

Avery County Economic Development Committee
January 14, 2019

Minutes

The Avery County Economic Development Committee (EDC) met at 5pm on Monday January 14th, 2019 in the Avery County Commissioners Board Room at the Avery County Administrative Complex, located at 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC 28657

Members present: Ken Walter, Carmen Lacey, Melynda Pepple, Clayton Harpold
Members absent: Jesse Pope, David Pollard

Guest: Phillip Barrier, County Manager
Dennis Aldridge, Avery County Board of Commissioners
David Smith
Kate Gavenus

It was determined that a quorum was present – meeting started at 5:05 by Ken Walter, Chairman.

Motion made by Carmen Lacey to approve November 26th minutes, 2nd by Melynda Pepple. Motion carried.

Discussion regarding officers for 2019. A suggestion was made by the County Manager that the 2 vacant positions would be appointed at the February Commissioners meeting and that we defer this until the February EDC meeting. All agreed.

Report from County Manager:

- Reports that a local farm is looking to develop the property as a wedding venue. He has been referred to Allan Cook with MCC to work on the business plan.
- Newland strip mall (old Lowes property) – developer has been looking at with a new realtor. He has offered county assistance as needed.
- US Textiles property: is a go for developing – there will probably be an announcement regarding around August
- IRC property is for sale again
- Old CMH property in Banner Elk: developers have been meeting with the BE planning board
- Newland pool construction is coming along. Plans to open with limited hours May 1st, then FT after Memorial Day
- Workshop being held on the essentials of Economic Development in Marion on March 6th. Sponsored by WCU and is \$55.00. There is money in the budget for training. Those interested must let Phillip know ASAP because there are a limited number of slots. Registration closes on Feb 27th.
- Mtn Biz Works – company looking for “scale up” and “growth opportunity” small businesses. Phillip has referred one local business – if there are others that might be appropriate, let Phillip know.

- FYI -Phillip has been contacted by a consulting company that focuses on rural Economic Development to analyze particular markets.

Other news:

Ken reported that in December of 2017, there were no hits on the website for economic development. December 2018 showed 106 hits. This is a testament to the work done on website development!

Strategic Planning:

The focus of this meeting is to begin the discussion on strategic planning and how to move forward. Ken indicated that the EDC vision for the future needs to come from the ACBOC. Carmen asked the question regarding who is ultimately responsible for the results of the strategic plan. Discussion indicated both EDC and ACBOC have a role, with the ACBOC being ultimately responsible for the directive and actions of the EOC. EOC role is to take the directives of the ACBOC, formulate an actionable, measurable and sustainable plan for ACBO approval, and act upon with resources approved by commissioners. Clayton suggested that community forums would be helpful in determining what the community perception of wants/needs are, as well as to determine feasibility. Dennis (ACBOC member) indicates that he sat on the EDC several years ago and what they found is the various communities within the county are distinctly different in what they feel is important to economic development within their respective communities. Dennis is supportive of economic development but wants to make sure that the EOC and county acknowledge the challenge of the various community cultures and the sustainability. All agree that there should be data to support the baseline and the impact of actions taken. David Smith also asked how we are determining what it is that students want/need in order to keep them in the communities. Ken indicated that 1st Junior Achievement course was completed last semester, with the 2nd to be scheduled soon.

Summary of Strategic Planning discussion:

Before the next meeting on January 28th, Ken would like for each member to submit goals/questions to him for compilation and presentation to the ACBOC. The

ACBOC will then determine those goals that are achievable, rank the goals, and determine their level of commitment to achieving the goals.

At the next meeting, we will discuss the e-mailed suggestions that are sent to Ken, send those that we believe are most viable to the commissioners for discussion, and ask them to identify 2-3 that they will commit to supporting, and are actionable/measurable.

Carmen made a motion to adjourn at 615, with Melynda 2nd.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: Carmen Lacey (in the absence of Susan Siirila)