

Aberdeen Economic Development Commission meeting
Wed. 2/21/2024

Members Present: Steve Horne, Holly Bennett, Dave Lynch, Dan Lambros, Sheryl Davis Kohl, Terrell Boothe, Terri Kearney, James Branscome, Tandra Ridgley, Robert Villani, Chuck Jacobs,
Others Present: Harrison Segall, Emily Myers, Eric Rebbert, Jerry Lacey, Howard Kohn, Uyesh Bhatti, Kara Macko, Pete Dacey, Bob Tarring

1. Mr. Horne called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. Mr. Horne read a thank you note from Ann Helton, thanking the EDC for the donation to Webster Church in Art Helton's memory.
2. Motion by Ms. Bennett, seconded by Ms. Davis Kohl to approve the January 17, 2024 minutes. Minutes approved unanimously.
3. Power Point Presentation by Eric Rebbert, interim executive director of Visit Harford
 - a. Visit Harford is Harford County's tourism economic engine & destination marketing organization
 - b. In 2022, 1.9 million visitors generated \$479 million in tourism spending
 - c. The highest traffic on the Visit Harford website goes to the following pages:
 - i. Restaurant week
 - ii. Events
 - iii. Things to do
 - d. To post an event on the Visit Harford website, go to the website, click Events, then Post Your Event
 - e. They have 2 ½ paid staff members
 - f. Steve recommended everyone go to the website & look at it, and confirm that there are links to Aberdeen
4. Treasurer's report – Chuck Jacobs
 - a. All bills paid as of this morning, 2/21/24
 - b. Checking \$17,637.27
 - c. CD \$14,328.08
 - d. Sheryl Davis Kohl motioned to approve treasurer's report
 - e. James Branscome seconded
 - f. Approved
5. B&O Train Station Update
 - a. Pete Dacey introduced Howard Kohn
 - b. Criteria that Friends have identified for whatever entity goes in the train station are as follows:
 - i. It has to pay for itself
 - ii. Needs professional management
 - iii. Needs to change the negative perception about being located next to the tracks

- iv. It should be catalytic to investment downtown – should help make people WANT to visit downtown
 - v. It needs to be compatible with the history of the station
- c. See report (attached) for below references
 - i. Viable possible options for use requiring no additional land (Helton's lot next door)
 - 1. Office space
 - 2. Community kitchen – for caterers & home-based cooking type businesses to be able to use a commercial kitchen
 - ii. Viable possible options for use requiring additional land (Helton's lot next door)
 - 1. Build senior independent housing units on the lot and use the train station for the office
 - 2. Sea container food concessions – food court
 - a. Essentially a food court, but rather than a brick & mortar building, use sea containers to house the different food options
- 6. UMUC Hospital update – Harrison Segall
 - a. They think everything is going fairly well so far
 - b. Steve mentioned that he'd heard a rumor that it was too dark up there, but that he heard Phil Crocker is on it
- 7. APG update – Emily Myers
 - a. No public events coming up in the near future
 - b. There will be a full-scale exercise in 4/24/24, first one since COVID
 - i. It's a closed event, worst-case disaster scenario
- 8. Harford County O.E.D. update – Terri Kearney – *see attachment with her notes*
 - a. The Heat Center will become the Converge center – incubator space
 - b. She will provide Tech Hub updates as it comes closer
 - c. Athena award breakfast is 3/1
 - d. Army Alliance luncheon is 3/7
- 9. Steve mentioned that the Restore grant should be coming online in the next few weeks
- 10. EDC approved the purchase of a new Earth Day banner via text a week or so ago, and the new banner has gone up across N. Rogers St. There is also a sign up near Target.
- 11. City of Aberdeen update – Tandra Ridgely
 - a. City council is waiting on planning commission reports to continue their updates on the comprehensive rezoning
- 12. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am