

Avery County Economic Development Committee

August 13, 2018

Minutes

The Avery County Economic Development Committee (EDC) met at 5:00 pm on Monday August 13, 2018 at the Avery County Commissioners Board Room at the Avery County Administrative Complex, located at 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC 28657.

Present for the meeting were:

Ken Walter, Susan Siirila, Melynda Pepple, Larry Hazen, Carmen Lacey, Phillip Barrier and David Pollard.

Absent were:

Tim Phillips, Trey Oakley, Jesse Pope.

The meeting began at 5:08 pm and was moderated by Chairperson Ken Walter.

A motion was made by Mr. Hazen to approve the June 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lacey and approved unanimously.

Mr. Barrier gave Ms. Pepple a copy of a proposed broadband grant, which can be shared, once signed.

He stated that Tommy Burluson had pulled a permit for Telcom to install a dish designed to help with high speed internet. This will be located in the Green Valley area.

Mr. Barrier reported that the Western Area Director of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina will be in Mitchell County of August 22, 2018. Mr. Barrier and Mr. Walter will attend this forum and will be able to share information about available properties in Avery County. He has reached out to owners of available properties in the county. He has heard back from two: the owners of the John Deere property in Jonas Ridge, and the owners of the Lowes Foods property in Newland. He will be able to present information on up to five properties at the above-noted forum. He is awaiting responses from other property owners, but as of now only has the two noted above.

Mr. Hazen asked why an owner of available property may not respond. Mr. Barrier reported that no one has turned down his requests, but simply have not responded. Ms. Lacey advised that she can provide information about property owned by her spouse (CAT building behind Lowes Foods property). Ms. Lacey will provide Mr. Barrier the information this week.

Mr. Walter stated that the Tynecastle property, which was discussed during our May meeting with Allen Cook, has now turned into two prospects. He stated that our partnership with Allen Cook is invaluable.

Ms. Lacey asked about the progress of the new owners of the IRC building in Newland. Mr. Barrier advised that the owner had indicated that he was too busy to do anything else with it at this time. Tommy Burleson will reach out to him again soon.

Mr. Barrier presented a slide-show, showing the new logo superimposed over photographs depicting Avery County. Mr. Hazen noted that the trademark sign, or symbol, being positioned in the upper right corner of the logo was distracting. Many committee members agreed. Mr. Barrier will pass along that the trademark needs to be made as small as possible and that it be positioned under the "C" on the "NC" at the bottom line.

The group reviewed the various photographs and collectively agreed on which images were acceptable. 13 pictures were selected to incorporate into the video from the 25 provided by Melynda Peple and the Chamber of Commerce. The group shared ideas of what different types of photographs needed to be added.

Mr. Walter advised that we have agreed to pay \$500.00 to Alex Amaya to work on the project of superimposing photographs onto the logo. He asked if we could pay more. Mr. Barrier stated that we needed to let him know the amount before the next public hearing in September.

Mr. Hazen asked why we planned to advertise in the brochure (referencing the Avery County Visitor, Relocation and Business Guide prepared by the Avery County Chamber of Commerce). Mr. Walter and Ms. Peple stated that it was because of the circulation of the brochure—up to 45,000 readers in a wide geographic area.

Mr. Barrier asked if we could put the Avery County logo on the front of the brochure. Ms. Peple stated that there would be a cost, plus additional costs if we chose to put an advertisement in the brochure. (See attachment to minutes-ad reservation form).

Mr. Barrier suggested putting the Avery County logo on the front, and placing an EDC advertisement in the brochure. Ms. Peple suggested that the EDC advertisement could be entitled "Come Grow Your Business."

Mr. Hazen raised the idea of a 'poster child' as discussed in previous meetings. He noted that having a consistent figure from ad to ad could help with branding.

Mr. Walter asked the group if we wished to move ahead with reserving ad space in the guide (brochure). Mr. Barrier suggested a ½ page ad for the EDC in the guide.

Mr. Hazen asked if the issue would have to be brought before the County Commissioners at a public hearing to approve the expenditure. Mr. Barrier indicated that he may approach the County Commissioners about the matter before the public hearing. He added that any EDC

expenses have to be approved in a public hearing, that it was state law. Ms. Lacey asked if the EDC was being held to the same standards as others who get county money.

Mr. Walter asked for a motion to have an EDC ad in the brochure at a cost of \$495.00, and for \$300.00 to fund a Junior Achievement program.

Mr. Hazen made the suggested motion, same was seconded by David Pollard and approved unanimously.

Mr. Pollard reviewed with the group a handout which he prepared entitled "Avery County Agriculture." (See copy of handout attached to minutes).

Mr. Pollard advised that 50,000 tags which will be attached to Christmas trees are being printed with the Avery County logo free of charge.

Ms. Lacey asked if we need to send information to small businesses or let them come to us. She asked if it would be a good idea for us to hold a public forum for small businesses. Mr. Pollard stated that it may be good to do so 'off the record' the first time.

Mr. Hazen indicated that we needed actionable items, such as a list of farms in the area that we could reach out to. He asked where we could get such a list. Mr. Pollard and Mr. Barrier noted that Jerry Moody, agriculture extension agent, would be the person to contact for such a list. Ms. Lacey suggested that we work toward getting lists of small businesses in order to have an idea of the types of businesses we may need to reach out to.

Mr. Barrier stated that he could gather data from the tax office.

Mr. Hazen stated that the focus may need to be on agriculture, referring back to Mr. Pollard's handout. Ms. Lacey added that we might also focus on restaurants in the area, as they would be the ones buying products from the farms. Mr. Barrier stated that we need to start with a round-table discussion regarding the small businesses. Mr. Walter suggested a small business fair, and that we use the Avery Journal and the Avery Post to do feature articles, and advertise EDC small business initiatives.

Mr. Hazen asked Ms. Lacey about marketing. He stated that the brand needs to be exposed through merchandising. Ms. Lacey stated that she wished to seek direction from Frank Rosato (consultant). She added that with the confines of the budget, we are limited in what we can do.

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2018. Mr. Barrier stated that he should know by then if the County Commissioners will be agreeable to a half page ad in the brochure, and for additional monies for Alex Amaya.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan P. Siirila