

Clarke County Economic Development Advisory Committee
April 19, 2017 Minutes

A meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) held in the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, at 1:00 PM.

Board: Christy Dunkle, Christina Kraybill, John Milleson, David Weiss

Absent: Jim Barb, Bryan Conrad, Eric Meyer, Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard

Staff: Lora B. Walburn

1. Call to Order

At 1:02 pm, John Milleson called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Christina Kraybill, seconded by Christie Dunkle, moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jim Barb	-	Absent
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Aye
Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Absent
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Absent
David Weiss	-	Aye

3. Approval of Minutes

Christina Kraybill, seconded by David Weiss, moved to approve the February 15, 2017, minutes as presented. The motion carried as follows:

Jim Barb	-	Absent
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Aye
Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye

Eric Myer	-	Absent
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Absent
David Weiss	-	Aye

4. Economic Development and Tourism Update

Due to a scheduling conflict, Len Capelli was unable to attend the meeting.

Christie Dunkle, Town of Berryville Planner and Assistant Town Manager, update:

- McDonalds:
 - o Site plan is complete.
 - o Bonds were approved by Town Council.
 - o Should start land disturbance and construction in the near future.
 - o Will be performing some work on McClellan, fix exiting curb and gutter.
 - o Need one easement from Alton Echols to run water and sewer lines.
 - o No access easement is needed for the turn around.
 - o Construction will take approximately four months.
- Mario's Parking lot: Site plan went through. Planning Commission completed and left it to staff to address demolition issues.
- Forum for Rural Innovation: Thirteenth year it has been held here. The Secretary of Agriculture and the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture attended the event.
- LFCC Small Business Development Center: Conducting seminar of social media for small business at the Bank of Clarke Co tomorrow.
- Lucketts Spring Market: Coming to Berryville. Working with Town staff on traffic control issues.
- Studio Tour:
 - o Scheduled for Sept 29, 30 and Oct 1.
 - o Organizational meeting scheduled for May 9 at the Barns of Rose Hill.
 - o Artists from more remote locations may be seeking venues in or close to the Town of Berryville.
- Artisan Trail:
 - o Clarke has 24 participants.
 - o Event held in March on website use.
- Appalachian Trail:
 - o Alison Teeter, Natural Resources Planner, working with VDOT on parking issues.
 - o Need to explore ways to attract users into Berryville.

David Weiss, EDAC Member and Chair Board of Supervisors, Update:

- Spirit Trail: Will be discussing joining the Spirit Trail.
- Farm Tour: Scheduled for Saturday, April 29.

Christina Kraybill, EDAC member, Berryville Main Street Member, update:

- Yard Sale Saturday:
 - No information is available for this event.
 - Restaurants do well during the event.
 - While the event provides exposure for stores, businesses, other than restaurants, do not do well.
- Car Show / Cruise In
 - Planned for the last Saturday in August.
 - Plan to involve more persons in parking and to conduct meetings prior to the event.
 - Bringing in portable toilets.
 - Sponsors are lining up for event. At this time, there are 29 sponsors.
 - All State will be distributing water bottles.
 - Signage issues from last year's event were resolved with Town Council.
- Planters: Hip and Humble will be adding new dirt and flowers to planters in Town.
- Berryville Main Street: Has a new website.
- Farmers Market:
 - Opening soon with a great collection of farmers.
 - Lillian Ledford is the manager. Ms. Ledford has lined up new activities, vendors, and artists.

5. Old Business

Equine / Livestock Survey Discussion with Chris Bates

Chris Bates, Farm Bureau and Equine Alliance member, joined the committee to review and discuss an equine / livestock survey. Highlights include:

- Briefly reviewed the history of land use taxation and planning.
 - Over time, a conflict arose over what to do with land use taxation, what it meant to the County, and “us and them” contest between town and county.
 - In early 2004, the Farm Bureau commissioned a survey by Virginia Tech to determine what agriculture meant to the County. The survey indicated:

- Agriculture is the economic engine driving the county.
- Agriculture keeps costs down for the average homeowner in the towns and county.
- Agriculture improves land values and keeps tax down.
- Wingate MacKay-Smith, former Conservation Easement member, was instrumental in disseminating this information.
- Since the 2004 survey, the County has not done as good a job of determining what it has or disseminating the value of agriculture; and conflict between town and county is, again, on the rise.
- Both the Farm Bureau and Equine Alliance believe that it is time to conduct another in-depth economic study of agriculture in the County.
- Mr. Bates distributed a sheet titled “How dollars spent on horses support our state”, an example of what was done by the Maryland for the horse industry. Study conducted by the University of Maryland for the Maryland Horse Council.
 - The study identifies what jobs are supported by the horse industry.
 - Key things from the study include the number of jobs and the amount of taxes, which are all good to know about the County’s economic driver.
- Equine / Agriculture Survey:
 - Identify current businesses to identify business that may be developed.
 - Provide data to determine if the number of businesses and animals producing wool such as alpacas, llamas, rabbits, sheep, etc. is sufficient to support a woolen mill or processing facility.
 - Provide data to determine if the number of meat goats is sufficient to support a halal butchery.
 - Provide data to determine the number of public training tracks to exercise horses.
 - Determine how many persons from outside the County are coming to Clarke to perform custom farming operations.
 - Who pays for the study?
 - Len Capelli indicates that he has found a way to get a grant.
 - Since agriculture is an economic driver, the survey should be funded by economic development.
 - Who performs the study?
 - Trusted survey sources, Virginia Tech, UVA, University of Maryland, are committed for the next year.
 - During the next year, a planning committee could develop the questions.
 - Suggested committee members include persons from the Farm Bureau, Equine Alliance, niche agriculture, refineries, spirits, etc.

- Recent newspaper article quoting Board of Supervisors Chair David Weiss stated that the County does not want to build infrastructure.
- Building infrastructure is not necessary if the County develops its agriculture engine.
- Suggested Next Steps
 - Sponsor agriculture survey and move forward.
 - Develop a planning committee.
 - Len Capelli has ideas on how to finance.
 - The Farm Bureau and the Equine Alliance are willing to work with the County to facilitate the survey.

David Weiss comments:

- The 2004 survey was a cost-of-services survey providing cost of residential services compared to open land cost.
- The Board of Supervisors has discussed a survey on a variety of occasions and there was mixed interest in that the Supervisors being uncertain how the survey would affect Clarke in its planning.
- Government programs must adhere to the procurement process that is much more complex than the private sector.
- In the past, the Supervisors have contributed financially to private sector programs in which the County is involved such as the recent ballfield lighting project.
- The Supervisors set the FY2018 budget at its April 18 meeting. Economic Development has funds available.

John Milleson comments:

- To characterize the discussion from the last meeting, there were many questions regarding the survey.
- Concern expressed about possible couched response due to potential tax implications.
- Committee is not prepared to make recommendation until all members have been given an opportunity to review.

Chris Bates comments:

- To be meaningful, a complete response is critical. Participants must be assured of anonymity.
- Survey would be conducted under the guidance of Economic Development that could coordinate volunteers from such groups as the Farm Bureau, Equine Alliance, and other interested parties.
- For the previous survey, a list of questions was developed and 20 volunteers either phoned or visited persons.

- Following the previous survey, the Commissioner of the Revenue, using the survey list, became very aggressive in collecting machinery and tools.

Christine Kraybill comments:

- Clarke County has the potential of becoming the breadbasket of the area.
- Need to have a good, strong plan in place in light of the anticipated regional growth.

Christy Dunkle comments:

- Communicating accurate information is critical.
- Pressure from the east will continue.
- Elected officials need a knowledge base.
- Timing is good to conduct a survey now that persons are questioning. Some persons believe that more people moving into area means a reduction in cost of services, which is not the case.

Chairman Milleson called for additional comment. Being none, he advanced the matter to the May 17, 2017, meeting for continued discussion.

Real Estate Seminar Planning

Chairman Milleson tabled discussion until Len Capelli was able to attend the meeting. He put forth for consideration Loudoun County expansion, Metro extension, location or expansion of businesses in the region such as Proctor and Gamble, Navy Federal, Amazon, and the FBI. He opined that there were not enough houses in the region for the anticipated growth.

Christy Dunkle concurred stating that she was already getting calls and developers were buying up land in the area. She noted that all the subdivisions approved in the 2000's are engaged in significant, quick activity right now.

Chairman Milleson commented that Loudoun County projections are approximately 10,000 per year for a couple years and escalate from that point.

Christy Dunkle opined that solid planning was critical.

Christine Kraybill stated that she felt strongly about protecting food sources. She opined that many are drawn to the land in hopes of a simpler life. Mrs. Kraybill observed that the mountain and river act as a natural barrier.

6. New Business

RISE Competition

Approved 05/17/2017

- Conducted at Lord Fairfax Community College Tuesday, April 18.
- Two Clarke County businesses made it to the finals:
 - Brag Swag (Milissa Marshall)
 - Shenandoah Seasonal (Ali Haney).

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 1:00 pm.

8. Adjournment

Being no further business, at 1:49 pm, Chairman Milleson adjourned the meeting.

Minutes recorded and transcribed by Lora B. Walburn