ago, a local job fair had been planned, but unfortunately, several of the local business didn't want to attend and the event didn't go ahead.
 - o Diane Harrison added that work ethic has changed a lot over the years and less high school students want to work.
 - Michelle Ridings Brown added that perhaps a different approach focused around a social aspect would encourage students to want to work.
 - o David Weiss suggested that Michelle meet with Shaine Coleman from the Clarke County High School about future job fairs.
 - o Diane Harrison suggested that music and art students could reach out to the Barns of Rose Hill for volunteer opportunities.
 - o Jay Arnold suggested that a Citizens Academy program for students after school would be a good idea.

- Chris Boies responded that two high school students are being invited to attend the next Citizens Academy, and agreed it would be good to get students involved in such programs.
- Michelle Ridings Brown added that listings on the Virginia Employment Commission and Top of Virginia Job Opportunities site are important.
- Jay Arnold asked if there was an update on the production of a LOVE sign in Berryville
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown responded that discussions have taken place with the EDAC and this project will be moving ahead. The design should be unique to Clarke County.
- Michelle Ridings Brown added that it would be a good idea to bring back the Artisan Trail event.
 - o Diane Harrison agreed but added that there would need to be a lot of volunteers to make it successful.
- Doug Lawrence asked if there is a new brewery opening in White Post.
 - o David Weiss responded that he was not aware of a new brewery opening.
 - o Michelle Ridings Brown added that she could not find anything on Google.
- David Weiss suggested that for next year the list be renamed to something other than priorities, as some of the items are more tasks than priorities.
- Diane Harrison added that the potential development of a Berryville Hotel is still on the list.
 - o Doug Lawrence asked when the Battletown Inn auction occurring.
 - David Weiss responded that the auction has already happened and the original owner, Jerry purchased it.
 - Michelle Ridings Brown added that she has reached out to Jerry to set up a meeting.
- Christy Dunkle added that the town's business license list was sent to Michelle Ridings Brown this morning.
- Michelle Ridings Brown asked the committee how they felt about the EDAC initially vetting the tourism branding logos and colors.
 - o The committee agreed this would be a good idea.

5. Economic Development & Tourism Update

Michelle Brown provided the following update:

- Working on the tourism branding and website development is the top priority right now.
- Also working on creating a business directory, which will be vetted through the EDAC to make sure we haven't missed anybody.
- Working on a master calendar of events. There is a difference between tourism events and community events, and we need to decide what that criteria is, for example, fire hall dinners would not be considered a tourism event.
 - o Diane Harrison agreed, but added that events such as the downtown Christmas tree lighting would be considered tourism events.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2023.

7. Adjourn

At 11: 05 am, Diane Harrison adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Recorded by Catherine Marsten and Transcribed by Indea Ford

Economic Development & Tourism Update

Discussion on Changes to County and Town Code & the Effect on Economic Development

Next Meeting:

January 26, 2024 – Regular Meeting

Adjourn

Reports in Packet:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- 2023-2024 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:

updated July 28, 2023

- 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. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA)
 - e. 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. Experience Clarke County (Tourism)
 - c. Clarke Connect
 - d. Virginia Tourism Corporation
 - e. Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership
 - f. Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (2 sites)
 - g. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA)
 - h. 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. 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
 - b. Continue dialogue with property owners of vacant properties and developable land
 - c. Engaging stakeholders on potential hotel in Berryville
 - d. Continue relationship with Blue Ridge Association of Realtors