

MINUTES
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
May 9, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Thompson, Chair
Chris Streett, Vice Chair
Todd Boyle
Bill Seccurro
Jay Ellenby
Bill Kelly
Tucker McNulty

VIA TELEPHONE: Pat Richards, Town Commissioner

IN ATTENDANCE: Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Angela Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator
Christine McPherson, Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Donna Dickey, Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Catherine Butrim, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Conference Room, 39 N. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes – April 11, 2019

Mr. Kelly moved and Mr. Streett seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2019 meeting.

The motion carried.

TOWN BUSINESS UPDATE:

General Business Update and ED Dept. Update

Ms. Heidenreich stated that a ribbon cutting was held on Tuesday for Chick-fil-A. She advised that Chick-fil-A will have approximately 100 employees at each location in Bel Air and Forest Hill.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that a ribbon cutting will be held at DIA Massage, located at 335 Kenmore Avenue, on May 16 at 5 p.m.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that a ribbon cutting will be held at Berkshire Hathaway, located at 124 N. Main Street, on May 29.

Mr. Thompson stated that Crabby Axe has their permit and is moving forward with construction.

Ms. Robertson stated that Taco Bell at Bel Air Town Center will be razed and rebuilt for an improved layout.

Ms. Robertson stated that Kevin Small informed her that Popeyes will not receive their U&O from the Town until Bel Air Town Center moves forward with the parking plan they brought before ECDC last year or until they receive approval from the other tenants to give Popeyes the U&O without the parking plan in place.

Mr. Thompson stated that they expect to receive the grading permit for 45 Gordon Street by the end of June, and they expect a mid-July start date.

Ms. Robertson stated that the Tollgate Marketplace parking lot will be landscaped as they prepare for the openings of Sprouts and Homesense.

Ms. Robertson stated that there have been some inquiries about the former Friendly's location.

Ms. Robertson stated that UM Upper Chesapeake is working on parking-related items prior to the issuance of a building permit for their Ambulatory Surgical Center.

OLD BUSINESS:

Outdoor Dining – General Recap

Ms. McPherson stated that she and Mr. Kelly attended the Town of Bel Air Traffic Safety Task Force meeting. She advised that the representative from State Highway Administration (SHA) informed them, ahead of a walk through the Town planned with State Highway representatives on June 4, that the State has turned a blind eye to outdoor dining, specifically mentioning Sunny Day Café; and the representative advised that the State will not continue to do so much longer. Ms. McPherson stated that the SHA representative was emphatic that the outdoor dining operations at Sunny Day Café needs to be scaled back and that the curbside tables should be removed for safety reasons.

Mr. Kelly advised that the SHA representative informed him that there is room to negotiate with the State regarding outdoor dining. Ms. McPherson stated that he informed her that liability is the biggest issue and that negotiation could include the following:

- An MOU for the use of the sidewalk
- Buying back the sidewalk
- Leasing the sidewalk

Mr. Thompson inquired if there was any discussion about pedlets. Ms. McPherson advised that there was not because the SHA representative pointed out it would add another level of liability anytime a safety measure, such as a bollard, would be erected.

Ms. McPherson advised that the SHA representative questioned why Black-Eyed Suzie's needs sidewalk dining when they have a rooftop deck, and he expressed the concern that distance between the fence around their dining area and the flower bed is less than 5' for ADA accessibility.

Ms. Dickey advised that the Alliance plans to call a meeting with all the restaurants to discuss this matter.

Ms. McPherson advised that this could be an opportunity for the Town to step up and create guidelines for what the Town envisions for outdoor dining. She advised that the Town will need to address umbrellas as well.

Mr. Securro advised that the speed of traffic on Main Street should be addressed by the Traffic Safety Task Force because people might be uncomfortable using pedlets alongside speeding traffic.

Mr. McNulty inquired why the Town is spending so much time on sidewalk dining given the SHA resistance and liability issues, and if the return is worth lobbying for it. Mr. Kelly advised that the availability of sidewalk dining makes Bel Air a different kind of downtown and not just a place to drive through. Mr. McNulty advised that the restaurants themselves should be more on board with the lobbying effort.

Ms. Dickey inquired if the sidewalk under the archway on Courtland Street is privately owned. Ms. Heidenreich stated that she believes that this is private property because it falls under the building footprint.

Routes 1 & 24 Visioning – Schedule Separate Meeting

Discussion about Route 1 & 24 visioning will be tabled for a date when a special meeting can be scheduled with Kevin Small in attendance.

Armory Revenue and Vision – New Property Manager Update

Ms. Heidenreich advised that Julia Potler has been hired as the new full-time events manager at the Armory. Ms. Potler has a degree in management and events planning and was previously overseeing events for Goucher College. Ms. Heidenreich advised that at some point,

she would like to invite Ms. Potler to be a part of the discussion about the Armory vision with ECDC.

Mr. Richards advised that the MOU received the blessing of the Town Counsel, but it will still need the approval of the Town and the Downtown Alliance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Armory Marketplace Incubator Update

Ms. Heidenreich advised that Kore Bootcamps graduated from their incubator space at Armory Marketplace and moved into a space on Main Street. She advised that there are applicants under consideration for Suite 105, and the committee is meeting next week to review these applications. Ms. Robertson advised that the Town conducted 11 tours of Armory Marketplace and yielded six (6) applications from that process. Ms. Heidenreich advised that some of the businesses that are not ready for an incubator space are perfect candidates for the Downtown Alliance's business accelerator program and a co-working space. Ms. McPherson advised that it might be beneficial to have a member of the Downtown Alliance involved in the selection of businesses that will occupy incubators at Armory Marketplace. Ms. Heidenreich advised that she is open to any recommendations the Downtown Alliance would make. Mr. Richards advised that he and Ms. Heidenreich can discuss the inclusion of the Downtown Alliance in the review process.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that Armory Marketplace received a sustainability award from the Maryland Department of Planning Sustainable Growth Commission.

Town Properties

Mr. Thompson inquired if there is an opportunity to surplus properties, like the City of Aberdeen has done, in an effort to acquire additional tax base in Bel Air and help offset the cost of the additions and renovations to the police station. Mr. Richards stated that he certainly is in support of any strategy that will help offset the cost of the police station. Mr. Thompson stated that the Hickory Avenue and Lee Street lots are available, but they are not being targeted for any specific uses other than parking. He advised that the question is whether those properties would generate enough revenue to put a dent in the dollar figure needed to fund the police station. Mr. Richards stated that the Town should look at what other benefits these strategies bring, including broader residential or mixed-use development and at partnering with the Planning Department to

make sure the properties are keyed up from a regulatory perspective to be more attractive to the development community.

Mr. Thompson advised that ECDC keep this issue as an open item to discuss.

OTHER:

Downtown Alliance Update

Ms. McPherson stated that the Belle Aire Market will take place on Mother's Day at the Main Street lot next to the Sheriff's Office.

Ms. McPherson stated that the BBQ Bash will take place on August 9-10, and WXCY-FM is bringing in two (2) national recording artists to perform.

Ms. McPherson stated that the Alliance is working through the co-working project and the feasibility study, and they are working on grant funding for projects in 2020. She advised that there is approximately \$8,000.00 still available from the current Façade Improvement grant.

Ms. McPherson stated that she has accepted a position with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development as the Program Manager for Maryland Main Streets. She advised that her last day with the Downtown Alliance is May 24, and she will begin her new position on May 29. Ms. McPherson thanked the members of ECDC for their partnership and mentoring and stated that she is excited about where Bel Air is now and where it is going. Ms. Dickey stated that the Main Street Social will be held on May 22 at MaGerks, and all are welcome to attend and say farewell to Ms. McPherson.

June Meeting Location and Fall Schedule

The members present agreed to hold the June ECDC meeting at Independent Brewing Co.

Ms. Heidenreich advised that she will reach out to the ECDC members in August to begin discussing nominations for the Bel Air Business of the Year, which will be celebrated on October 24 at the Liriodendron. She suggested that ECDC discuss a tribute to Andy Klein at the Business of the Year event.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.