

**TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR STANDARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 – 3:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS-MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Regular Standard meeting of the Economic Development Authority was held on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 3:00 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Building.

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

Meeting called to order and agenda 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. Charlie Fugate  
Mr. Ernest Daniels

Administrative/Town Staff:

Mrs. Janice Dornon, Administrative Assistant

**Comprising a quorum of the Board**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- November 12, 2020
- January 14, 2021

A motion made by Mr. Kenny Shuman, seconded by Mr. Robert Trevorrow to approve the November 12, 2020 and January 14, 2021 minutes as presented.

#### **D. CREEPER TRAIL CONSERVANCY UPDATE**

Lisa Quigley told the group that the Creeper Trail Club was formed in 1989. The club has decided to become proactive about the trail, its maintenance and sustaining the trail. The trail is a great economic resource to the community, with three entrance points.

Ms. Quigley talked about the Economic Impact Study the club has initiated which would be completed by December 2021. This study will gather pertinent information and create a master plan for the long term. The EDA is helping to support this endeavor.

Ms. Quigley notified the board that there will be no more benches allowed as a memorial beacon, only trees.

The Creeper Trail Conservancy Club has plans for two emergency stations along the trail, emergency call boxes, and a 911 call box. They are looking into installing markers at interval points on the trail to show you where you are, how far it is to the nearest restroom and the emergency stations. A self-serve bike repair station will be constructed.

Ms. Quigley announced plans for a Bike Pump Track station on the trail. This would bring in a different demographic to the trail. The trail has seen a 30 percent increase in visitors during the pandemic.

The Creeper Trail Conservancy Club is hoping to have several mature trees implanted as a screen between the Sports Complex and the Creeper Trail.

Ms. Quigley said that several Ash trees will be removed as a precaution due to an Ash Worm infestation. They will be working with the Town Arborist, Kevin Sigmon to determine which trees need to be cut down as a preventative safety measure.

The Creeper Trail Conservancy Club will be distributing gravel on the trestles. The club is also working on having a Virginia License Plate available for vehicles. The design for the license plate will come from a book called, "The Virginia Creeper Trail Companion", written by Ed Davis and Ed Morgan.

#### **E. WILLIAM KING ARTS DIGITAL LAB PRESENTATION**

Laken Bridges and Alice Salyer were the presenters from the William King Arts Digital Lab.

Ms. Bridges manages the adult education and the art lab at William King. The art labs are located in the old Washington County offices. The labs have several local sponsors. The use of the labs is open to the community.

Ms. Salyer is the digital lab associate. They have ten labs for training with workspaces. The labs offer the following:

1. Adobe Training – learn Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign and Premiere Pro.
2. Digital Drawing Tablet – use art-making tools.
3. Print Services – small-batch personal printing and fine art printing services.
4. Drone – training on how to use drones, taking real estate, agriculture and create fine art photos with enhanced printing.
5. 3 D Printing- design art, jewelry, toys, replacements parts, prototyping and so much more. Great for entrepreneurs.
6. Laser Cutting- Etching, engraving, laser cutting on wood, paper, acrylic, leather and more.

The facility offers evening hours to accommodate the working community. Use of the labs is free until July, great for entrepreneurs starting a business or someone interested in photography. The facility has two Canon Rebel cameras for public use. The facility introduces technology to the community and works under the William King Museum umbrella.

EDA members agreed that this facility would be a good activity for Tour Buses.

EDA may take a tour of the digital lab's facility at the William King Museum.

## **F. ABINGDON MAIN STREET**

Ms. Nicole Childress update the members on Abingdon Main Street.

1. First Fridays starting in May, Main Street stores will have later hours, pop-up art events, special restaurant menus, sidewalk sales, and the Washington County Library will be holding a storybook reading for the children.
2. Halloween preparations have begun.
3. January Jams to return in 2022.
4. Abingdon Main Street has regained its accreditation.
5. Silver Lining Fund- helps small businesses during Covid-19 with commerce platforms, building websites, even purchasing a TV for a yoga shop for them to have remote classes online.
6. Façade improvements, they plan to pick a business and have a spring painting to spruce up the storefront.
7. They will be attending the National Main Street Conference at no cost due to a grant.
8. Mr. Berg mentioned that the Main Street program also helps businesses with architectural renderings.
9. There is a need for interior rendering.

**G. TREASURERS REPORT**

Ms. Shanna Carrico was not sure of the account balance at this time due to recent checks issued to restaurateurs for the Prepared Meals Program. EDA is paying the restaurant, then being reimbursed about a month later.

Ms. Triplett let the members know that a story in the local newspapers has brought attention to the local Prepared Meals Program. The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association will be meeting and asking to send this program a check for \$1,000.00 to fund additional meals.

Mr. Berg stated that this program is giving back to local restaurants with nearly a sixth of their weekly revenue being given back to them while helping to feed the community.

Ms. Triplett said that the Prepared Meals Programs delivered 1100 meals in January, 2021, paying the restaurants \$13,200, 1500 meals in February paying the restaurants \$18,000 and are predicting to delivery 1800 meal in March paying the restaurants \$20,400. This program used the funding to purchase a cooler and freezer for Faith-In-Action.

Ms. Triplett told the EDA members that they had enough funding left for one more applicant in the Façade Program. Mamma Mia is interested in applying for the Façade Program.

**H. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT**

Mrs. Tonya Triplett said they are waiting on Wolf Hills Coffee to send in their application for the Façade Improvement Program.

Mrs. Triplett informed the members that there were fourteen participants in the 2021 Business Challenge, two of the participants are looking for a location on Main Street for their business.

Mrs. Triplett is on the Attractions Committee, this committee gets together to share events going on within the community.

Virginia Highlands Festival will be holding its first miniature golf tournament on April 17, this event will be held at the back of the Martha Washington Inn. There will be 20 teams and a twenty-dollar fee. This event will sell raffle tickets and have games and more.

Ms. Triplett announced that there have been fourteen new businesses to start during the Covid-19 pandemic. Blue Hill Market and Abingdon Gifting have expanded their businesses during the pandemic.

Ms. Triplett has gained help with Tourism from Tennille Montgomery. Ms. Montgomery is helping with the Tuesday Spotlight initiative. The business being spotlighted are the ones that opened during the pandemic.

Mrs. Triplett said the Tenderloins Steak & Seafood will be opening this week, Ron Mink will have two Ice Cream Shops opening next week, one at exit 19 and one in the old Chef Heathers building on West Main Street. There will also be an Italian Restaurant and an upscale Mexican Restaurant opening soon.

Mr. Berg mentioned that the Summers Building at the corner of Main and Court when renovated will house a Sports Club, Cellar, and Rooftop Bar.

Mrs. Triplett let the group know that the Holliday Inn Express is now open with 82 rooms and the Hampton Inn plans on opening in July with 80 rooms.

Mrs. Triplett asked that everyone do the "Best of Abingdon" survey. The survey will end on April 15<sup>th</sup>, taking the rest of April to tally up the voting. Once tallied Tonya, Tenille and Jon Phelps will be going around to the winners in May to deliver a new 2021 flag and a certificate.

Mrs. Triplett said that a part-time Visitors Center employee is working at the Visitors Center and helping to update the website and getting the Hassinger House emptied. Amber has the visitor racks ready and getting new materials printed for the racks. The Finley House Visitors Center is open Thursday-Friday-Saturday. Tonya has asked for a full-time employee for the Findley House with her 2021-2022 budget.

Virginia Tourism has put together a virtual tour and a 9-slide video for motor tour businesses. Towne Center will be hosting 25 Airstream motor homes, May 13-16.

Mrs. Triplett let the group know that for \$25.00 you can Gnome someone.

Mrs. Triplett has received a forty-thousand dollar grant to do a housing study. This study will show how many housing units are needed for the locality.

## **I. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None**

## **L. OLD BUSINESS/MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

### **A. Outdoor Refreshment Zone**

Mr. Berg told the group that the bill for the Outdoor Refreshment Zone is on the Governor's desk waiting to be signed. Information on this program has been set to local restaurants. EDA is supporting this program. If the bill is passed, each Town will have the ability to participate or not.

Mr. Berg noted that The Girl and the Raven façade grant has been paid.

Mr. Berg told the EDA that he would be working with Town staff as a Stakeholder on the new Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance.

Mr. Shuman mentioned that there is an online survey for the new ordinance updates. Mr. Shuman would like to see clarification of definitions, such as short-term rentals.

Mr. Berg thinks that pocket neighborhood housing, low-income housing and high-density housing should be included in the new ordinance.


#### **N. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. The next EDA meeting will be May 13, 2021 at 3:00, in the Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building.

#### **O. ADJOURNMENT**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 P. M.



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**Nathan Berg, Chairman**



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**Janice Dornon, Secretary**