

**Economic Development Authority
Of
Lancaster County, Virginia
At
Chesapeake Bank
Minutes – March 10, 2015**

Members Attending: Chairman Szyperski, Mr. Pennell, Mr. Pittman, Mr. Fleet and Mr. Barrack. Mr. Curry was absent.

Others Present: Mr. Frank Pleva, Executive Director, Mr. Paul Sciacchitano, Ms. Joni Carter and Ms. Susan Cockrell.

Mr. Szyperski called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Pleva stated that Howard Kyzer had resigned from the EDA and that his term was to expire in November. He stated that Mr. Kyzer was in Supervisor Bellows' district and his replacement would be nominated by Mr. Bellows.

September 24, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Pennell moved to approve the September 24, 2014 minutes. Mr. Pittman seconded the motion. **VOTE: 5-0.**

Visions' Funding Request of \$30,000 for Oyster-Related Asset Development

Mr. Paul Sciacchitano stated that Visions was started after discussions with the Jesse Ball DuPont Foundation and its mission is to reduce poverty in the lower Northern Neck. He stated that they believe the best way to achieve that goal is to create more jobs. He stated that they wanted to start with the assets that the community already has, such as the waterfront. He stated that the oyster resurgence is a good way to continue to develop the waterfront. He stated that the oyster industry is a heritage industry in the Northern Neck.

Mr. Sciacchitano stated that Ms. Joni Carter has spearheaded the efforts to support the oyster industry by making contact with the Governor's office and other political bodies.

Mr. Sciacchitano stated that Virginia is creating an oyster trail and he and others would like to see the Northern Neck become the oyster destination in the Chesapeake Bay area. He stated that they are calling it Virginia Oyster Country.

Ms. Cockrell stated that Virginia is developing the Virginia Oyster Trail and the project is taking some time because it will be state-wide. She stated that restaurants, oyster houses, etc. can be on the oyster trail and it will be a pay to play scenario.

Ms. Cockrell stated that Virginia Oyster Country was started last summer when Lancaster, Middlesex and Gloucester counties wanted to have a more local focus. She explained the features of the website and its impact on local tourism.

Mr. Szyperski asked about the amount of funding that Virginia was putting into the oyster trail.

Ms. Cockrell replied that the development amount was approximately \$80,000, but much more if advertising and public relations costs are factored in.

Ms. Joni Carter added that the state will not help with the local effort of marketing the oyster. She stated that there are some great assets in the community and local museums, oyster houses and Belle Isle, among other places, need to be approached concerning a local oyster trail. She stated that the assets need to be coordinated and they need to continue to work with Middlesex and Gloucester.

Mr. Sciacchitano stated that their funding request was for Ms. Carter's salary so she can help develop the local initiative for the oysters.

Mr. Szyperski asked about the sustainability of the request.

Ms. Carter replied that it is a jumpstart request.

Ms. Cockrell stated that they are asking for a part-time salary for Ms. Carter and once the museums and other assets are up and running, they can be self-sustaining. She stated that the marketing costs, however, would be on-going.

Mr. Sciacchitano stated that he thought the sustainability would come out of the private sector with tourism marketing dollars.

Ms. Cockrell stated that other localities have economic development people in place and Ms. Carter can work with them.

Mr. Pittman asked about training for the watermen to do tours.

Ms. Cockrell replied that she thought there might be some grant money through Rappahannock Community College for the training.

Mr. Fleet stated that he had noticed other localities employing an economic development director, but Lancaster does not.

Mr. Pennell stated that it was actually more common for a locality not to have one. He stated that the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors views the EDA as their economic development effort.

Mr. Fleet asked about Ms. Carter's present salary.

Ms. Carter replied that she has been volunteering her time for the past two years.

Mr. Fleet asked if the County had been approached with this request.

Mr. Pleva replied no. He stated that he agreed with Mr. Pennell in that the Board of Supervisors views the EDA as the economic development entity. He further stated that the County had contributed to the branding initiative.

Mr. Pennell stated that, for the record, he is a member of the Visions' Board and because he has no fiscal involvement in the Board, he would be able to vote on the request.

Mr. Sciacchitano stated that he wanted to clarify the request. He stated that they were requesting \$30,000 for this year and then another \$5,000 for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Pennell asked if there was anything prohibiting them from considering both amounts at the same time.

Mr. Szyperski replied he did not think so.

Mr. Pleva suggested breaking the amounts into two in the motion.

Mr. Fleet made a motion to grant the \$30,000 request for this fiscal year and the \$5,000 request after July 1, 2016. Mr. Pennell seconded the motion. **VOTE: 5-0.**

Financial Report

Mr. Pleva stated that he is tentatively expecting a final audit for the EDA perhaps as early as April.

Mr. Pleva stated that the balance from the last bank statement was \$108,368.78. He stated that the County's current poor house tract amount that is reserved for economic development was \$351,561.25.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Szyperski encouraged everyone to attend the Visions meetings. He stated that they meet on the third Thursday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Chesapeake Bank Training Center.

Other Business

Mr. Pleva stated that he wanted to let everyone know that the Board of Supervisors approved the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries grant agreement for the public

boat ramp at their meeting last night. He stated that the ramp will be located at the Windmill Point Marina Basin and appears to be a suitable location.

Mr. Pleva stated that the next EDA meeting will be on Thursday, July 16th unless a request is made for them to meet sooner.

Adjournment

Mr. Fleet moved and Mr. Pennell seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. **VOTE: 5-0.**

Attest: _____
Frank A. Pleva,
Executive Director