

Meeting Minutes  
Virtual Meeting  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
March 23, 2021

At a virtual meeting of the Economic Development Authority of York County, Virginia, held on March 23, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. using the Zoom platform, those present were:

Steven A. Meade, Chairman  
Harmon J. Coxton, Vice Chair  
Vernard E. Lockwood, II  
J. Mark Carter  
John Biagas  
R. Anderson Moberg

Others present:

Neil Morgan, County Administrator  
Mark Bellamy, Deputy County Administrator  
James Barnett, County Attorney  
James W. Noel, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer and Director of Economic Development  
Melissa M. Davidson, Assistant Director of Economic Development  
Amanda R. Ridings, Coordinator of Economic Development

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman Meade.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was established with six members present.

**CITIZENS' COMMENT PERIOD**

None.

**PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RETAIL STRATEGIES PROPOSAL**

Mr. Noel reported that Retail Strategies is a consulting firm specializing in providing retail development services for municipalities. Staff has been considering this type of assistance for some time and the COVID-19 impact on our brick and mortar retailers has heightened the need for help in this sector. The proposed contract is for three years, \$45K in year one, and \$35K in years two and three. Like all of our multiyear contracts, everything after year one is subject to annual appropriation. He recommended it be funded through our Capital Fund.

Mr. Noel explained that, based on the current and future retail environment, engaging with a consultant to assist us in attracting new retailers and restaurants seems to make sense. Retail Strategies provides a full service approach, using analytics, unique strategy development, and direct recruitment on our behalf. They do not focus necessarily on large retailers and seem to be very good at filling smaller retail and restaurant spaces. They come highly recommended by some of the top local retail leasing firms.

Mr. Noel stated that he doesn't think the fallout from the pandemic has fully materialized and he thinks we will be seeing more retail closings. Additionally, he doesn't think we have seen full pandemic impact on our restaurants. There is a strong sentiment in our citizens to "Keep It In York County" if the goods or services are available.

Mrs. Davidson stated that she liked that Retail Strategies markets themselves as an "extension of your staff" and not some random contractor calling local businesses. They are also well-versed in restaurants and finding unique options to fill vacant retail spaces.

Mr. Noel reported that Retail Strategies uses the most up-to-date methods of tracking consumer behavior and trying to figure out what might work best in your market.

Mr. Coxtton asked if Retail Strategies was local.

Mr. Noel stated that they are based out of Alabama, but part of the contract is that they will come here. They also do research online on the community. They do have experience in Virginia.

Mr. Morgan commented that we are talking about a company that has very granular information that shows the different categories of people and spending in the area.

Mr. Carter motioned to approve the Retail Strategies proposal.

Mr. Biagas seconded the motion.

On roll call the vote was:

Yea: (6) Biagas, Carter, Coxton, Lockwood, Moberg Meade  
Nay: (0)

### CROSS ACCESS EASEMENT AGREEMENT

Mr. Noel reported that in 2018 we took possession of a 1.79 acre parcel, located at 6714 Geo. Wash. Mem. Hwy., that was surplus property from a County pump station site. We traded the County for a parcel we owned near Edgehill for use on a regional storm water project. The parcel we traded was donated to the EDA by our former member, Harvey Weinstein.

Mr. Noel explained that the most logical way to provide access to our site appears to be through the adjacent parcel owned by NORIT L.L.C. The concept plan shows an entrance to our property running through the NORIT parcel. This would require a cross access easement with NORIT and some sort of compensation. The preliminary estimate for constructing the entrance/driveway is between \$100K -\$140K.

Mr. Noel stated that in order to effectively market this parcel, we need to clarify and quantify the access issue. The first steps in that process will be engaging a civil engineer/surveyor to prepare plans for an entrance, developing the necessary easement language, and getting bids for the entrance/driveway work.

Mr. Carter suggested working with the county to abandon the current entrance to the pump station because it would go over better with VDOT not to have two driveways so close together.

Mr. Meade suggested we also think about signage due to the lack of visibility.

Mr. Noel stated that he will incorporate these issues in the request to the civil engineer to prepare the entrance plans, which will be the next step in this process.

### KINGSGATE SHOPPING CENTER GRANTS

Mr. Noel reported that the Kingsgate Shopping Center owner, Mr. Kadish, submitted an incentive application. He asked for \$500,000, but staff is recommending \$200,000. He is bringing in two quality retailers with long-term leases.

Mr. Noel explained that the incentive package of \$200,000 would be rear-loaded over time. The projected annual sales are \$6.5; million a year between the two retailers, which will garner almost \$100,000 a year in sales tax alone. The first \$100,000 incentive would be based on them completing the build out and façade improvements.

Mr. Meade asked if this would have to go to the Board of Supervisors for approval after the EDA has approved it.

Mr. Morgan explained that, if it's approved, he plans to send the board a memo and advise them about the prospect and the EDA's action to provide an incentive.

Mr. Lockwood motioned to approve the incentive request as proposed for the Kingsgate Shopping Center.

Mr. Carter seconded the motion.

On roll call the vote was:

Yea: (6) Carter, Coxton, Lockwood, Moberg Biagas, Meade  
Nay: (0)

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **RIVERWALK RESTAURANT DESIGN SERVICES RFP**

Mr. Noel reported that we have received twelve responses to our RFP for architectural services for Riverwalk Restaurant. The project review committee members are currently reviewing the proposals. A meeting has been scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> to shortlist the proposers and set a schedule for interviews.

### **KINGS CREEK COMMERCE CENTER**

Mr. Noel stated that we have made significant progress since the end of the year to get the Kings Creek Commerce Center project back on track. Most importantly, we have successfully amended the property purchase language in the state budget to give us until December 31, 2021 to close on the property, under the same terms.

Mr. Noel reported that the six EVRIFA localities engaged in this project are all still on board and KDC Solar has committed to a new property acquisition timeline. All of the localities have made their budget contributions for the project. KDC is actively funding the due diligence work, and we are planning for a mid-July closing on the property.

Mr. Noel noted that we have been able to use some of the EPA Brownfields grant money for a Phase 1 ESA for the solar project. We have also requested that the state consider extending and modifying our GO Virginia grant for the unmanned systems development on the site. The current grant expires June 30, 2021, and we have initially asked for another year, since we won't be closing on the land until July 2021. We have also suggested to the state that we might use some of the funds for improving the property's

site readiness, in line with the state's business ready site assessment of the property.

### **NEW MATTERS**

None.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Chairman duly noted the receipt of the January and February 2021 financial reports.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 26, 2021, meeting of the Economic Development Authority of York County were approved by vote as follows:

Yea: (6)      Coxton, Lockwood, Moberg, Biagas, Carter, Meade  
Nay: (0)

### **CLOSED MEETING**

None.

### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS**

Mr. Morgan reported that he presented his recommended operating and capital budgets to the board. Those can be seen online for anyone interested. The biggest question mark is the return of tourism. Lodging, meals, and sales taxes have been impacted by the pandemic. The proposed budget restores things that were in the original budget last March. For example, the Capital budget will be restored, after being frozen for the last year. There will be two tax changes proposed that will generate about a million dollars; a new cigarette tax and a slight increase in the personal property tax rate. The public hearing is on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Morgan mentioned that the county will be receiving funds from the recently approved American Rescue Act. Over the next few months, the county's professional staff is going to try to understand what it means for the county and how best to allocate the funds.

### **DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS**

Mr. Noel reported that work has started on the Beale's site.

March 23, 2021

Mr. Noel stated that the American Recovery Act will provide the county with about \$13 million. The money will need to be spend over a 24 month period. We are possibly looking at offering another business assistance grant program with a portion of the funds.

#### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS**

Mrs. Davidson reported that we are working with our Community Services department to pursue additional CDBG funds to replenish our COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program. We are hoping to receive another \$1.3 million dollars. The grant funds would no longer include PPE and would be limited to rent or mortgage only. The grants will be for up to \$15,000 each.

#### **MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Mr. Coxton recommended that we catalog all the businesses that have closed and the vacant buildings that exist in the county to find out why they are empty or why they have left the county. He also suggested looking for property to build a small industrial park.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

None.

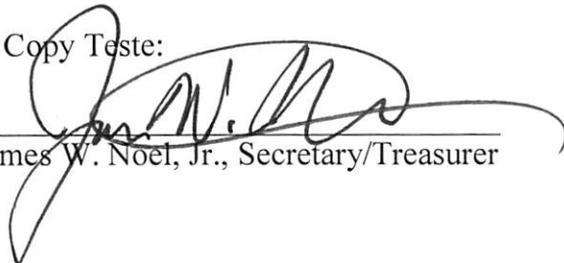
#### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.



Steven A. Meade, Chairman

A Copy Teste:



James W. Noel, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer