

Approved March 20, 2019

Clarke County Economic Development Advisory Committee  
January 23, 2019 Minutes

A meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) held in the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, January 23, 2019, at 1:00 PM.

Board: Christy Dunkle, Christina Kraybill, Eric Myer, John Milleson, Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard

Absent: Jim Barb, Bryan Conrad, Bev McKay

Staff: Cathy Kuehner, Brianna Taylor, Lora B. Walburn

Press: Mickey Powell – The Winchester Star

1. Call to Order

At 1:07 pm, Lora Walburn, Economic Development Advisory Committee Clerk, called the meeting to order.

2. Organizational Items

Elect Chair

Lora Walburn called for nominations and election of the 2019 Chair.

**Christy Dunkle, seconded by Betsy Pritchard, moved to nominate and elect:**

✓ **John Milleson, 2019 Chair**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

Jim Barb	- Absent
Bryan Conrad	- Absent
Christy Dunkle	- Aye
Christina Kraybill	- Absent
Beverly B. McKay	- Absent
John Milleson	- Aye
Eric Myer	- Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	- Aye

Following the vote, the meeting was turned over to John Milleson 2019 Chair.

Chairman Milleson called for nominations and election of the 2019 Vice Chair.

**Betsy Pritchard, seconded by Christy Dunkle, moved to nominate and elect:**

- ✓ **Christina Kraybill, 2019 Vice Chair**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

Jim Barb	-	Absent
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Aye
Christina Kraybill	-	Absent
Beverly B. McKay	-	Absent
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Aye

Set Meeting Date, Time and Location

By consensus, the Committee adopted the schedule as presented.

March 20  
May 15  
July 17  
September 18  
November 20  
December 18 [Business Tour]  
January 15, 2020 – Organizational Meeting

Third Wednesday at 1:00 pm  
Berryville Clarke County Government Center  
Meeting Room AB

3. Adoption of Agenda

**Christy Dunkle, seconded by Betsy Pritchard, 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	-	Absent
Beverly B. McKay	-	Absent
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Aye

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

Christy Dunkle requested a correction to the September 19, 2018, draft minutes page 7

From:

- Tourism Strategic Plan: Christy Dunkle will provide staff with the Tourism Strategic Plan she is developing for the Town of Berryville.

To:

- Tourism Strategic Plan: Christy Dunkle stated that in 2014 she had drafted a tourism strategic plan that has not been adopted, which is a requirement for some grant funding.

**Christy Dunkle, seconded by Betsy Pritchard, moved to approve the September 19, 2018, minutes as corrected. The motion carried as follows:**

Jim Barb	-	Absent
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Aye
Christina Kraybill	-	Absent
Beverly B. McKay	-	Absent
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Aye

#### 5. Director Economic Development Update and 2018 Year-end Summary

Highlights of Len Capelli's update includes:

- Reviewed the 2018 year-end summary.
- County is well positioned on what it is doing in local basis and its memberships in Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership, Spirit Trail, Artisan Trail, and Appalachian Trail with promotions on its website and social media.
- According to state records, last year Clarke increased over one million dollars in tourism revenue moving its rank from 106 to 94 or 95 in the state. These numbers suggest that the County's efforts are producing positive results.
- SVTP's goal is to encourage tourism particularly overnight or extended stays.
- SVTP has retained a public relations firm to respond to queries and aid in promotions on various websites, magazines, and social media.
- SVTP put together a relationship with Utrip, which has added a new venue to promote Clarke as part of the entire Shenandoah Valley.
- Spirits Trail:
  - o Has been very effective in generating leads.

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- Conducting a "Spirits Trail tee shirt" promotion that is getting good results.
- Actively promoting Clarke's openness to farm-based wineries, breweries, and distilleries.
- Artisan Trail Network: Christy Dunkle put in a tremendous amount of work; however, the number of persons involved has dwindled. It is hoped that the new director will have a positive impact on participation and renewed vibrancy.
- Appalachian Trail:
  - Working with agencies to promote day hikes.
  - Met with agencies and two outfitters to discuss access to the Shenandoah River.
    - Issues preventing increased use include the distance between points of ingress and egress along the river since most of the land along the river is private.
    - The Commonwealth is willing to help expand sites but has no funds to maintain public sites.

Christina Kraybill joined the meeting at 1:22 pm

- Hotel Feasibility Study:
  - Christy Dunkle asked to for an update on the hotel feasibility noting that Christina Kraybill was a committee member on Berryville Main Street [BMS].
  - Len Capelli responded that he has spoken with Nathan Stalvey, President Berryville Main Street Board, and Director of the Clarke County Historical Association.
  - Three bids received. BMS would like to present to the Industrial Development Authority [IDA] at its January 24 meeting.
  - Subcommittee members are planning to attend the IDA meeting, as well as Nathan Stalvey, and Jay Arnold, Berryville Town Council liaison.
  - Hotel feasibility study conducted in 2013 requires update, which the IDA has agreed to fund.
  - BMS received three bids in response to its RFP.
  - BMS committee is intentionally stating that it wants the hotel located in downtown Berryville.
- Business Attraction and Retention:
  - Meeting with existing businesses to identify needs.
  - Working with Virginia Economic Development Partnership on attracting new business.
    - VEDP is showing greater interest in working with localities with sites of 100 acres or less.
    - VEDP considering revitalizing an older program that helps localities construct shell buildings to have something to offer businesses.
    - Christina Kraybill expressed support for incubator programs.
  - Working toward expanding the business park.

- Southeast Collector Transportation Study is in process.
- Federal guidelines identify a small business as up to 250 employees or \$20 million in sales.
- Distribution and warehousing facilities are not desirable - typically providing low-paying jobs and over burdening highways; exceptions would be locations in Route 50 Waterloo or Route 522 Double Tollgate.
- Anticipate new opportunities and challenges due to the growth in Loudoun County.
- It is possible that Clarke will attract businesses in support of the new Amazon center.
- Two investors recently purchased most of the properties for sale on First Street.
- GoVirginia: Clarke is included in the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission study grant application that was approved. Study will focus on job retention and education.
- Top of Virginia Regional Chamber:
  - Clarke recently joined the Chamber under membership for agencies such as economic development departments.
  - Meeting scheduled for February 5 at Bank of Clarke County.
- Agri-business:
  - Working closely with a dairy farm that is one of six in Virginia using robotic milking machines. Farm would like to bottle its own milk. Helping them develop a business plan. Grant agency requires a feasibility study to determine its potential profitability.
  - Smithfield Farm approached by Giant Foods as a potential supplier and could be eligible for grant funds.
  - Farm2Table:
    - Nominated a number of farms to be able to meet with buyers for local restaurants and stores.
    - Farms exhibit at a show scheduled for March in Weyers Cave. Last year, more than two hundred purchasing agents attended the event held at the Mimslyn in Luray.
  - Tractor / Feed Supply Stores:
    - In researching the numerous suggestions for locating a tractor or feed supply store in Clarke:
      - There are 16 tractor / feed supply stores within a 20 mile radius of Berryville
      - Clarke's population is 14,500 with approximately 4,500 in the Town of Berryville.
      - A farm supply is already located in Berryville.
      - Given the number of farms, the population, and the number of current stores, it would be difficult to support a new venture.
- Business License List:
  - Brianna Taylor continues to develop the business license list, which includes verifying business information.

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- Solicited contact information for promotion on the County's website in four separate mailings with only two businesses responding.
- List is checked to ensure that businesses have a valid business license prior to being nominated for programs, promotions, etc.
- Christina Kraybill opined that often a business is started as a hobby that the owner is trying to build into a business; and, at some point, it crosses into a viable business but below the owners expectation.
- Betsy Pritchard added that if you make over \$1,000 a year you are considered a business.

Christy Dunkle posed the following questions to Len Capelli:

- Update Battletown Inn:
  - Len Capelli responded that his most recent discussion with the owner was about three weeks ago.
  - Owner working on another project and was out of town.
  - Owner is getting ready to start again but has cut back on expansion plans due to limited parking.
  - Owner promises to have open by late summer or early fall 2019.
- Mercke Property: In response to Ms. Dunkle's query, Len Capelli responded that he had not recently spoken to anyone about this property.
- Project Hope:
  - In response to Ms. Dunkle's query, Mr. Capelli stated that he has not been working with the owner.
  - Mr. Capelli stated that he had spoken to several realtors interested in working with Project Hope including those persons handling the sale of the former Black Penny property.
  - This will be a topic of discussion with VDEP during the next scheduled meeting.
  - Ms. Dunkle asked about the number of acres and types of use for this property. Mr. Capelli responded that he was not certain of the number of acres for sale; and, as for the uses, there were various including a conference center, school, or even a hotel provided a special use for such purpose was approved.
  - Mr. Capelli opined that neighbors might not welcome some potential uses on this limited access road.

Christy Dunkle provided the following updates:

- Forum Rural Innovation:
  - Fourteenth year and will be held on March 8 at the same time and location as last year.
  - Event will include a family succession panel, 4-H, and more student, education situations.
- New Thai restaurant: Winchester Thai opened its third location in the area.

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- McDonald Restaurant: Land disturbance starts Monday, January 28.

## 6. Old Business

### Economic Development Strategic Plan Review and Discussion

The Committee reviewed its September changes to the plan ensuring that an hotel was added to the top of the list under Section C Goals.

Lora Walburn informed the Board that the Plan was scheduled for review by the Industrial Development Authority at its 1 pm, January 24 meeting.

### Other Business Not Included on the Published Agenda

Eric Myer informed the members that Chris Bates, a personal friend, had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the Economic Development Advisory Committee. He stated that Mr. Bates lives near the Lake Frederick area off Route 522 in Clarke County; and, he opined that Mr. Bates, with his background in transportation, agriculture, and equine, would be an asset to the Committee.

By consensus, the Committee endorsed Dr. Myer's recommendation to recommend appointment of Chris Bates to the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

## 7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 2019.

## 8. Adjournment

Being no further business, at 2:11 pm, Chairman Milleson adjourned the meeting.

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Minutes recorded and transcribed by Lora B. Walburn