

Meeting Minutes
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
September 26, 2023

At a regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority of York County, Virginia, held on September 26, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room of York Hall, 301 Main Street, Yorktown, Virginia, those present were:

J. Mark Carter, Chairman
Jeffrey Clemons, Vice Chairman
Harmon J. Coxton
Vernard Lockwood
Steven Meade
Leslie Murphy
David Murray

Others present:

Neil Morgan, County Administrator
Richard Hill, County Attorney
Kristi Olsen-Hayes, Secretary/Treasurer and Director of Economic & Tourism Development
Matt Johnson, Deputy Director of Economic & Tourism Development
Jeanna Henderson, Administrative Technician, Economic & Tourism Development
Valinda Loudin, Economic Development Specialist, Economic & Tourism Development
Darren Williams, Chief of Waterfront Operations & Events, Economic & Tourism Development

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mr. Carter.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was established with seven members present.

CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Tom Waltz addressed the Board regarding a property known as the York Industrial Park that is for sale. It is a 20-acre parcel with 21 buildings that sit on seven acres with 13 acres of undeveloped land. Of the 13 acres, not including wetlands, approximately nine acres can still be developed.

Mr. Coxton asked for clarification about the acreage that could be developed.

Mr. Waltz responded that there are about 9 acres that are able to be developed and about 4 acres that are wetlands.

Mr. Morgan asked if the entire industrial park was for sale, including all the buildings, with some being subject to leases.

Mr. Waltz replied with a yes. He remarked that there is the ability to buy just the income producing portion of the park, the additional undeveloped land, or the entire property.

Mr. Johnson asked if the undeveloped parcel has rail access.

Mr. Waltz responded that there is a spur that comes off the main track.

Mr. Coxton questioned if there is sewer, water and gas in the front.

Mr. Waltz replied that he was not sure about sewer, but it has water. He will make sure more information about the property is provided to the Board.

Mr. Carter moved to the next item of business.

PRESENTATION

YORK COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION

Ms. Olsen-Hayes introduced Dr. Karen Cagle, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Ms. Jennifer Romanelli, Coordinator of Career Development.

Dr. Cagle and Ms. Romanelli presented the Board with an overview of the Career Connections Program, which is designed to equip students with the resources, tools, and knowledge they need to succeed beyond high school. They also shared information about the grants their program has received.

Mr. Carter thanked Dr. Cagle and Ms. Romanelli and congratulated them for their grant work to benefit York County students. He encouraged them to reach out to Ms. Olsen-Hayes and Mr. Johnson if needed, and stated that the EDA Board will be happy to help any way it can. He asked the Board if there were any questions.

Mr. Coxton asked how many YCSD graduates didn't go to college.

Dr. Cagle responded that she could not say specifically for last year, but an average of 80 to 85% of students do attend college after high school.

Mr. Coxton questioned further, asking what happened to the other percentage.

Dr. Cagle replied that non-college bound information is collected as well. The team does follow up with those students. Some go straight into the workforce and some into the military. The team also follows up with the college students because not all of them stay in college.

Mr. Coxton commented that the group that doesn't go into the military and doesn't seek employment would be a good group for small businesses to develop a training program for.

Dr. Cagle expressed the value of New Horizons for that purpose. They have the equipment and the resources to help students prepare for the workforce. Her team is there to help students get into and go through that program.

Mr. Clemons encouraged them to keep up the good work. He shared that his family moved to York County specifically for the schools, and a program like this ensures our kids are competitive.

Dr. Cagle agreed. She restated that many students go to college, but college is not the end game. It is the workforce they're preparing students for. She's most proud of the work they're doing to prepare them for the life beyond.

Mr. Murray asked about follow-up and what resources there are for students who took a mechatronics or computer-aided design program, graduated from high school, and are just not finding out how to go from there.

Ms. Romanelli replied that mechatronics is part of the Good Life Solutions Program. She indicated that there are businesses that are waiting for students to graduate so they can offer them job opportunities. It is her belief that New Horizons has a high employment rate for all its graduates, those who enroll in Good Life Solutions and other programs. She continued that we are fortunate in York County to have four career coaches, one dedicated to each school zone. The role of those coaches is to help students who want to join the workforce but don't know about or haven't made a connection with a business. Their job is to help students make that transition.

Mr. Coxton asked if there are any plans to go back to on-the-job training, not from New Horizons, but York County.

Ms. Romanelli responded with a yes, through work-based learning courses like mentorships and internships. If a student has a particular business interest, a business owner could be asked if they would be willing to host them as a mentor, and the student can then experience that career.

Dr. Cagle commented that they offer career internships and career mentorships, credit for work experience, and work-based learning experiences to students.

Mr. Murray asked how businesses in York County or the local areas know what's available, how to get involved, or how they would get connected.

Ms. Romanelli responded the first stop would be the EngagedIN YCSD network. They can register there and select what their engagement interest is. They are then in the filterable database. When a student is interested in an experience, teachers, coaches, and students themselves can reach out to businesses to connect and have conversations started.

Dr. Cagle shared the original design of the database was for that very purpose, but it has grown to be so much more. People are needed to do mock interviews and career fairs. When someone registers, they pick and choose what they are interested in.

Mr. Murray questioned whether the database was developed by York County or purchased from a vendor.

Dr. Cagle responded that, with their vision and input, Jason Short, from the York County School Division, created the database.

Mr. Clemons commented on the incredible amount of collaboration between Dr. Cagle's team, New Horizons (who York County funds), and the Hampton Roads Workforce Council.

Ms. Romanelli responded that when understanding how our entire ecosystem functions, it's important to understand the regional initiatives, to support that work, and prepare our students. She tries to stay informed, to understand the vision, and make academic adjustments as needed.

Ms. Murphy thanked Dr. Cagle and Ms. Romanelli for their passion and all they are doing. She asked if they had insight about what motivates students when they're looking for work after high school.

Ms. Romanelli responded that she was part of a consortium that met last year in James City County. What she learned from those meetings is that young adults have choices, and it's not just about benefits anymore. They're interested in the onboarding process and what support they will receive in the first year as they transition to learn the business. Mentoring seems to be very important to them, as well as the area's quality of life.

Dr. Cagle shared that the process starts in 3rd through 5th grade. Counselors work with students to identify their values, interests, talents, and what they are passionate about. Then, students are exposed to different careers. In middle school they take career investigations and self-assessments to research careers further. In high school the counselor helps them pick classes to reach their goals. It's a continuum.

Ms. Murphy asked if there is any collaboration with York County residents that are homeschooled.

Dr. Cagle responded, not currently, but a conversation along those lines could take place.

Mr. Johnson took a moment to let the Board know that mock interview opportunities are coming up in October and November, and that he would provide the information to the Board to sign up, if interested. He's found them to be great experiences. He thanked Ms. Romanelli for all the work that has been done and the strong commitment to seeing Career/Technical Education continue to grow as a valued part of the school systems.

Ms. Olsen-Hayes agreed with Mr. Johnson and expressed appreciation for the overview and the variety of programs and opportunities given to the students to be successful. She told the Board that multiple students have worked in their department, primarily from the York High School credit-based program, and that one student did stay on for a period of time. She said it was great to work with them and expose them to the variety in the department and what County government does.

Ms. Olsen-Hayes took the opportunity, before moving to the next item, to introduce Valinda Loudin as the new Economic Development Specialist. As part of Economic & Tourism Development's (ETD) proactive efforts to engage with York County businesses, she will be the primary representative for ETD's Business Retention Program and small business endeavors, including the partnerships with the Peninsula Home-Based Business Network and Start Peninsula. Ms. Olsen-Hayes expressed her delight to have Ms. Loudin in this role and asked the Board to join her in welcoming Ms. Loudin.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 22, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Authority of York County were approved by vote as follows:

Mr. Coxton motioned to approve the August 22, 2023 meeting minutes.

Mr. Clemons seconded the motion.

On roll call the vote was:

Yea: (7) Coxton, Lockwood, Meade, Murphy, Murray, Clemons, Carter
Nay: (0)

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Morgan remarked that Mark Bellamy was appointed Interim County Administrator to commence upon Mr. Morgan's retirement on January 1, 2024. He then shared comments and thoughts related to the Yorktown waterfront. He spoke about the Princess Cruises pilot program that will start calling on Yorktown next summer. He thinks it is a fine way to discover what impact the visits will have on the County and encouraged the Board to proceed accordingly, based upon that impact. Next, he reminded the Board of the 2018 Capital Improvements Program to build a replacement facility for the current Dockmaster building. The project was put on hold in 2020 because of COVID. At their last meeting, the Board of Supervisors did not approve the appeal of the Historic Yorktown Design Committee's decision regarding the design and the construction contract for the new building, both of which were needed in order to move the project forward. He stated that the next CIP will need to include a similar project to provide suitable space for Dockmaster staff, visitor services, and ADA-accessible restroom facilities. He then stated, while it's in the early stages of infrastructure design work to redesign Water Street, with an emphasis on the landward side, the next CIP will also have to address some funding for that. Lastly, he spoke about NorthPoint Development wanting to make a quarter-billion-dollar investment in York County in a properly zoned area. It is a project that will develop over many years, and may receive consideration of CIP funding to do some meaningful transportation improvements.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

None.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S COMMENTS

None.

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT'S COMMENTS

Ms. Olsen-Hayes referenced the media coverage articles provided to the Board regarding the September 22, 2023, ribbon-cutting for Dominion Dogs. There was great support for that event. Ms. Olsen reminded the Board of two upcoming ribbon-cuttings for Drain Wizard Plumbing and Drain Cleaning and Vinny's Pizza & Pasta 2. Next, she referenced a flyer provided to the Board for the State of the Region - Hampton Roads event hosted by the Virginia Peninsula Chamber on October 6, 2023, and invited them to attend.

She then provided the Board with the media release and information about a series of engaging and informing videos that speak to three target audiences: residents, prospective businesses, and visitors. Those videos are found on the yesyorkcounty.com website and are airing on York County's WYCG-TV (Cox channel 46 and Verizon channel 38). She encouraged the Board to watch them. She continued with project updates for Delorean Power and Chilled Ponds Iceplex. Delorean Power exercised their third-year option to extend their contract and purchase the property at 134 Stafford in the Busch Industrial Park. Chilled Ponds is closer to completing their lobby renovations and welcome the EDA Board to see the changes. They informed Ms. Olsen-Hayes that they have a booked schedule. For the local base, they will have holiday shows presented by their own Tidewater Figure Skating Club. The rink has booked travel teams for 12 weekends between now and February 2024. Chilled Ponds reached out to Ms. Olsen-Hayes to request lodging information. Ms. Olsen-Hayes will also provide them with the York County Shopping & Dining Guide and area attractions. These events will bring revenue to the Victory Boulevard establishments, the surrounding area, and our lodging properties as they will bring multiple teams and entire families who travel for these tournaments. Ms. Olsen-Hayes is excited about the opportunity for bringing new life into the Chilled Ponds facility, both from a local-usage base and from those coming from out of town. Lastly, Ms. Olsen-Hayes reminded the Board that Mr. Johnson will be leaving the Economic & Tourism Development team in October to relocate to Charlottesville. She expressed that he was extremely instrumental in building the newly merged department, thanked him for his support and guidance, and wished him the best.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Johnson recounted to the Board that, last week, two groups that the EDA partners with, Virginia Peninsula Community College and Small Business Development Center, were recognized for their efforts at the Workforce Innovation Awards. He provided project updates for Mobjack Coffee Roasters/Little York Confectionery and Water Street Grille. Mobjack Coffee Roaster's Stanley Steamer vehicle is set to be delivered and operational in time for Yorktown Day. Renovation for the Water Street Grille/Riverwalk Restaurant project will move forward in phases. The first phase will be exterior

improvements on the water side of the property, which will increase the amount of outdoor seating available at the restaurant and provide for year-round use. He expressed his opinion that the voice of the Economic Development Authority Board, and the individual voices of its members, will be extremely important and key in moving economic development projects forward in York County. He encouraged the Board to be proactive in this respect. He closed by conveying his pleasure working with Staff and the Board during his time with the County and thanked everyone.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS

The Board discussed the best way, as leaders and citizens, to approach the Board of Supervisors to share their support of economic development programs, as the EDA's mission statement is to retain, attract and generate revenue for the County.

Mr. Murray shared his pleasure to have worked with Mr. Johnson. He wishes him well and admires his efforts to be with family. He asked if there was an update on Beale's Brewery.

Mr. Johnson indicated that Beale's is continuing to move forward, and ETD will continue to have conversations and keep watch on the project.

Mr. Morgan suggested that he and Ms. Olsen-Hayes, or Ms. Olsen-Hayes and Mr. Bellamy, have a call with Mr. Dave McCormack, owner of Beale's, and try to have an update by the next meeting.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that there were established timeframes and markers in the note agreement, offered as an incentive, with the EDA. No forgiveness on the note has occurred as those have, as of yet, not been met.

Mr. Morgan indicated that tearing down the old, existing buildings was accomplished, and the County is better off than five years ago.

Mr. Murray added that he finds that people are excited about Beale's being there more than worrying about the money or the timeline.

Mr. Morgan stated we could still have a happy ending.

Mr. Clemons thanked Mr. Johnson for his service and expressed that it's been great working with him. He wished him and his family all the best.

Mr. Coxton expressed his thanks and is sorry to see Mr. Johnson go.

Mr. Lockwood feels Mr. Johnson brought a lot to the EDA in a very quick fashion. He's enjoyed working with him and wished him luck. He feels Mr. Morgan changed the direction of the EDA Board and York County and said it was a pleasure to work with Mr. Morgan as well.

Ms. Murphy thanked the Board for their grace during her absence while tending to family matters and said that she feels a renewed sense of excitement. She will dearly miss Mr. Johnson and wished him luck.

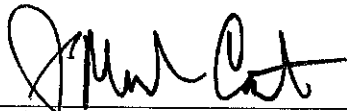
CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Carter reminded the Board to please watch the videos Ms. Olsen-Hayes mentioned. He said they are excellent and should make us happy to be a York County resident. He expressed that Ms. Olsen-Hayes should be proud of the work ETD is doing to promote York County. He mentioned Mr. Meade did a great job assigning them to committees and suggested continuing in those same assignments. Next, he shared that the October issue of Southern Living magazine has a full-page article about The Virginia Beer Company and the Edge District was mentioned. He thought it was good exposure for York County, the Edge District and The Virginia Beer Company. Lastly, he thanked Mr. Johnson for all that he has done for the Board, the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority, the King's Creek Committee, and for assisting Ms. Olsen-Hayes with the consolidation of the departments. He wished Mr. Johnson well.

Mr. Carter then thanked the Board for their attendance and engagement.


ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.



J. Mark Carter, Chairman

A Copy Teste:



Kristi Olsen-Hayes, Secretary/Treasurer