

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2025

PRESENT

Ariel Balog (Ag Industry Coordinator), Mary Bolt (Cecil College), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (NEMD URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Amy DiPietro (MRA), Sandra Edwards (OED Director), Woody Jackson (Citizen), Ed Jones (Northrop Grumman), Kimberly Justus (SWN), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Mgr.), Robert Palsgrove (Citizen), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancer)

ABSENT

Kristina Brown (Delmarva Power), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS),

GUESTS

Randy Baynes (DPL), Christie Griest (Tourism), Laure Hannan (FHNC), John Ness (WCHC), Brigitte Peters (MD Dept. of Commerce), Kim Ray (Tourism), Dan Schneckenburger (CC Director of Admin.), Toni Sprenkle (BDC), Clyde Van Dyke (CC P&R), Maura Van Syckle (SBDC), Andrea Vuncannon (APGFCU), Jessica Worley (CC Chamber of Commerce)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:00 am
- February 2025 meeting minutes approved

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- A lot of activity/changes in Annapolis - Carl Roberts has updates from GRC

Director's Report – Sandra Edwards

- Enterprise Zone (EZ) is priority
 - Testified Thursday afternoon before House, Friday before Senate
 - On Thursday, learned of proposed amendments to EZ; set to sunset June 30, 2025
 - Amend to keep EZ but phase out State contribution
 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 (BRFA) shifting costs from State to Counties
- OED Vacant Positions:
 - Hired Jake Herman as Business Development Specialist
 - Starts March 17; has been interning at USRC last two years
 - B.S. in Marketing, finishing Masters in May
 - Interviewing for OED Deputy Director next two weeks; excited to then be fully staffed
- Hosted Rooted in Our Community (RIOC) last Saturday at Cecil College
 - Different format this year (youth panel, CSA presenter, vendors, etc.) – may not continue next year, may do something different
- Tourism:
 - Presented at Cecil Leadership Institute (CLI)
 - Strategic planning process projects with 2 state-wide organizations
 - Will have expo booths at Travel & Adventure in DC and PA Bus Association in Lancaster
- Have completed one-on-one meetings with EDC members – once data compiled will share with EDC

- Economic Development Strategic Plan – still working on RFP due to schedule constraints
- March 14 - Governor coming to Cecil County with entire cabinet; details being handled by Administration

A presentation on the Enterprise Zone (EZ) – BFRA & Decade Act was given by Sandra Edwards, Director, Cecil County Office of Economic Development (Copy of presentation attached)

- A presentation on the Enterprise Zone provided:
 - by definition, what is it, parameters of the program, qualifying criteria, maps & census data, eligibility standards, tax incentives, examples for analysis, reported property tax revenues, recent/prime examples in Cecil County, what the Enterprise Zone has done for Cecil County, capital investments made Statewide, potential Cecil County projects in next 5 years within EZ, why support the EZ.
- The EZ is a vital tool for business attraction and retention in Cecil County.
- A major push being made by Cecil County Administration to keep the EZ from being sunsetted.

Others:

Cecil College – Dr. Mary Bolt

- Summer Camp time – have partnerships with FHNC, Plumpton Zoo, Chesapeake Wooden Boat Builders School
- April 12 – Cecil College Foundation’s Collegium de Vinum Gala; largest fundraiser; last year raised \$500K toward student scholarships

Administration – Dan Schneckenburger

- County Council confirmed Raymond “Chick” Hamm as new Director, Finance.
 - Starts March 17; being briefed on budget updates; fills last position on Administration’s team
 - Brings extensive financial background as well as professionalism to Finance Office.

Cecil Chamber/GRC – Dr. Carl Roberts

- General Assembly has not seen this number of bills, not normal volume
- Acknowledge County Exec, Dir of Admin, Dir. Econ Dev., entire team for level of professionalism
- April 13 - Legislative Wrap-up Breakfast @ Cecil College, TC208, 8:00 – 10:30am
- GRAC on Energized Act update tomorrow
- March 13 – Senator Alsobrooks is guest
- March 20 -Update on FY26 State Budget
- Two weeks to Sine Die
- Updates for Strategies for new Budget Year

REMINDER: April 2, 2025, EDC Meeting will be VIRTUAL

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant