

Berryville / Clarke County Joint Committee for Economic Development and Tourism
February 12, 2020, Minutes

A meeting of the Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee for Economic Development and Tourism [Joint MOU] Committee held in the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, February, 12, 2020, at 10:00 am.

Board: Jay Arnold, Berryville Town Council – Recorder; Chris Boies, Clarke County – County Administrator; Keith Dalton, Town of Berryville – Town Manager; David Weiss, Clarke County Board of Supervisors - Chair

Absent: None

Staff: Christy Dunkle, Cathy Kuehner, Lora B. Walburn

Press Present: None

Also Present: Diane Harrison - Ward Two Berryville Town Council Member; Kara Rodriguez – Ward Four Berryville Town Council Member; Bill Waite – Secretary / Treasurer Industrial Development Authority of the Clarke County Virginia; Robina Rich Bouffault – Planning Commissioner – White Post District

1. Call to Order

At 10:01 am, David Weiss called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- Add Discussion of Organization and Committee Structure

Jay Arnold, seconded by Chris Boies, moved to approve the agenda as modified. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Chris Boies	-	Aye
Keith Dalton	-	Aye
David Weiss	-	Aye

3. Approval of Minutes

Jay Arnold, seconded by Keith Dalton, moved to approve the July 1, 2019, minutes as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Chris Boies	-	Abstain
Keith Dalton	-	Aye
David Weiss	-	Aye

4. Discussion of Organization and Committee Structure

Highlights of discussion include:

- Membership:
 - o Berryville Town Council selected Kara Rodriguez as its second representative on the Joint Committee. Councilor Rodriguez heads the Community Development Committee.
 - o The Board of Supervisors has agreed to appoint an additional member, and the appointee should be named before the next Committee meeting.
 - o Jay Arnold and David Weiss concurred that they wished to adhere to the original intent of the Committee to include the Town Manager and the County Administrator in discussions.
 - o By consensus, the Committee agreed that the two new members from the elected bodies would be in addition to the existing members.
 - o Keith Dalton affirmed that it would be Town Manager or designee, specifically Christy Dunkle.
 - David Weiss raised the question of "lateral" staff in oversight of the proposed Economic Development and Tourism Director position; however, while it was a concern, he agreed to leave in the "or designee" phrase.
 - Keith Dalton opined that the County Administrator would be responsible for the direct supervision of the position; however, if the Town and County end up sharing the position, the agreement would address any input the Town Manager would have and membership on the MOU Committee does not necessarily represent supervision.
 - o Additional members will join the Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- Meeting date / time:
 - o Jay Arnold noted that staff would need time to accomplish the tasks set forth at meetings.
 - o David Weiss suggested that, once established, the Committee could meet quarterly.
 - o By consensus, the Committee agreed to meet every other month initially.
 - o Staff will draft a meeting schedule for Committee review.
 - o By consensus, the Committee agreed morning meetings.
- Chair / Vice Chair:

- By consensus, the Committee agreed to finalize the selection and process for establishing the position of chair and vice chair at the next meeting.

5. Follow-up Items from July 19, 2019, Meeting

Highlight of discussion include:

- Committee determined that it had made progress, but still had things to accomplish.
- The Committee had discussed expanding its membership to include one additional person from each of the elected bodies.
- Memorandum of Understanding [MOU]:
 - Jay Arnold noted that much of the MOU was timeline tasks.
 - The Town would like to update the MOU to look at partnerships with the County and participation of each group.
 - Jay Arnold suggested that staff draft the MOU and take to committee before bringing back to the Committee opining that it would be difficult to hash it out in this type of meeting.
 - David Weiss concurred and requested to add review of an updated job description in the process.
- Hotel in Town of Berryville:
 - Jay Arnold noted that it was one of the primary items for the Town discussed at the last meeting.
 - The Town had a survey done about five to eight years ago with nothing done. A survey was conducted in 2019, and The Town does not wish to see the idea "die on the shelf" and before the survey has to be updated.
 - Town hopes that with the Economic Development Director a hotel in Berryville will be a priority.
 - David Weiss stated that the Supervisors support the hotel, understand all the issues involved, and the pros and cons. He opined that he did not believe the issue in the county was too many rooms, regardless of where they are for the more rooms you have the more likely you will have people to fill them.
 - David Weiss also noted that the Industrial Development Authority [IDA] supports a hotel in Berryville.
- Position Funding:
 - Town of Berryville is discussing funding; and, with budget season coming up, it is looking at budget items.
 - Keith Dalton suggested that he and Chris Boies discuss this further.
 - Full-time or part-time:

- Keith Dalton opined that a full-time position would produce the most positive effect; however, it comes down to whether the Town and County are organized and have something for the individual to market.
 - David Weiss put forth that one of the benefits of a more defined and robust partnership would be the ability to generate a full-time workload.
 - David Weiss opined that it might be difficult to hire part-time, noting that there were only two respondents to the Board's last solicitation.
 - Jay Arnold opined that there were many tasks noting that there was a lot of interest in promoting the downtown, business buildings, and the First Street area.
 - David Weiss put forth exploration of the Camp 7 property at Double Tollgate, amongst other properties within the County.
 - Keith Dalton stated that to take the position full-time Town Council would be looking at something after the beginning of the next fiscal year.
- Economic Development Advisory Committee [EDAC] / Industrial Development Authority [IDA]
 - o The Supervisors are desirous of more actively engaging the EDAC and the IDA with the hiring, job description, and the whole concept of the economic development office.
 - o David Weiss has spoken to the Chairs of both public bodies, and they are interested in participating and being more active.
 - o David Weiss would like to utilize both Chairs in the selection process.

6. Discussion about Economic Development Position

Highlight of discussion include:

- Job Description:
 - o Chris Boies stated that getting input from the Committee was the first step in the process.
 - o David Weiss added that the County was looking at an interim placement, which would be a source but may not be available.
 - o Town Council should give direction to Keith Dalton on the job description, and he can work with Chris Boies.
 - o Keith Dalton would like to discuss the job descriptions and characteristics with Christy Dunkle before discussing with the County Administrator.
 - o Jay Arnold added that the Community Development Committee has been discussing the position and whether it will be doing both economic development and tourism. He told the Committee that he was informed that these positions take two different types of persons.
 - o Chris Boies responded that in many smaller, rural localities the position ends up doing both economic development and tourism. He opined that it was all about making connections, working with persons that wish to locate somewhere or visit somewhere.

- Jay Arnold opined that at some point a person with a real estate background might be needed.
- Business Retention:
 - Jay Arnold opined that the position should focus on business retention.
 - Jay Arnold noted that, often, the Town does not find out about a business until it is going out of business. This position might be able to help identify and assist struggling businesses.
- Chamber of Commerce:
 - Chris Boies noted that Berryville and Clarke do not have their own Chamber of Commerce. He provided an example of how a chamber was used in another locality to identify local business needs; and, subsequently, it conducted a job fair from which local businesses were able to hire needed employees. He observed that local businesses are not going to contact competitors and work together to host a job fair. He put forth that it is about creating connections; and, while the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber is doing what it can, there is not a lot of membership in this locality that would allow the regional chamber to focus a lot of time and resources. He opined that the proposed position could help coordinate efforts.
 - Keith Dalton concurred that the Town of Berryville recognized this as an issue. He noted that Len Capelli worked with the Lord Fairfax Community College Small Business Development Center. He stated that work force development was a challenge everywhere.
 - Jay Arnold suggested that the position could help with more utilization of Berryville Main Street [BMS], which has access to grants, resources, architects, tax credits, architects, etc. Some businesses take advantage of BMS as a resource while others do not know it is available.
- Holiday Business Tour:
 - Chris Boies observed that one of Len Capelli's most effective efforts was the annual Holiday Business Tour. He opined that it was helpful to him to meet the owners and employees, hear what their challenges were, and to understand the community.
 - The tour is a retention tool.
 - The tour is good for the EDAC and IDA.
- Direct Supervision:
 - Chris Boies noted that the position had plenty to do, but must be provided the structure, direction, metrics to succeed.
 - Keith Dalton responded to David Weiss' query that it was his belief that the Town was comfortable in the partnership allowing the County to be the direct supervisor.
 - Keith put forth that he recognized that an individual cannot have multiple bosses, so, the question is how does the Town have input?

- David Weiss stated that it makes sense for the County to oversee since it covers the larger share of cost.
- Chris Boies added that the County would need to have a clear understanding of what the Town expects in return for whatever investment it is making.
- Keith Dalton concurred with Mr. Boies stating that clear expectations were critical.
- Jay Arnold put forth that the MOU would spell out some of the expectations.
- Review:
 - David Weiss stated that the position would have annual reviews.
 - David Weiss remarked that if the Committee meets quarterly it should be able to communicate issues.
- Potential Town Projects for Position:
 - Christy Dunkle provided the following:
 - Southeast Collector Project:
 - Brandon Stidham and she should soon be wrapping up with the consultant.
 - Look at business park zoning district.
 - Identify what is still relevant.
 - Identify things that need to be modified.
 - Branding
 - Community Development Committee will be issuing an RFP at the end of the month.
 - Branding is in this FY2020 budget.
- Specific Staff Action for March Meeting:
 - Develop MOU and job descriptions as a separate documents.
 - Review memorandum of understanding
 - Review job description
 - Provide reference to industry pay scales
 - Develop funding agreement
 - Draft 2020 meeting schedule
 - Involve as many partners as you can in the initial stage including IDA, EDAC, and other partners.

Kara Rodriguez commented that after the July 2019 MOU Committee meeting the Community Development Committee started chipping away at the MOU reviewing it for areas that needed tweaked. It was at the point that it was going to start sorting all of its recommendations that the Community Development Committee, with two changes at the top of County leadership, it opted to

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stay a holding pattern. She stated that if it would be helpful for the next meeting she could compile those recommendations and provide them to the Committee.

David Weiss asked Ms. Rodriguez to provide the information to Keith Dalton and Chris Boies in advance of the meeting, if possible, so they could utilize those thoughts in the review process.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting date is tentatively set for Friday, March 20, 2020, at 10:00 am in Meeting Room AB.

8. Adjournment

At 10:38 am, David Weiss adjourned the meeting.

Minutes recorded and transcribed by Lora B. Walburn