

Economic Development Advisory Committee  
September 21, 2022                      Regular Meeting                      1:00 pm

At a regular meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 1:00 pm in the Main Meeting Room, Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berryville, Virginia.

Members Present: Reid Dodson, Christy Dunkle, John Milleson, Betsy Pritchard, Bev McKay

Members Absent: Chris Bates, Mark Gribble, Christina Kraybill

Staff Present: Chris Boies, Felicia Hart, Tiffany Kemp

Others Present: None

Press Present: None

**1. Call to Order**

At 1:01 pm, Chairman Milleson called the meeting to order.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

**Christy Dunkle made a motion, seconded by Betsy Pritchard, to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:**

Chris Bates	-	Absent
Reid Dodson	-	Aye
Christy Dunkle	-	Aye
Mark Gribble	-	Absent
Christina Kraybill	-	Absent
Bev McKay	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Betsy Pritchard	-	Aye

**3. Approval of Minutes**

– July 20, 2022 – Regular Meeting

**Betsy Pritchard made a motion, seconded by Reid Dodson, to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2022, Regular Meeting as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:**

Chris Bates	-	Absent
Reid Dodson	-	Aye
Christy Dunkle	-	Abstain
Mark Gribble	-	Absent
Christina Kraybill	-	Absent
Bev McKay	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Betsy Pritchard	-	Aye

#### 4. Planning Session

Discussion highlights include:

Chair Milleson read the following email from Chris Bates, who was not in attendance: "I think you have grasped the key issues. The issue of where we intersect with other committees is key to the success of all of them. And since the supervisors are now funding part of downtown Berryville, we should define our relationship with them. Two projects that appear to fit into our focus should be Millwood and route 601. ( Bev has a handle on both)."

Chair Milleson reminded the committee that the EDAC receives instruction from the Board of Supervisors, who set the strategy of what economic development is wanted in Clarke County. Christy Dunkle suggested the committee come up with three or four priorities to present to the Board and go from there.

##### Millwood Traffic Issues

- Bev McKay provided a brief history of the Lockes Store. Brought up the fact the parking near the Locke Store gets so busy traffic bottlenecks down to one lane. Chris Boies recapped the issue of pedestrians on the roads and parking in inappropriate locations.
- After discussion, the members of the EDAC decided this was a public safety and road issue that needed to be taken to VDOT and the Sheriff's office.

##### Hay Sale and Small Animal Auction

- Christy Dunkle brought up the Hay Sale from the past, which Bev McKay confirmed is no longer happening.
- Bev McKay and Reid Dodson both brought up how it is difficult to find a source, and this could help small farms/farmers make a valuable connection.
- Bev McKay suggested combining a hay sale and a small animal auction.
- Reid Dodson mentioned that the Purrel Auctions, for a few years, were doing small animal auctions at the fairground. The auction, in the last year, moved to Frederick County because they could not get any Saturday availability at the fairgrounds.
- Betsy Pritchard felt this kind of activity could work at the fairgrounds.
- Chair Milleson asked how this would benefit the treasurer of Clarke County. Reid Dodson responded that it would create an outlet for farmers in the County. Chair Milleson further asked how it is revenue generating for the County, to which Bev McKay responded he felt it was not just revenue generating for the County but for everyone. Reid Dodson added it would bring people into Berryville. Betsy Pritchard added it gets money into the pockets of County farmers.
- Reid Dodson brought up that an auctioneer who is capable of doing it and wants to contribute would need to be found.
- After discussion, it was decided that this would be a good topic for further discussion.

##### Conversations with the Schools

- Christy Dunkle suggested opening a dialogue with the schools again on what farmers are producing. Previous school administrators were not keen on the idea but felt much information could come from the Health Department or someone regarding items such as milk production and packaging.

- Bev McKay brought up the fact that there are many requirements to take something into the schools to which Christy Dunkle felt a conversation would be beneficial.
- Betsy Pritchard added that Rappahannock County does a good job with projects like this in the school systems.
- After discussion, it was decided that this would be a good topic for further discussion.

#### Horses in Clarke County

- Reid Dodson pointed out that Equine was a rapidly expanding part of Clarke County.
- Betsy Pritchard asked if the Equine Alliance was still active in Clarke County. Felicia Hart stated that Chris Bates is still involved.
- Bev McKay mentioned that many people in the County make good money off retired racehorses through boarding and pasture rentals.
- After discussion, the committee decided there was not a significant need that the County could assist with concerning horses.

#### Commercial Coop Kitchen

- Reid Dodson stated if there were a commercial kitchen available for rent, he would be using it for his business already.
- Betsy Pritchard added that when her operation was inspected last year, she asked about renting the kitchen space out and was told to stop doing so immediately by VDACS because the kitchen was only licensed to her business and could not be shared with anyone else.
- Reid Dodson asked if the Health Department would need to be involved.
- Chair Milleson brought up the kitchen spaces in churches rented a minimum of once a month. Felicia Hart informed the committee at the Agritourism event farmers were told to reach out to their local churches if they needed larger kitchen spaces.
- On Friday, Felicia Hart told the group she was meeting with someone about a project like this.
- After discussion, it was decided that this would be a good topic for further discussion.

#### Small Livestock Clinics

- Christy Dunkle asked if there was a community need for classes on how to raise small livestock. Betsy Pritchard pointed out that the Cooperative Extension should be able to assist with this but noted they were low on staff, previously offering classes and courses but unsure if that still happened.
- Felicia Hart asked how 4-H fit into this. Betsy Pritchard responded that 4-H was for anyone 21 and under.
- Bev McKay suggested combing this with the hay and small animal auction idea.
- After discussion, it was decided that this would be a good topic for further discussion.

#### Threats

- Chair Milleson asked what, if anything, could be done about individuals buying commercial properties and leaving them to sit vacant.
- Reid Dodson felt that circled back to the Main Street problems; storefronts sitting vacant; there is nothing in place to deal with this issue.

- Bev McKay added that nutrient banks and solar farms take over production farmland which in turn takes away revenue for the County.
- Betsy Pritchard asked Chris Boies what the County stance is on solar farms. Chris Boies clarified that the zoning ordinance only allows solar farms to be located adjacent to a substation, of which Clarke County only has two; adding it is by a special use permit, not by right.
- Reid Dodson added that from the meeting packet, a slide mentioned that subdividing agricultural land to build houses costs more in the long run because of the resources it costs rather than keeping it as farmland.
- After discussion, it was decided that there was nothing the EDAC could do with this topic.

#### Business Call-Ins & Business Tours

- Chair Milleson asked the committee how they felt about going out to talk to businesses. Adding that he was unsure if people felt comfortable with the task.
- Betsy Pritchard commented that the Hospice still needed more space.
- Chair Milleson added he felt the business tours conducted in the spring and fall were his favorite meetings because you always learn something new. Betsy Pritchard stated she felt Grafton was eye-opening as a resident and had spread that knowledge to many people since that tour took place.
- After discussion, it was decided that there was not a need for a formal call-in for businesses; the committee is active in the community and will take anything they hear about to staff. It was also agreed upon to continue having two (2) business tours a year.

#### *Brief Update by Christy Dunkle*

- New psychiatrist's office across the street from the government building
- Met with the owners of the vacant lot on Chalmers; she had heard it is under contract, but she was not sure of the actual status.
  - Also spoke about the facade at the laundromat as the same people own that property.
- 37 E. Main and the old funeral home were purchased. The new owner received the grant for the facade update and is going to the Planning Commission for a Change of Use on that building.
- No news regarding the yoga studio.
- 11 & 13 E. Main St. were purchased. The building currently has Blikken Hut, a construction company, and four (4) residential apartments upstairs.
- Her understanding is a new dermatologist is going to buy the building at 15 W. Main St.
- Battletown pharmacy has a couple of people looking but is unsure of the exact status as she has heard it's under contract.
- Battletown Inn has nothing new to report.
- Hawthorne building has repointing, and work is being done on the chimney and roof.
- There is a new awning on Sweet Basil Thai.
- New windows were installed at Homespun, adding that the mural is fabulous, and she had received numerous positive comments.
- Unique Creations Studio went into Mayor Jay's empty yellow building on Main Street.
- Godfrey House has numerous Building and Zoning issues which are being worked out.

## **5. Next Meeting**

- Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – Fall Business Tour
  - Felicia Hart added that she is waiting for confirmation from Berryville Graphics on their interest. One company has backed out, and she will be reaching out to Macintosh Fruit Farm to gauge their interest.
- November 16, 2022 – Regular Meeting

## **6. Adjournment**

At 2:02 pm, Chairman Milleson adjourned the meeting.

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Minutes Recorded and Transcribed by Tiffany R. Kemp