Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism July 16, 2021 Regular Meeting 10:00 am

At a regular meeting of the Berryville/Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development and Tourism held on Friday, July 16, 2021, at 10:00 am in the Main Meeting Room, Berryville Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia.

Members Present: Harry "Jay" Arnold, Berryville Mayor and Town Council

Representative;

Doug Lawrence, Board of Supervisors Representative;

Kara Rodriguez, Town Council Representative; David Weiss, Board of Supervisors Representative;

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Chris Boies, Christy Dunkle, Felicia Hart, Cathy Kuehner, Brandon

Stidham, and Brianna Taylor

Press Present: None

Others Present: Mary Ivie

Call to Order - Determination of Quorum

At 10:01 am, Chair Arnold called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

David Weiss, seconded by Doug Lawrence, moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote

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

3. Approval of Minutes

Kara Rodriquez, seconded by David Weiss, moved to approve the minutes for March 19, 2021, as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

4. Economic Development and Tourism

Update by Director Felicia Hart:

Goals

- 1. Convene a group of hospitality owners/operators.
 - Group has met once in person. Discussion continues as needed and when appropriate.
 - I have not heard from anyone (good or bad) regarding the new meals tax.
- 2. Engage stakeholders on the feasibility of a hotel in Berryville (this would include owners/operators in the region).
 - Work in progress COVID major consideration right now
 - In another locality, one hotel has decided to hold off on building; in another locality, two are holding off.
 - In talking with other localities, a majority of the hotels are having difficulty hiring front line staff.
 - Locally, the occupancy rate is holding at about 70% right now.
 - Local hotels are competing against the AirBnBs and short-term rentals.
- 3. Continue efforts on small business attraction, retention, and expansion (seminars, promotion, assistance). <u>I have also expanded this to include workforce initiatives and expansion.</u>
 - Working regionally regarding the Worlds of Work!, Workforce Initiative, and programs Clarke County schools are currently involved in.
 - We have brought in Virginia Career Works, the Virginia Employment
 Commission, and other local and state agencies as needed for networking.
 - Wrapped up the latest Economic Gardening program. Have met with a participant, and they are very pleased with the results and end product.
 - Note newest Clarke County unemployment numbers. We had an unemployment rate of 3.9% in March – lower than February's rate of 4%, although some of our Main Street businesses are reducing hours because of the lack of employees applying.
- 4. Engage in a dialogue with property owners of vacant buildings and the developable land to spur economic activity.

- Ongoing.
- I update my list weekly of available properties.
- 5. Evaluate what is needed to make the Berryville Main Street program viable and successful report back to Joint Committee on a recommendation.
 - Letter received from Berryville Main Street regarding reorganizing.
 - I attended their recently held public meeting, and they have elected nine new board members. They are now working on developing committees.
- 6. Formalize website and social media strategies for economic development.
 - Work in progress regarding updates;
 - A new website is in design works will better enable us to post immediately and provide more pertinent information for those who use it.
- 7. Establish relationships, and provide training for realtors in the area.
 - In regular conversations with Blue Ridge Association of Realtors (BRAR) ED Nancy Silva.
 - Made introductions with ED and Clarke County High School officials as a partnership for teaching students.
 - Made the Blue Ridge Association of Realtors aware of the new Waterloo water/sewer program and the potential at Double Tollgate.
 - Continue meeting one-on-one with realtors to learn of speedbumps/issues/concerns.
- 8. Develop and implement an incentive program using the CARES funding
 - Program completed.
 - New funds are available through the American Rescue Plan. We are currently trying to understand how these new funds can be used and when.

Other projects:

Economic Development

- Continue having broadband meetings/updates/phone calls. We are looking at opportunities to use the new American Rescue Plan funds.
- On behalf of the Virginia Health Department, we are coordinating with local businesses to schedule on-site vaccines.
 - This is a no-cost program that allows the Health Department to schedule on-site (at the businesses) vaccines for all their employees. This will help to eliminate manufacturing downtime while at the same time vaccinating more people.
 - Four local businesses have taken advantage of this program.

- The Commissioner's Office will be visiting each restaurant/store to educate them on the recently passed meals tax program and will be distributing information.
 - Working with them, I developed handouts for our restaurants regarding available grant monies from the American Rescue Plan program.
- Met with representatives from our local Department of Social Services to make them aware of several local programs and organizations for partnership opportunities.
 - Made them aware of numerous existing programs their clients may be able to take advantage of. Made several introductions to local organizations/businesses for the DSS Director to speak at to update local elected officials (Town of Berryville) and citizens (civic clubs) as to the Department of Social Services' current reality. We have now set up quarterly meetings for regular updates.
- Have monthly phone calls with representatives of the Virginia Economic
 Developers Association (VEDA). We continue to update them on the current reality of Clarke County and regionally.
- I have met several times with Ali Farahani, the owner of Oakhurst Cabinetry on Cattleman's Lane.
 - I have made several introductions with local businesses and organizations and a couple of State organizations. I am continuing to work with him on needs and opportunities as they arise.
- Continue to utilize Christine Kriz from the Lord Fairfax Small Business
 Development Center.
- Regionally (Winchester, Frederick County, Clarke County), we had a meeting with Draper Aden regarding the EPA Community-Wide Brownfields Coalition Grant.
 - This is a new opportunity grant program Clarke County agreed to participate in. The program will allow us to work with any property owner who is in need of an environmental site assessment in order to sell their property. This is especially pertinent for any older farms that may have used any chemicals or pesticides. This is a no-cost program to the property owner or Clarke County. The program has a total value of \$600,000 with no match required.
- Regionally participating in the Startup Shenandoah Valley program. This
 program works with businesses to identify and address their risks while
 scaling up.
- Continue to meet regularly with Christy Dunkle for updates/catch-up.
- I continue to meet regularly with Clarke County's Planning and Zoning Directors for updates/catch-ups.

- Have monthly phone calls with representatives of the Virginia Economic
 Developers Partnership (VEDP). We continue to update them on the current reality of Clarke County and regionally.
 - VEDP is establishing a new division Office of Education Economics. I have already made introductions with Clarke County High School officials to make them aware of the programs already in place here in Clarke County.
 - Had a conference call with VEDP's representative regarding international sales.
- Work/talk continues on both the Waterloo and the Double Tollgate areas. In addition, Clarke County is still awaiting word back from Frederick County regarding our water/sewer request.
- Continue hosting weekly meetings with Frederick County and City of Winchester EDAs. Also part of the group is Christine Kriz with Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center and Cynthia Snyder with the Top of Virginia Chamber.
 - Many businesses need employees, so we are working with the Top of Virginia Chamber, the US Chamber, and the Virginia Employment Commission to set up job fairs, both virtually and in-person, to get the information out to prospective employees.
- Regionally we are part of the Small Business Resiliency Team program as part
 of the GOVirginia this is in partnership with Lord Fairfax Small Business
 Development Center. This program assists small businesses with marketing,
 financial guidance, creating an e-commerce website, and accounting software.

SmartAsset piece

- Clarke County has been rated 8 out of 10 for 2020.
- Working directly with Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Committees to develop personalized contact lists. This would allow each committee member to talk directly with businesses to determine how we can be of greater assistance. We have a questionnaire that is a work in progress to initiate conversation and help us understand how we can be of assistance.

Tourism

- Continue to write blogs for state, regional, and local use
 - Recently hosted a travel writer who visited eight businesses in Clarke County and stayed at Smithfield Farm Bed and Breakfast.
- Continue conversations with our local farmers/farm markets about needs and opportunities.

- Our partnership in the Shenandoah Valley Spirits Trail continues to show results. Social media and website stats are improving, and we are getting visitors from further away. They are sharing and posting positive comments on our wineries and breweries.
- Expanded blog opportunities listings with the Shenandoah Valley Tourism
 Partnership (SVTP) and the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (SVTA)
- Continue to update the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) website regarding Clarke County and our assets/businesses.

Davis Weiss

- Noted the Board of Supervisors has been trying, unsuccessfully, to find an industry representative to serve on the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board. Dr. Seal of the schools represents the Chief Executive Officer position. Asked the committee if they know of anyone who may be interested to please send recommendations our way.
 - O Doug Lawrence asked how often they meet; Chris Boies responded that he believed they meet quarterly. Also noting they receive State dollars for workforce development and provide guidance on how those dollars are spent and then help with training. In addition, they are a sounding board for the industry on what the needs are for the community.

Kara Rodriquez

- Asked what the outreach has been from prospective businesses and/or property owners of vacant builders along the main street? Felicia Hart stated there is no push for the vacant building owners because they do not need the money. However, this happens along every main street; people are starting to look at this from a regional perspective.
 - Chris Boies added some traction on the last vacant lot in Industrial Park with Christy Dunkle, confirming that she has communicated with them multiple times. Chris Boies also noted that the Mercke land has had some interest.

5. Berryville Area Plan Five-Year Review Resolution Discussion

Brandon Stidham highlighted the following:

- In 1988 the Town and County adopted the first Annexation Area Agreement to cover the area's future development.
- There were later updates to the agreement in 1990 and 1992, which were efforts to create an entity to oversee this development, ultimately becoming the Berryville Area Development Authority (BADA), and to develop a comprehensive land plan specific to this area which eventually became the Berryville Area Plan.
- BADA acts as the Planning Commission for land use decision-making within this area;
 they supersede the Berryville Planning Commission and County Planning Commission.

- Christy Dunkle and I partnered on an extensive cover-to-cover update to clarify the plan in 2015 that was customer/citizen-friendly.
- Attachment 3, Map 4 Berryville Area Plan Land Uses (2015)
 - The majority of areas have been annexed into the Town though there are a few that still remain in the County.
 - The numbers on the map correspond to the narrative text within the Berryville Area Plan, which describes the existing characteristics of where the areas are, development, the current pattern of development, and current recommendations for future development.
 - Subarea 21 is the business park which is predominately developed.
 - Subareas 19A and 23 are light industrial areas.
 - Subarea 12B, located off first street, is also recommended for business park uses.
 - There are two commercial areas, Subarea 6 and subarea 7.
 - Subarea 6 is split into two pieces; the easternmost piece adjacent to subarea 7 is not annexed into the town and is referred to as the Mosby Business Area. This is recommended for business/office uses.
 - The Northern part of Subarea 7 and is currently in the Byrd family, is not annexed. This is recommended for Highway, and Visitor Commercial type uses.
- Areas for potential annexation were added in 2015, See Attachment 4, Map 5 –
 Potential Future Growth Area
 - This is predominately the Smallwood Property. Specific properties were not highlighted, but a general shaded area was noted to describe a general study area.
 - The first opportunity with the Smallwood Property is to look at and study all
 of the options for the property.
 - This was identified as a short-term priority within the first 10-years of the adoption of the plan.
- Attachment 5, Map 6 Hermitage South Potential Future Growth Area
 - This is specifically for low-density residential uses, similar to what is in the Hermitage subdivision currently.
- Attachment 7, Map 7 Western Potential Future Growth Area
 - Shows another area to be possibly looked at for residential, long-term study areas, meaning longer than the ten (10) year threshold.
- Attachment 2, Resolution to Initiate Review of the 2015 Berryville Area Plan
 - State codes require a review of the comprehensive plan every five years and take some sort of action on its status, whether that be keeping the existing plan or initiate updates/changes.
 - The review contains a bulleted list of items as a starting point; it's not intended to be an all-inclusive list but an initial scope of work.

Kara Rodriquez

— If the review starts in 2022, do you anticipate an adoption in 2022 or 2023? Brandon Stidham clarified the process usually takes 12-months, so plan on starting in 2022, but that exact date is dependent on Christy Dunkle and I's workloads. Once a direction is received from the BADA, then work would begin on the redraft, noting this would require adoption by the County Board of Supervisors and the Town Council. Christy Dunkle added that the census data would also affect when the work can begin.

Doug Lawrence

- Asked if the acreage of Berryville 20 years ago, what percent has been annexed, and what the percentage of total acreage up for annexation in January is?
 - o Christy Dunkle clarified they are still gathering information.
 - O Brandon Stidham noted that we are in a unique situation because most Towns and Counties do not have a joint annexation agreement, much less having staff that works together to accomplish this. In most cases, annexation can be an adversarial process. Adding that residential area takes up the majority of total acreage than business uses.
- Doug Lawrence additionally asked if it were a ratio of 5:1 house per job ratio?
 Brandon Stidham stated the philosophy of what percentage of your tax base should come from commercial use versus residential is the most commonly used trick.

6. Set 2021-2022 Goals

Davis Weiss asked for Felicia Hart's feelings on the current goals and if she feels they need to be updated or kept the same. Felicia Hart responded that most of the goals of 2020-2021 were more of an ongoing priority list and deal with them as they come up. Felicia Hart went over the list of 2020-2021 goals as follows:

- 1) Convene a group of hospitality owners/operators Topics to include TOT, short-term rentals, Civil War.
 - a. This is complete.
- 2) Engage stakeholders on the feasibility of a hotel in Berryville Include owners/operators in the region.
 - a. This is a continual discussion trying to find out what is going on in the world, what the current feel for a project like this is.
- 3) Continue efforts on business attraction, retention, and growth Seminars, promotion, assistance.
 - a. This is done daily when going out to talk with folks. Feels being able to assure businesses that we're here and can listen to issues and concerns and provide guidance.
- 4) Engage in a dialogue with property owners of vacant buildings and the developable land to spur economic activity.
 - a. Ongoing piece.

- 5) Evaluate what is needed to make the Berryville Main Street program viable and successful Report to Joint Committee on recommendations.
 - a. This is a work in progress and is building partnerships and relationships to help spread the message.
- 6) Formalize website and social media strategies for economic development.
 - a. Made a top priority for the upcoming year to complete the new Economic Development website.
- 7) Establish relationships, and provide training for realtors in the area.
 - a. Just went through again and had an hour-long class with some of the local realtors. Wants to get to the point of having Christy Dunkle and the Planning & Zoning directors have one-on-one conversations to help realtors better understand how to do business in the Town and County.
- 8) Develop and implement an incentive program using the CARES funding
 - a. This is complete. Has moved into working on the use of the American Rescue Funds focusing on broadband efforts around the County.

Suggestions:

Kara Rodriquez

- With so many new residents looking to move into Clarke County, believes it would be a unique opportunity to engage our new and current residents with a shop and dine local campaign by targeted marketing, direct communication, and getting back to business profiles on Social Media.
 - Felicia Hart clarified she is meeting with Sarah Ames, Director of Barns of Rose Hill, on how to get new and current folks to come downtown. Since Barns is the official visitor's center, they are looking into how to gather the data from the visitors. Currently do not know what their expectations are and what they expect when visiting. Noting they are planning on doing a bigger outreach program.
 - Kara Rodriquez wondered if the Barns of Rose Hill, in collaboration with us, can do an online survey to help gather more data.
- Saw somewhere there was going to be a "big" announcement on Broadband today by the Governor. A long-term goal, with the knowledge that infrastructure in place is a priority, would be to get feedback regarding co-op workspaces so people who don't necessarily want to drive an hour plus commute.
 - Christy Dunkle and Felicia Hart have had this conversation many times. Christy Dunkle noted in the past, there was a committee specific to this topic. The previous office space used was funded by the federal government. There are some spaces that people could use to have access to Broadband. Felicia Hart added that many folks in the Town and County have been reaching out to see how they can get Broadband. The talk is there, and we can look into spreading the word and giving more opportunities to people.

- Develop and implement an incentive program using available State and Federal funding.
- Would like to see the resident engagement, shop and dine campaign a goal for the next year.

Doug Lawrence

- Thanked Felicia Hart and Chris Boies for working on Broadband for the County. Added that Shentel is hanging wireless beam technology on the old high school antenna. The rates vary from \$60, \$80, and \$160 to get fixed wireless. Believes this should provide "pretty good" coverage to all of the Town, and they hope to have the project complete this summer. The electrical permit has been pulled. Shentel will do their own publicity. When the County finds out more information, they will let the Town know. The State wants fiber to the home but not enough resources; hopefully will add more money to the VATI program.
- Asked if the Welcome Wagons still existed? Christy Dunkle suggested that Felicia Hart may be able to work with Berryville Main Street to do welcome bags for new residents.

Felicia Hart provided a handout to the committee members with the following 2021-2022 goals as ongoing priorities:

- 1) Complete redo of the Economic Development website
- Set up quarterly meetings with Barns of Rose Hill Director Sarah Ames to discuss/work out
 - a. Partnership opportunities
 - b. Ways to gather data from our visitors
 - c. How they provide additional support to a broader business base
 - d. Ways to enhance the visitors' experience while at the Barns of Rose Hill
- 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. Shenandoah Spirits Trail
 - e. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA)
 - f. 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. Clarke Tourism,
- c. Clarke Connect,
- d. Virginia Tourism Commission
- e. Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership,
- f. Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (2 sites),

- g. Shenandoah Spirits Trail,
- h. Virginia Economic Development Authority (VEDA), and
- i. Virginia Economic Development Partnership.
- 5) Enhance relationships between County and Town departments to more easily share information.
 - a. New business licenses,
 - b. Current business licenses, and
 - 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. Engaging stakeholders on a potential hotel in Berryville,
 - b. Continue efforts on business attraction, retention, and growth to include:
 - i. Assistance,
 - ii. Promotions,
 - iii. Training and any needed support, and
 - iv. Potential co-op space.
 - c. Continue the dialogue with property owners of vacant properties and developable land,
 - d. Continue relationship with Blue Ridge Association of Realtors.

<u>Jay Arnold</u>

- Noted the Town is using the American Rescue Plan funds looking at the Wayfinding Sign Program. The Town has been looking at that for the last five-six years, trying to get enough money. Hoping to get that off the ground to direct more folks downtown and provide signage downtown. Also looking for incentives for downtown building owners to enhance the building frontage.
- Asked if there is a way to work with GPS to get information to people who travel
 in, to have something show what is available to see and do in Berryville? Felicia
 Hart confirmed it is possible, but noted it might be costly. Kara Rodriquez and Jay
 Arnold confirmed they would be interested in seeing the cost. Jay Arnold felt it
 would be nice for them to have the option. Felicia Hart added "Siri" and "Alexa"
 is another source of technology that hinders the use of GPS because people can
 ask their smartphones for what specifically they are looking for.

David Weiss

 Noted the County is planning to put the American Rescue Plan funds towards Broadband. Chris Boies added that it looked like the Governor was going to put quite a bit of money back into the Rebuild Virginia program, which was a business assistance program. Remarking the needs the County is hearing from businesses right now is not financial, but employees to work.

Felicia Hart

• Believes enhancing the relationship and discussion with the fairground would be beneficial to the businesses. Kara Rodriguez agreed that is an issue and added if there was a way to catch that information and make the businesses aware of what to expect and travelers know what is available in Clarke County. Felicia Hart felt providing either a tear-away map or a large "you are here" map would help visitors, as well as businesses, prepare so, for example, restaurants do not run out of food. There is a need to improve that relationship. Kara Rodriguez felt a QR code might be very useful.

Kara Rodriguez

- The Town adopted a plan to use a portion of the ARPA funds to redo the website and a refresh in four-five years. They are looking at ways to compliment the County and Tourism website for events. Going to be kicking off that process, imagining it is going to take a while to get going. One area to improve the available information for prospective business owners. Felicia Hart believes this is perfect timing as she redoes the Economic Development website, making sure people know the difference between whether they need to be working with the Town or the County, what the different rules are, and this is a great opportunity for collaboration.
 - Doug Lawrence asked who upgrades and maintains the Town's website currently? Kara Rodriguez stated Civic Plus handles all that. Doug further asked if it would be an advantage to have an MOU or partnership with the County's Information office?
- Suggested getting a draft list of priorities and formally vote at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is September 17, 2021

10) Adjournment

Kara Rodriquez, seconded by Doug Lawrence, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jay Arnold - Aye

Approved September 24, 2021

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

At 10:59 am, Chair Arnold adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Recorded and Transcribed by Brianna R. Taylor & Tiffany R. Kemp

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE REVIEW OF THE 2015 BERRYVILLE AREA PLAN

WHEREAS, the 2015 Berryville Area Plan was adopted by the Berryville Town Council on May 10, 2016 and by the Clarke County Board of Supervisors on May 17, 2016, and

WHEREAS, Code of Virginia §15.2-2230 requires that at least once every five years, a locality's planning commission shall review the comprehensive plan "to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan," and

WHEREAS, the Berryville Area Plan is an implementing component plan of the 2013 Clarke County Comprehensive Plan,

AND WHEREAS, May 2021 marks the five-year anniversary of the Plan's adoption.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Berryville Area Development Authority has determined that it is necessary to conduct a review of the 2015 Berryville Area Plan, and that the scope of this review shall include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- The current Plan's goals and objectives and whether they remain relevant and current or need to be updated.
- Changes in population and demographic information as reported in the final release of 2020 Census data.
- The results of the Southeastern Collector Study (PrimeAE, April 2020).
- Cooperative economic development efforts between the Town and County.
- The build-out status of residential sub-areas (including Battlefield Estates, Hermitage Section 5, Berryville Glen, and Shenandoah Crossing) and whether these sub-areas can be removed from the Area Plan.
- The status of designated potential future growth areas.
- The impact of any updates to the County or Town Comprehensive Plans since the previous Berryville Area Plan update.
- The impact of new development projects, capital projects, or transportation improvements completed since the previous Plan update.
- Development of guidance for a future review and update of the Town-County Annexation Area Agreement.
- Any other subject not addressed or inadequately addressed by the current Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Authority intends to commence this review in 2022
following publication of all Census 2020 data and as the Authority's and Staff's workload
permits.

Adopted this 26 th day of May, 2021.		
	Allen Kitselman, Chair	







