

Minutes

Economic Development Commission

January 24, 2022

The first meeting of the Economic Development Commission began with the swearing in of Commission members Ryan Csajko, Leanne Tennant, and Bob McNally, by Burgess Weddle. Linda Morgan arrived a bit later and was sworn in upon her arrival. This is a three-year term. Those in attendance included Commissioner Michael Bailey, Burgess Chad Weddle, Commission members Ryan Csajko, Leanne Tennant, Linda Morgan, Bob McNally, Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey, and about 6 members of the public.

Commissioner Bailey called the meeting to order.

1. Selection of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Each will act as such starting out for just this calendar year.

- Bob made a motion to appoint Linda as Chair in her absence. Ryan seconded. Linda accepted once she arrived.
- Bob volunteered to be Vice Chair. Leanne motioned, and Ryan seconded.
- Leanne volunteered to be Secretary. Ryan motioned and Bob seconded.

2. Business Directory

- Ashley updated all on the plan for the business directory on the new website. The new directory will have an alphabetical search function, as well as by business category. The current directory will be transferred from the old website. Bob asked if emails would be added to listing. Ashley advised that all contact information that a business had could be used in the listing, including hyperlinks to website/social media/email.
- Ryan asked about how businesses will be updated. Ashley offered that the business could submit their information to her directly, and she would have the website updated.
- Leanne inquired if we could make a social media post just advising the public/businesses that we would have this updated directory and how they could have their businesses added. Ashley agreed once there is a more definitive live date.
- Commissioner Bailey also stated that as we are liaising with Walkersville

3. Discussion/Selection liaison between EDC, Frederick County Office of Economic Development, and Walkersville Business and Professional Association

- Commissioner Bailey stressed the importance of working in step with these two entities. He asked Ms. Morgan if she would be the liaison to the FCOED, and Ms. Tennant if she would like to be the liaison to WBPA. Both agreed.

- Mr. McNally asked what the WBPA’s primary function was, to which Bob Sussman, former president of the WBPA, approached the podium to provide an overview and answer questions.
 - WBPA has been in existence for about 10 years. They meet the third Thursday of the month at 8am, currently virtual, but have met at Abloom, the Library and the park. About 43 members.
 - Their goal is to promote Walkersville Businesses, as well as network and raise awareness.
 - Members shop at other members businesses.
 - They have guest speakers from businesses come and talk at their meetings in an attempt to promote economic growth in Walkersville.
 - Mr. Sussman posed the questions:

What are the parameters on who we would allow to be included on the website as far as businesses in the town? Are we limiting to the town Walkersville? Are we allowing businesses that are unregistered and registered with the town? Would we be open to the idea of including Woodsboro or other “sister towns”?

- Mr. Sussman also advised that if we keep bringing the business to Walkersville, the WBPA will continue to network and will go out of their way to promote and support these businesses so that the economic growth of the town increases. Also, if we got rid of some of the blight areas and replaced it with business, such as in the Safeway shopping center, people would have multiple places to shop, that would promote the health and wellbeing of Walkersville. He also stated that “if you (EDC) get the businesses established, send them our way and we’ll create chances for them to network in regard to their business, through the WBPA. You get them in, and we’ll keep them going.”
- \$40 annual fee.
- They gather “knickknacks” and make welcome packages for new businesses. Anything to promote the general welfare of the town.
- Bob McNally asked what they do to promote WBPA. Alan Rugh, current president, responded that through Newspaper, 3-4 social media sites, as well as their own website which every member has a log in to. There will also be a Member of the Month, that will be showcased with their business on the website.

4. Open Discussion

- Ryan brought up social media presence for EDC. Ashley offered to set up FB page for them when they were ready.
- Bob asked about Directory. Ashley reiterated that she would handle adding new business info and updating current, once new website was established.
- Commissioner Bailey added that they can talk about who we want to include, corporate boundaries or extend it out, and discuss/ present to Burgess and Commissioners.

- Bob asked what the rationale of expanding into Woodsboro would be? Mr. Sussman responded a lot of members are doing business in Woodsboro. Also, Woodsboro Walkersville Times (Ken Keller) was including Walkersville in newspaper. The two towns are so close, offers everybody more chances of different businesses to go to.
- Mr. Sussman is also president of Colony Village Assoc. He advised that there are a lot of small businesses/ contractors. How can we (WBPA and EDC) help promote those smaller businesses.
- Commissioner Bailey touched on Covid relief money and how to allocate it to businesses, how do we suggest delineating that out to not just businesses that met that threshold? Is it the independent contractor, the person that has the 1099 but operates mainly out of Walkersville? These are discussions to have to present information to the Burgess and Commissioners on where do we draw the line, regarding size of business and relief money.
- First big hot ticket item for EDC would be COVID relief grants.

5. Public Comment

- Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis-thanked EDC members for stepping into this role. She posed the question how are we (EDC) going to contact the businesses in regard to COVID relief.
- Frederick resident Frank Noe. Here to do research and ask questions. He has a business that is currently virtual and would like to develop brick and mortar. He is looking to possibly secure the two-story property in the Safeway parking lot. His business is small electric vehicles that he purchases and makes street legal. He would operate his business out of the lower level and then rent out upstairs to other businesses. He also proposed putting in an electric car charging station. Michael put him in contact with Town Planner Susan Hauver.
- Commissioner Bailey advised that after COVID relief, the next line of business for EDC would look into incentives to bring in businesses/investors to deal with blight properties.
- Mike Hillman from Woodsboro Walkersville News Journal-asked if the paper would be included in the Business Directory? He said that he would change title of paper to Walkersville Woodsboro News Journal (in jest). He also said that as far as COVID relief, Woodsboro is already putting that process in place and that they may be able to offer some guidance. Commissioner Bailey said that he would reach out to their Burgess, Heath Barnes.

Meeting Adjourned