



Aberdeen Economic Development Commission
Wednesday, February 19, 2020
8:00am-9:16am

Minutes

Member's in Attendance: Chairman Steve Horne, Chuck Jacobs, Dan Lambros, Uyesh Bhatti, Terrell Boothe, Dave Lynch, James Branson

Other's In attendance: Randy Robertson, City Manager
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development
Robert Andrews, Harford County Office of Community and Economic Development
Peter Slusar, US Army Garrison, APG
Crystal Owens, Main Street Coordinator
Stefani Spector, Economic Development Assistant
Christy Lynch, Prospective new Commission member
Chief Henry Trabert, Chief of Police

1. Opening of Meeting
Chairman Steve Horne opened the meeting at 8:00am, and asked the Commission to introduce themselves and give a brief description of their background.
2. Approval of Minutes
Mr. Horne motioned to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2020 meeting, seconded by Mr. Lambros.
3. Update from the Department of Planning and Community Development
 - A. Façade Improvement Program
Mrs. Grover spoke on the Façade Improvement Grant, stating they were awarded \$55,000 from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The City has received applications from the Odyssey Salon and MRDC Head Start.

Mr. Jacobs asked Mrs. Grover how much was left to disperse to other businesses. Mrs. Grover said some of the funds have already been committed from last year's grant, and so she would have to calculate the exact amount.

B. TAP Grant

Mrs. Grover stated the TAP Grant was awarded to the City from the State Highway Administration for pedestrian improvements to the MARC/Amtrak Train Station. The grant is in the design phase, and the contract for the design services was awarded to EXP. The 30% design was submitted to SHA, and EXP. Is now working toward 60% design.

C. Main Street Updates

Mrs. Owens said she is currently working with a food truck operation that would like to open a storefront in downtown Aberdeen. They are looking for space that could accommodate a garage to store the food truck as well.

Mrs. Owens stated she is working with a bakery that would like to expand a second location in Aberdeen.

Mrs. Owens said she hosted a social media workshop for downtown businesses and property owners. She said she got good feedback on the workshop and will host another one.

Mrs. Owens said Grace United Methodist Church thanked her for the support during the Chocolate Festival. Grace said this year's Festival was the best in terms of attendance and sales. Mrs. Owens said this could be due to the marketing push lead by the City.

Mrs. Owens said she is working on pushing the wedding competition. One lucky couple will get a chance to have their wedding in Festival Park and a reception following free of charge.

Mrs. Owens said there are two new businesses in the downtown, The Faded Theory and the Treatment Room Esthetics. They will have their ribbon cutting in the coming weeks, and a calendar invitation will be sent.

D. Update from the Harford County Office of Community and Economic Development

Mr. Andrews stated Pier 1 announced their bankruptcy, and they have plans to close the Aberdeen distribution center and consolidate operations in their Harford County location.

Mr. Andrews stated Amazon has leased two buildings in Harford County, which are last-mile distribution centers. Mr. Jacobs asked Mr. Andrews if they have a presence in Cecil County, to which Mr. Andrews said yes, they have a two or three-million square foot warehouse. Last-mile operations are smaller and are where the Amazon drivers pick up packages for local deliveries.

Mr. Andrews said Washington Court Project in Edgewood has a contract with Coppermine to construct turf fields and sports complex. Carsins Run fields will be coming off-line, and Coppermine will replace those fields.

Mr. Andrews said there is a possibility of the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit being eliminated, which would severely effect Harford County development.

Mr. Andrews said Giovanni's Restaurant in Edgewood announced they will be closing, but may come back to Harford County with a new concept. He also said there were ribbon cuttings for Home Sense, Double Groove Brewing, and Valvoline in Hickory.

E. Update on APG

Mr. Slusar said the first annual Monument Run will be hosted on April 18, 2020. There is more information on the FMWR website.

F. Discussion on Committees

Mr. Lambros said he will take on speaking to property owners on vacancies or renovating their properties. There is a different tone coming from the Economic Development Commission volunteers versus the City of Aberdeen.

Mr. Horne said with the Committee on Ripken Stadium, there could be an opportunity to reach out and enhance the experience. The Ripken team said they will help promote downtown events. Mr. Jacobs said Harford Bank has a relationship with Ripken Stadium and owns a box. Chuck said he would be willing to lead the charge on Ripken Stadium.

Mr. Horne asked Mr. Slusar about targeting APG employees and civilians to shop and live in Aberdeen. Mr. Slusar they have not cracked the code either. We have learned there are some places they will stop, and others they will not. APG completely revamped the bowling alley, and it is hard to get APG employees and active military to go. Roughly 8% of APG employees and active military live on base. Mr. Lambros said he would rather APG not have a bowling alley or housing, and have APG military and employees bowl in Aberdeen and buy or rent homes outside the gate. Mr. Slusar said that it is Federally mandated to have housing.

Mr. Robertson said there are several hundred housing units on Edgewood Campus that will be torn down. Corvias is contracted to build new housing.

Mr. Branson said he found there is a lack of communication in APG. Mr. Slusar a new PA Officer was hired to better communication.

Adjournment

With there being no further discussion, the Economic Development Commission adjourned at 916am.