

Virginia:

At the monthly meeting of the Economic Development Board (EDA) held at the Charles City County Government Administration Building thereof on **Thursday, November 03, 2022, at 6:04 pm.**

Economic Development Authority (EDA) Board Members:

Present: Dominique White – Chairperson, Johnny Day, Donald Charity. Brooke Welburn - Secretary

Virtual: No one

Absent: Mr. Erda – Vice Chairperson, Gregory Cotman, Sr., & Mr. Arnold Brown.

Charles City County Administration & Staff:

Present: Michelle Johnson, County Administrator, Rhonda Russell, Asst. County Administrator/Community Development Director, Jesse Bausch, Attorney, Sheron Black, and Peggy Sullivan, Adm. Assistants.

The County Administrator, Ms. Johnson, welcomed everyone on November 03, 2022. Ms. Johnson stated to Chairperson that the EDA has a quorum and that Mr. Arnold Brown resigned from the EDA due to new job constraints effective immediately. Ms. Johnson stated that the County will have to find a new person to represent District I.

Ms. White – Chairperson, called to order the November 03, 2022, meeting of the Charles City County Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Adoption of Minutes:

Ms. White - Chairperson asked that the minutes from September 01, 2022, and October 06, 2022, be deferred until the next meeting December 01, 2022, so members will have time to read and suggest corrections. Ms. Johnson asked for members to send corrections of minutes to staff and copy Ms. White.

Economic Development Personnel:

Ms. Russell stated that tourism can be a component added for the Economic Development Director and referenced that Roanoke County and Danville Virginia had included tourism in their description. The salary range is \$90,000. - \$115,000. yearly. This position would include business, real-estate development, marketing, design, and distribution, and to increase tourism.

Ms. Johnson stated this will have to be added to the County budget: Salary, operating expenses, travel etc. Ms. Johnson stated there is \$30,000, marked for tourism that this person will manage.

° Ms. Welborn asked if they could have a meeting with business/tourist attractions, venue's, restaurant's, and have a discussion about tourism? Ms. Johnson answered yes, that would need to be arranged.

° Ms. White asked if the Economic Development Director would be in charge of the County Web Page? Ms. Johnson answered, yes.

° Ms. Welborn asked the EDA pays the Director's salary for the first three years then the Board of Supervisor's will be paying the salary? Ms. Johnson answered yes, we will have to do a memorandum to the Board of Supervisor's for approval after the three years.

Ms. Welborn asked to get a copy of the job description for the Economic Development Director sent as a word document so the EDA would be able to make changes. Ms. Johnson stated once the tourism information is added we will send back to the EDA for corrections and approval.

On a motion made by Mr. Charity, second by Ms. Welborn, and a vote of 4/0 to hire Economic Development Director. Motion passes.

Ms. Johnson stated we will have a final job description for Human resources. The county will advertise for thirty days, Human Resources will screen them, highest qualified, qualified, and not qualified. Ms. Johnson requested Madam Chair to have one member from the EDA sit in on the interviews. Ms. Johnson, Human Resources, and the EDA member will complete the first round of interviews select the top two and then bring to the EDA and the EDA will select the Director. Ms. Johnson stated the EDA will be managing the Director but will work under Ms. Johnson's leadership, same as other County Director's.

Mr. Day stated that one of the Market 5 spaces could be used for tourism. Ms. Johnson stated that the renovation of the bathrooms will have a section for tourism. That facility will serve dual purposes.

Market 5 Updates:

Ms. Johnson stated at their last meeting the Board of Supervisors approved the contract's for RoxBox Containers and Bruce Howard Contracting. Bruce Howards Contract is ready to be sent to Bruce Howard. RoxBox has not been finalized but hope to have that done by the end of next few weeks. The county is working with Spencer Architect for site plan design. The County has all the quotes for renovating the bathrooms. Ms. Johnson will be meeting next week with all partners to have the kick off.

° Mr. Day asked if an EDA member should be at that meeting? Ms. Johnson answered no.

° Ms. Welborn asked if more information could be put out so the county could better understand the project? Ms. Johnson answered yes, we have a Public Relations Firm working on that now and they will be at the kick off meeting. Virginia Association of Counties will also help market this project.

° Ms. White asked if staff had the answers for itemized cost for RoxBox and Department of Environmental Quality permits? Ms. Johnson answered the itemized cost for RoxBox expenses is being worked on now. Ms. Russell answered Department of Environmental Quality does not require a permit because disturbance is one acre or less that is a state wide policy. All of this will be covered in the site plan. The site plan design engineer will have all this in the site plan. Mr. Charity would like to have this noted in the minutes that the site plan is adequate in design so the county will not have any problems in the future with DEQ.

Mr. Charity request the County keep a close watch on potential danger to the creek.

EDA Market 5 Leases:

Ms. Johnson stated staff will develop Market 5, and the EDA will outline the leasing portion by developing the frame work and guidelines. Mr. Bausch will help us with the lease agreements. What are your thoughts on the leasing process?

° Ms. White asked what is our job? Ms. Johnson answered you have to think about the guidelines. The EDA needs to establish criteria. Ms. White suggested we will need three years of financials, credit check, background check, strong business plans.

° Ms. Welborn asked how long are the leases? Ms. Johnson answered the minimum should be 11 months.

° Ms. Welborn asked why 11 months and not one year? Ms. Johnson answered this is a temporary facility, you at least have to have one month of closure.

° Ms. Welborn asked if the one month closure had to be the month of January? Ms. Johnson answered that is up to you the EDA to decide.

Mr. Day suggested exploring a management company to handle the whole thing.

° Mr. Charity asked who will pay the management company? Ms. Johnson stated all of this will be in the final agreement between the County and EDA. Ms. Johnson suggest you send your ideas for leasing to staff before the next EDA meeting so we may compile one list to send out to you in your next packet.

° Mr. Charity asked if the County would try and recoup the money spent in the Market 5 project? Ms. Johnson answered yes, over a period of time. The County has identified some funding that will help fund the project. There is some funding available now, and hope there will be more. The County is working on funding. All of this will be outlined in the plan.

EDA Next Steps:

Ms. Johnson stated it has been one year since you started with the EDA. What are the next steps for the EDA?

EDA members suggested in moving forward, industrial park, business incubator (boost local economy), attend EDA meetings in other localities, training facility, maybe some way to have our own power support. Ms. White wanted to know what business's are in Charles City now and the best way to find out what the community would like to have in the county besides the obvious grocery store. Ms. Johnson stated staff is updating the Business Directory and it should be ready soon. Ms. Johnson suggested putting a survey on the web page, hold a town hall meeting, maybe put an ad in the Chronicle with a link attached. There are retailers who want to come to Charles City, but they want to pick their spot and its up to the land owner to decide if they want to sell to that retailer. The retailers look at the amount of cars that pass through every day they want to have at least 20,000., most traveled in Charles City has 7,500. cars at route 5 and Courthouse Road. Per Retail Strategies these are the top request that residents want; Grocery, Hardware, Restaurants, and Retail.

° Mr. Charity wanted to find out more information what the County is wanting for the future. Ms. Johnson suggested looking at the Comprehensive Plan and the 2015 Economic Development Plan, along with speaking to Ms. Russell about the 106 corridor and the Courthouse area plan.

° Ms. Welborn suggest the County put more information on line so residents can get a better understanding on how the County operates, why things take so long to get done. Ms. Johnson agreed that would be a good idea because most projects take 12 – 18 months, before they even get started.

Ms. Johnson suggest the EDA look at the Comprehensive Plan and the 2015 Economic Development Plan, then decide where you would like the EDA to go from there.

Chairman Request Report:

Madam Chair had nothing to report.

Ms. Johnson reported the Fire Station will begin moving dirt November 14th. The Food Pantry will begin moving dirt November 7th, and the Brewery will begin remodel November 28th. This has nothing to do with the County, but the Tribal Medical Center will break ground November 17th. Ms. Johnson stated a citizen requested that the Planning Commission and the EDA make their meetings public. This will start in January. The meetings will not stream live, however will be recorded for the public. The EDA has the public here tonight, the EDA is not legally required to let them speak but if you wish we can follow what the Planning Commission by letting individual speak 3 minutes or if you are speaking for a group 5 minutes. You do not have to answer any questions, the County will follow up.

° Ms. Welborn asked if the EDA meetings is still one hour? Ms. Johnson stated did not know where that time specially came from, however the meeting can be longer than an hour if needed. Public Comments will be added to the Agenda.

Public Comments:

- Anne Kinney – Concern Citizens of Charles City; This was presented in front of the Board of Supervisors several months ago, with no response.

1. Why is the County making a deal with out of state developers on the Townhouses?
2. Was an RFP done for the Townhouses? Were local developers or builders asked?
3. Townhouses are prefab modular built out of state, has no benefit to local contractors, why is the County doing it this way?
4. The proposal requires public water and sewer, is there a connection fee cost?
5. Has Zoning change been applied for?
6. Project as a whole does not work.
7. Do you have a plan B?
8. Can the units be rented out as apartments?
9. Can the owner rent out with a section 8 voucher? Do we want to encourage or subsidize that?
10. If the project is not performing will the land, be given back?
11. Where are the prospective buyers coming from, local or out of town?

Market 5

1. Why is the County going to get involved in the landlord business?
2. Was an RFP issued? Why are you not working with local developers?
3. Is this a smart use of taxpayer funds?
4. Free market should provide housing and retail space. The government should provide infrastructure, roads, water etc.
5. It is a 11 month lease, are you going to require they be open all 11 months?
6. Will locals get a discount?

Ms. Kinney has concerns on spending money that is not going to be recouped.

- Peter Churn has concern about townhouses and C4GT on getting the land back.
 - Lynn Barbini continued with C4GT land concerning Mr. Churn stating there is a 2 million dollar lean on the land, so getting it back did not do us any good. When did the County become developers? The County seems to have a lot of properties that you are developing, but not a lot of transparency. Charles City is a Historic County, and this looks like dumpsters with a glass front with a few bushes planted out front. Who is going to be the person who rents it? Who is going to run a business there? I have concerns because we still do not have the internet.
 - Irene Churn stated bikers bring their own food, they want energy food. They are not going to stop there.
- There were no other public comments, public comment closed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. White - Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.