

Approved September 18, 2020

Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
July 17, 2020, Minutes

A meeting of the Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism Committee held in the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Friday, July 17, 2020, at 10:00 am.

Board: David Weiss, Chairman, Board of Supervisor;
Jay Arnold, Berryville Mayor;
Kara Rodriguez, Town Council Representative;
Doug Lawrence, Board of Supervisor Representative

Absent: None

Staff: Chris Boies, Christy Dunkle, Cathy Kuehner, and Tiffany Kemp

Press Present: Mickey Powell, Winchester Star

Also Present: Call in - Matt Bass

1. Call to Order

At 10:00 am, David Weiss called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Jay Arnold requested the addition of a discussion on the Southeastern Collector Study to the agenda in the setting of the goals period.

Kara Rodriguez moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

David Weiss	-	Aye
Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Kara Rodriguez	-	Aye
Doug Lawrence	-	Aye

3. Approval of Minutes

Jay Arnold moved to approve the May 1, 2020, minutes as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

David Weiss	-	Aye
Jay Arnold	-	Aye
Kara Rodriguez	-	Aye
Doug Lawrence	-	Aye

4. MOU Update by Chris Boies

Highlights Include:

- The MOU has been signed by both the Board of Supervisors and the Town Council of Berryville. Both parties have a copy. This MOU will automatically update every year with a three (3) year budgetary review.

5. Setting of Goals

Goals:

Discussion Included:

- County Administration currently has a rough list of Airbnb operators in the town of Berryville and Clarke County. That list is not broken down by towns.
- With Covid-19, Felicia Hart stated that we are seeing an increase of people utilizing Airbnb and other similar platforms going up, predominantly because the numbers in Clarke County are so low.
- Various locations for a hotel were discussed.
- Christine Kriz from Lord Fairfax, Small Business Development Center, has been in Clarke County, working with small businesses to be able to come out of the other side of Covid-19 and survive and take advantage of the many small business assistance loans and grants.
- Once relationships are built with the local businesses, those owners need to come and ask for assistance before it is too late. They need to realize where the tipping point is and that there is assistance available.
- The director of Economic Development & Tourism is a partner available to business owners to help minimize the speed bumps and make the process a bit easier.
- Berryville Main Street program is seen as a valuable program, but it takes a lot of effort to maintain the accreditation. Help is a challenge for this group.
- Do the businesses that pay dues to the Berryville Main Street program find this a valuable program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in the program; what can we afford to do and understand the value of the program. This is an evolving program.
- Social media sites have two (2) different target audiences; economic development and tourism.
- Felicia Hart voiced that realtors should see these groups as a resource. They don't need to know all the answers, but she can be a source of information.
- The development of a small business incentive program through the CARES Act will be a significant effort. More communication with the community once this is refined will be necessary. CARES funds must be expended by the end of the year.

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Following the discussion period, the following goals were set:

- 1) Convene a group of hospitality owners/operators
 - a. Topics to include the Transient Occupancy Tax, short-term rentals such as Airbnb's, Civil War historical visitors, etc.
- 2) Engage stakeholders on the feasibility of a hotel in Berryville.
 - a. To include owners/operators in the region
- 3) Continue efforts on small business attraction and retention.
 - a. Seminars, promotion, assistance
- 4) Engage in a dialogue with property owners of vacant buildings and developable land to spur economic activity.
- 5) Evaluate what is needed to make the Berryville Main Street program viable and successful-report back to Joint Committee on the recommendation.
- 6) Formalize website and social media strategies for economic development.
- 7) Establish relationships, and provide training for realtors in the area.
- 8) Develop and implement an incentive program using the CARES funding.

Staff To Do:

- Staff will create a chart of the four (4) groups relating to economic development and tourism; the Industrial Development Authority, the Economic Development Advisory Committee, the Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, and Berryville Main Street. This will provide each group a visual of what its role is concerning economic development and tourism.

Southeastern Collector Study:

Highlights Include:

- \$9.6 million, Berryville Area Plan calls for a Southeast Collector. It's always been a goal for the Industrial Park to have access to Route 340 and serve as a collector to take drivers from Route 340 to Route 7 East. There could be private developers interested in this project.
- Various land sites that could be utilized for this project were discussed.
- The sites of Clarke County need and want to be protected.
- The railroad crossing will be problematic. An overpass or underpass is generally 10x the cost of an at-grade crossing. At the previously discussed location, there is a sight distance issue due to curvature in the railroad, which makes it unusable.

Approved September 18, 2020

6. Next Meeting:

September 18, 2020

8. Adjourn

At 11:03 am, David Weiss adjourned the meeting.

Minutes recorded and transcribed by Tiffany R. Kemp