

Accomack-Northampton
Economic Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2018

3:00 p.m.

Eastern Shore Community College

Members Present

Dr. Mark Reiter, Virginia Tech
Elaine Meil, A-NPDC
Evelyn Shotwell, Chincoteague Chamber of
Commerce
Brittany Pettit, Eastern Shore Community
College (alternate for TJ Johnson)
Gary Letchworth, NASA
Robie Marsh, Eastern Shore of Virginia
Chamber of Commerce
Joseph Betit, Entrepreneur
Dr. Richard Snyder, VIMS
David Lumgair, Luminary Air Group
Sara Baldwin, Entrepreneur
Wesley Edwards, Accomack County EDA
Ava Gabrielle-Wise, New Road Community Dev.
Jacqueline Chatmon, Citizen

Members Absent

Roland Bailey, A-NPDC
Peter J. Bale, Wallops Island Regional Alliance
Hon. Rob Bloxom, VA General Assembly
Tommy Clark, Don's Seafood Rest. & Tom's
Cove Aquafarms
Honorable Arthur Leonard, Town of
Chincoteague
Lynwood Lewis, VA General Assembly
Mike Mason, Accomack County
Ron Matthews, Matthews & Co., CPAs
Charles Kolakowski, Northampton County
Andy Mason, Mason-Davis Realtors
John Pavlik, Northampton County JIDA
Richard Williams, Being Well Essentials
Kevin Dennis, Perdue Farms

Others present

Julie Bellamy, Accomack County
Cristina Carollo, Citizen
Paul Muhly, Accomack County Supervisor
Ed Murdy, University of the Eastern Shore
Michael Ward, Northampton County Planning
Commission

Clara Vaughn, A-NPDC
Terry Malarkey, University of the Eastern Shore
Aribal Sautley, Citizen
Pat Coady, Citizen
Marina Goerrer, Cape Charles Distillery
Curtis Smith, A-NPDC

Call to Order

The Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM.

Public Participation

Smith provided members of the public in attendance the opportunity to provide comments. None in attendance offered to comment.

Organizational Business

Meeting Minutes

The draft meeting minutes from the June 6, 2018 meeting were presented.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice Chair Baldwin and seconded by Committee Member Wesley Edwards. No discussion ensued and the motion carried unanimously.

Attendance Record

The attendance record for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019 were presented.

Membership Update

The nominating subcommittee presented nominations for Karyn Belknap and Elizabeth Lankford for the two vacant Accomack County Private Sector Seats.

Chairman Marsh motioned to approve Karyn Belknap and Elizabeth Lankford to the two vacant Accomack County Private Sector Seats. Seconded by Committee Member Edwards, the motion carried unanimously.

2019 Meeting Schedule

Staff presented the 2019 meeting schedule for the Committee and its subcommittees.

Committee Member Letchworth presented an invitation for the Committee to participate in a tour of the Wallops Flight Facility. The Committee expressed interest in conducting the tour during the Spring.

Staff Update

Informational Items

- *Federal Opportunity Zone Guidelines Overview* – Smith presented the Federal Opportunity Zones draft guidelines to make members aware of their opportunity to comment on the guidelines through the end of December. This program allows investors to receive tax benefits on currently unrealized capital gains that are invested through Opportunity Funds in eligible census tracts designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones. The Eastern Shore currently has two Opportunity Zones: one in northern Accomack County and one in southern Northampton County. Smith plans to coordinate a visit by a DHCD member to give a more detailed presentation on the guidelines.
- *Go Virginia Update*
 - *Eastern Shore Update*— Committee Member Betit outlined an initiative aimed at developing a small business incubator in the Town of Exmore. In addition to its co-working desk space, the incubator would provide a small makers' space in an adjacent building. The facility's proximity to New Ravenna could provide access to sophisticated tools, too. The possibility of complimentary co-working spaces in Eastville and Accomac is also being explored.
 - *Water Management Economy Planning Grant*— Smith announced that Virginia Sea Grant has received a planning grant through GO Virginia to examine the possibility of developing a water campus. The project is looking to Louisiana's Water Campus as a model for the collaborative project bringing together the private and public sectors to research and address coastal resilience. The grant will help coastal Virginia explore how to establish a water-management economy that provides improvements in economic growth amidst water-related challenges.
- *Study: Sea-level Rise Impacts to Home Values Since 2005* – Smith introduced a peer-reviewed study that found that flooding due to sea-level rise caused a loss of \$7.4 billion since 2005, including \$280 million in depreciated property values in Virginia.

Study results can be found at www.floodiq.com. Smith offered to increase informational presentations on similar topics at future Economic Development Committee meetings, to which members were favorable.

Other Projects/Initiatives

- *ANPDC Small Business Funding Summary Document –*
Smith presented a draft inventory of a document capturing funding opportunities in the region. He emphasized the need for more local and private resources to be added to the single-resource document, including local government revolving loan funds. Committee members were asked to review and contribute to the sheet before it is published.
- *ANPDC Value-added Opportunities Study –*
Smith introduced a USDA Rural Development-funded study that will address multiple goals of the Economic Development Plan. The study is anticipated to provide critical analysis supporting development of a regional marketplace for selling local products, identify untapped value-add opportunities for local products, and aid in development of a regional marketing strategy for local agricultural and artisan products. An advisory committee of local agriculture and aquaculture producers and artisans has been established to refine the scope of work and guide the study being led by consultants from Virginia Tech’s Office of Economic Development.
- *ANPDC Local Products Draft Inventory–*
Smith provided an overview of initial efforts by the ANPDC to compile an inventory of goods produced on the Eastern Shore of Virginia has captured more than 400 businesses and individuals. This inventory will be used to inform studies, including the Value-added Opportunities Study describe above, and includes information on the types of product and price point for each. Next steps include identifying partners and producers interested in expansion. This inventory will inform several goals in the Agribusiness and Food Processing and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Visitor Industries Action Plans.
- *ANPDC Local Retail Locations Draft Inventory –*
Smith introduced initial efforts to create an inventory of local storefronts, which is key to the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Visitor Industries Action Plan’s goal of increasing the number of local retailers selling and promoting local products. To date, the inventory captures 430 shops, restaurants, hotels, and other retail sites. Surveys will be distributed to these businesses to solicit more information regarding who is selling local products and who would like to sell and promote local products in the future.
- *Rural Coastal Virginia Partnership*
 - *ANPDC Water Trails Website–* Smith provided an introduction to the new Virginia Water Trails website which represents a collaborative effort between the A-NPDC and Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck Planning District Commissions to direct paddlers to sites safe for all levels of recreation while driving traffic to local businesses. The website represents Year One efforts, which includes water trails on the seaside. Bayside water trails will roll out in Year Two of the initiative. Visit www.virginiawatertrails.org.
 - *Rural Coastal Virginia Community Enhancement Authority–* Smith reported that the VA General Assembly approved legislation authorizing the creation of the Rural Coastal Virginia Community

Enhancement Authority, a political subdivision unifying rural coastal Virginia, including the A-NPDC, Northern Neck, and Middle Peninsula regions. The creation of such an Authority increases opportunities to address shared challenges across the region. A-NPDC staff with the other PDCs and their state representatives will host a summit to develop the operating terms, goals, and objectives of the Authority. Accomack and Northampton Counties will be invited to the summit and must sign independent resolutions to join the Authority.

Think Tank Subcommittee Report

The Think Tank met in early December 2018 and decided to propose distributing a survey for local government staff and elected and appointed officials to provide what was felt to be necessary insight and guidance on regional economic development activities and plans. Smith presented an overview of the survey, which includes questions related to planning at the local level, entrepreneurship, business incentives, service delivery, barriers to economic development, and evaluating success, among others. Smith indicated that the survey results would be compiled and considered by the Think Tank during Spring 2019 before being presented with recommendations to the EDC during its June 2019 meeting. Vice Chair Baldwin requested that the survey include questions regarding initiatives to educate local youth on how to be enterprising and entrepreneurs. Committee members agreed respondents should remain confidential to encourage honest survey response.

Regional Economic Development Plan

Overview of Updates to Regional Action Plans

Smith presented a summary of the Aerospace & Defense Subcommittee Plan; Agribusiness & Food Processing Subcommittee Plan; Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, & Visitor Industries Subcommittee Plan; and Foundational & Entrepreneurship Development Subcommittee plans. He noted items where significant progress has been made, as well as items lacking significant headway; proposed actions to be added to the plans; and plan items that were completed between April and October 2018. Updates included:

Aerospace & Defense Action Plan

Noteworthy Progress:

- Goal 1, Objective A (Consolidated Marketing Strategy) & B (Grow Wallops Research Park)– A study by Old Dominion University is expected to be completed in the near future and will lead to significant progress for several key objectives.
- Goal 1, Objective B (Grow Wallops Research Park) & D (Grow Number of Launches)– There was significant progress with Rocket Lab’s announcement that it will establish launch operations at Wallops with facility construction in Wallops Research Park.
- Goal 2, Objective B (Grow Number of UAS Tenants)– Expectations for future growth continue to grow with planning underway for the construction of a port on the northern end of Wallops Island.
- Goal 3, Objective D (Barrier Island Management)– The A-NPDC reported there are multiple research and planning initiatives driving critical discussions surrounding long-term resilience of the barrier island system.

Items Lacking Significant Progress:

- Goal 3 (Coastal Resilience)– Updates have not been provided since early 2017 for several objectives. It is anticipated that some progress has been made, but the extent is unclear.

Agribusiness & Food Processing Action Plan

Noteworthy Progress:

- Goals 1 & 2- The USDA Rural Development grant award for the feasibility study underway has spurred progress in multiple key initiatives and will result in completion of these items during 2019.

Proposed Actions for Addition:

- Goal 2, Objective B (Infrastructure Needs)– A new strategy was proposed to assist Broadband expansion to agriculture and aquaculture/seafood producers by compiling and sharing farm and working waterfront location data.
- New Goal 5– Natural resources sustainability research and planning needs have been a recurring theme and a number of strategies were in the group’s Parking Lot for some time. A new Goal with an objective targeting research needs, an objective targeting planning and management needs, and an objective regarding implementation of the plans was proposed.

Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries Action Plan

Noteworthy Progress:

- Goal 1, Objective A (Promote Events/Resources)– The recent launch of the updated ESVA Tourism, Water Trails, Oyster Trail, and Birding & Wildlife websites marks major progress for this objective.
- Goal 1, Objective B (Grow ESVA Brand) – The A-NPDC draft retail locations inventory is complete and will lead to intensive efforts to increase the number of local retail locations selling local products.

Items Lacking Significant Progress:

- Goal 1, Objective B (Grow ESVA Brand)– Funding is needed to consult with a brand expert to reevaluate the effectiveness of the “You’ll Love Our Nature” slogan and enhance brand integration to all local industries.

Proposed Actions for Addition:

- Goal 5, Objective A (Pedestrian Facilities)– A new strategy was proposed to develop and implement a regional recreational marketing strategy highlighting regional trails, including bike, water, birding and wildlife, and recreational opportunities such as parks, beaches, and sporting venues and events.

Foundational & Entrepreneurship Development Action Plan

Completed Items:

- Goal 2, Objective B (Attract Companies)– A strategy to attract business to the Wallops Research Park was completed with the Rocket Lab announcement and significant interest from other companies wishing to locate in the park.
- Goal 3, Objective A (Regional Marketplace)– A strategy for conducting a feasibility study for current and potential local products to be sold in and support a regional marketplace is underway as part of the grant from USDA Rural Development.

Noteworthy Progress:

- Goal 1, Objective A (Think Tank)– The Think Tank held its first meeting and proposed several activities during the EDC meeting.
- Goal 1, Objective B (Increase Entrepreneurship)– Entrepreneurship trainings were successful during 2018 and more are planned for 2019. The A-NPDC investment funds document will be available in the near future.
- Goal 1, Objective C (Create Small Business Incubator)– GO Virginia funds are being pursued to launch an incubator in Exmore.
- Goal 2, Objective A (Fund Economic Development Plan goals) & B (Attract Companies)– The Think Tank and the A-NPDC funding document are driving progress for these objectives.
- Goal 4, Objective A (Broadband)– Significant progress has been reported from both the private and public sectors regarding Broadband buildout.
- Goal 4, Objective B (Water & Sewage)– A feasibility study is underway examining expansion of a sewer line from Nassawadox to Onancock.
- Goal 4, Objective D (Transportation Infrastructure)– Significant progress is being made by the A-NPDC and ESVA Regional Navigable Waterways Committee regarding dredging and beneficial use of dredge material activities in region.

Proposed Actions for Addition:

- New Goal 5– A new set of goals, objectives and strategies were proposed for creation of a four-year university or college in the region. Representatives from the University of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Foundation were present during the meeting to give a brief introduction to this project.

The only proposed change to the updated plans presented was to the Foundational & Entrepreneurship Development Subcommittee Plan’s Goal 2, which read, “Banks are basically forbidden to fund startups...” Members agreed to change this language to, “Banks are not favorably inclined to fund startups...”

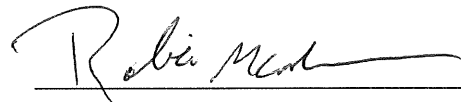
Committee Member Edwards moved to approve the updated plans as presented, which Vice Chairm Baldwin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

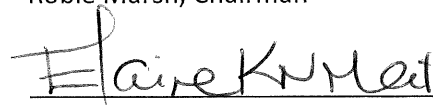
The next meeting will be held June 12, 2019. A reminder will be sent in advance of the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM upon a motion by Committee Member Betit and seconded by Committee Member Edwards. The motion was unanimously approved.



Robie Marsh, Chairman



Elaine Meil, Secretary