

**TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR STANDARD MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 – 3:00 P.M.
TENT BEHIND TOWN HALL**

A Regular Standard meeting of the Economic Development Authority held on Thursday, September 10, 2020, at 3:00 pm under the tent behind Town Hall.

**A. WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER, AGENDA REVIEW and APPROVAL - by
Nathan Berg – Chairman**

The meeting was called to order and the agenda was approved.

B. ROLL CALL, ASCERTAIN QUORUM, REVIEW OF AGENDA

Members of the Board Present: Mr. Robert Trevorrow
 Ms. Shanna Carrico
 Mr. Kenny Shuman
 Mr. Don Adams
 Mr. Nathan Louis Berg

Members of the Board Absent: Mr. Ernest Daniels

Administrative/Town Staff: Tonya Triplett, Community Development
 Coordinator
 Mrs. Janice Dornon, Administrative Assistant,
 Secretary

Comprising a quorum of the Board

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- December 12, 2019
- August 12, 2020

A motion made by Nathan Berg, seconded by Kenney Shuman to approve December 12, 2019 and the August 12, 2020 minutes as presented.

Mr. Robert Trevorrow	Aye
Ms. Shanna Carrico	Aye
Mr. Kenny Shuman	Aye
Mr. Don Adams	Aye
Mr. Nathan Berg	Aye

Minutes for December 12, 2019 and August 12, 2020 were unanimously approved.

D. EDA TREASURER REPORT

Ms. Shanna Carrico made the following announcements:

- EDA has written a check for the façade grant program. This grant was for business outside the immediate Main Street area.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

Tonya Triplett made the following announcements:

- Mrs. Tonya Triplett presented checks to three façade grant recipients, \$2,500.00 each.
 1. Farmers Mutual Insurance
 2. Gibson's Service Center
 3. Puerto Novo Mexican and Seafood Restaurant
- Mrs. Tonya Triplett was asked to be a member of the task force team for grant money received by Washington County. She has helped to deliver 1.6 million in funding to small businesses in the Washington County area.
- Mrs. Tonya Triplett told the board that the second round of funding would be for 1.2 million. She will be sending out an email blast to the community to advise the small businesses about the second grant and how they might apply for these funds. To apply the business will be asked to supply a financial statement, some businesses are not happy with supplying this much information, in those cases, Mrs. Triplett suggested that they provide a profit loss statement to compare 2019 to 2020. The maximum a single business can receive is \$20,000.
- Mrs. Tonya Triplett said that she has applied for supplemental Cares Art funding.
- Mrs. Tonya Triplett let the board know a series of videos will be produced about the industrial section of the county. Tonya will focus on the Small Business Incubator, Stone Mill Tech Park. Mrs. Triplett will be contributing to the videos by

giving accountability to life and livability of a small town. Tonya will focus on small-town living.

- Mrs. Tonya Triplett has been working with the DHCD and has obtained \$200,000 in Covid-19 grant money. To apply for this grant a business must have been in business before Covid-19. The specifics will be presented to the Town Council at the September 24, 2020 meeting.

- Mrs. Tonya Triplett announced that several businesses in Town are in the process of updating their buildings or will be opening a new business, they are:

- Former Zazzy's – renovation on the façade
- Wolfe Hills Coffee/Cider- new business
- Forget Me Not – new owner
- Pal's Sudden Service – new business

- Mrs. Tonya Triplett mentioned that the Abingdon Tourism Department received \$47,500 from the Cares Act and the funds were used to pay premiums for Advertisements through Facebook, Blue Ridge Outdoor and AAA.

- Mrs. Tonya Triplett noted that the Town of Abingdon Financial Committee agreed to present Martha Washington Inn with \$40,000 and the Barter Theatre with \$50,000 from the Town of Abingdon.

- Mr. Nathan Berg asked about the grant application procedure, Mrs. Triplett responded with the following process:

1. Applicate to complete an application
2. Applicant will be approved or denied
3. Applicant will complete the required work, keeping receipts for material
4. Applicant will turn in the receipts for work completed and if the completed work is approved, the matching grant will be awarded.
5. Some of the recipients are required to go before the Planning Commission to get approval for renovations.

A motion made by Nathan Berg seconded by Kenny Shuman to approve the application as submitted by Tonya Triplett for the grant process.

Mr. Robert Trevorrow	Aye
Ms. Shanna Carrico	Aye
Mr. Kenny Shuman	Aye
Mr. Don Adams	Aye
Mr. Nathan Berg	Aye

EDA board unanimously approved the grant application as presented by Tonya Triplett.

F. TOURISM DIRECTOR REPORT - None

G. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Kenny Shuman gave the board the status of the new Comp Plan. The Comp Plan will go before the Town Council as a Public Hearing. Once approved the new Comp Plan can be implemented.

Mr. Kenny Shuman stated that EPR has created a very good Comp Plan.

Mr. Nathan Berg noted that the new Comp Plan process appears to be consistent.

Mr. Kenny Shuman stated that under the new Land Use section in the new Comp Plan that the Meadows project would never have been approved.

H. OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Tonya Triplett said the Abingdon Main Street will need to provide evidence as to how the money rewarded to them was used and the three businesses that were awarded funds.

Mr. Kenny Shuman suggested that the EDA not fund Abingdon Main Street again.

Mr. Tonya Triplett told the board that the Town would be receiving a \$200,000 grant on September 17, 2020. For a restaurant to receive funds, they would have to supply a minimum of three meals a week, spending at least \$980.00. Tonya suggested that an MOU be filled out as well.

I. CREEPER TRAIL CONSERVANCY REPORT

Ms. Lisa Quigley represented the Creeper Trail Conservancy and elated to the board that the Creeper Trail in the number one economic driver in Southwest Virginia.

Ms. Lisa Quigley noted that since the Covid-19 pandemic began that they have lost 1.) Emergency funding for the trail, and 2.) Volunteer bike patrol has been pulled from riding the trail. These groups were responsible for helping wounded visitors on the trail. For their safety due to Covid-19, they are no longer providing this resource.

Ms. Lisa Quigley explained that the Conservancy helped coordinate the closing of the trail in April and the re-opening on May 12, 2020. They decided on the best practices to use when opening the trail for safety issues presented by Covid-19. Lisa said that they received 1100 phone calls within 20 days with questions about the trail.

Ms. Lisa Quigley announced that the trail restrooms would be re-opened by the end of the day on September 11, 2020. Lisa also expressed that the local bike shops are doing great business with an increase of 25-30 % in business since 2019.

Ms. Lisa Quigley told the board that the Master Plan Impact Study that had previously been postponed is scheduled to start back up later this fall. The conservancy has selected the Equinox Group from Asheville, NC to provide a model that can be used for years to come as a living document, the last study was completed in 2004. The new study will include 1.) GIS strategy for the trail and adjacent properties, all 34 miles to include setbacks, conservation, and the Meadows project and its encroachment on the trail, and 2.) in-depth study of trail maintenance and safety plan. The group will be in Abingdon at the end of September to gather data for the study. The study will be completed by late summer-early fall in 2021. The data from this study will be publically available.

Mrs. Tonya Triplett said she would work to get someone to open the Creeper Trail Welcome Center.

Ms. Lisa Quigley thanked Mr. Shuman for all his support with the Creeper Trail.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

K. NEW BUSINESS

Delegate William Wampler: Outdoor Refreshment Zone

Delegate William Wampler presented to the EDA his outline for the new bill he will be presenting to the Virginia House of Delegates in January 2021, the Outdoor Refreshment Zone. This bill, if approved, will give local towns, cities and municipalities the option of electing to support this proposal in their locality. This bill will allow the public to take out food and alcohol from outside of an establishment and go to a designated area to continue to socialize. The proprietor would have to supply take out social cups with the establishment name and/or logo on it. The local Police Department would patrol the Refreshment Zone.

Delegate William Wampler explained that there are two types of licenses a business can hold, 1.) Commercial Lifestyle, the new Abingdon Food City has this type of license; you can have a glass wine while you shop or 2.) Special Event License, such as a farmers market or an outdoor music event.

Delegate William Wampler suggests that the municipalities allow up to A one-half-mile area for the Refreshment Zone and to set closing hours adhering to local ordinances. Localities would be the driving force behind this intuitive, not the state. The local Town Councils will decide where the Refreshment Zone area is and what the hours should be.

Delegate William Wampler said that food trucks would benefit from this initiative to increase their revenues. Food Trucks could be allowed to park outside the Refreshment Zones to increase their business and draw visitors.

Ms. Lisa Quigley said that visitors on the Creeper Trail would visit the Refreshment Zone after a day on the trail.

Ms. Tonya Triplett added that if customers had another place to socialize after enjoying a meal at a local restaurant that would free up a table for the next customers, therefore increasing their business.

Delegate William Wampler explained that the Abingdon Police and the Washington County Police would be responsible for enforcing drunk driving, strong language, fights, etc. The municipality will construct a safety plan for policing the area. UBER drivers could benefit and would have a designated area for pick up. If the bill is passed and a Town chooses not to participate they could still market their Town as being a family-friendly community. Local Towns could use this a revenue-generating tool. Delegate Wampler has spoken to Chief Holbrook and confirmed that no additional Police Officers or Police Vehicles would be needed to police the Refreshment Zone.

Delegate William Wampler said that in creating his bill he hopes that it will be a way to help the local economy and to help a business make money to sustain their business during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Nathan Berg asked Mr. Wampler if the EDA wanted to formally support this bill what would the steps be. Mr. Wampler said he would let the EDA know as the bill progresses.

L. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Mr. Nathan Berg set up the next EDA meeting for November 12, 2020, in the Council Chambers, second floor of the Abingdon Town Hall.
2. Mrs. Tonya Triplett announced that the new EDA member will be Mr. Charlie Fugate. Mr. Fugate will be replacing Alex Brown.

M. ADJOURNMENT

On Motion by Mr. Robert Trevorrow, seconded by Mr. Nathan Berg, for the Board to adjourn the meeting.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ms. Shanna Carrico	Aye
Mr. Robert Trevorrow	Aye
Mr. Ernest Daniels	Aye

September 10, 2020
Regular Standard Meeting

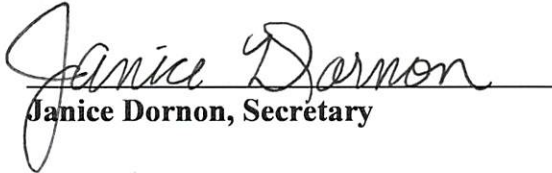
Mr. Kenneth Shuman
Mr. Nathan Berg

Aye
Aye

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 P. M.



Nathan Berg, Chairman



Janice Dornon, Secretary