

**CURRITUCK COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

August 27, 2009

Cooperative Extension Center, Barco

Attendance: Elizabeth White, Greg Wirth, Tameron Kugler, David Palmer, H.D. Newbern,  
Peter Bishop, Commissioner John Rorer, Kevin Burwell, Mike Painter

Guests: Commissioner Janet Taylor, Diane Nordstrom, Director of Travel & Tourism

**Item I. Call to Order**

Chairman Burwell called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Item II. Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval. Director requested that an item IX Closed Session be added to the agenda to discuss "Matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in Currituck County, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by Currituck County in negotiations." Mr. Palmer also requested an item for discussion and action to approve the EDAB Strategic Plan. The item would become a new item VII, pushing the agenda down thereafter.

Mr. Palmer moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Wirth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Item III. Public Comment**

Mr. Palmer offered words of welcome to guest Commissioner Janet Taylor and Director of Travel & Tourism Diane Nordstrom.

**Item IV. Approval of June 25, 2009 Minutes**

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval of the June 25, 2009 minutes. Mr. Palmer moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Wirth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Item V. Discussion & Action on Visitor Spending Survey & Aligned Action Items: Diane Nordstrom**

Director of Travel & Tourism Diane Nordstrom was present to discuss a visitor spending survey and possible other areas of collaboration. Director noted that the Strategic Plan outlined several overlap items and encouraged more cross-board cooperation.

Mrs. Nordstrom described that the TAB and Tourism Department wanted to conduct a visitor spending survey similar to one done in 2008. Specifically, the survey will be online via Survey Monkey and ask business owners a series of spending and business growth related questions. The results will give the departments and idea of current data and get direct policy and program input from the business community.

Director stated a more precise series of surveys could follow up, based on the EDAB developed line of questions.

EDAB members Ms. White, Mr. Rorer and Mrs. Kugler all felt that there should be only one survey, and it should be combined and with embedded logic to direct responses based on industry and visitor impact. Directors Nordstrom and Bishop concurred with the assessment and approach.

Further, Directors requested volunteers from the EDAB to work with the TAB on the final survey product. EDAB members Ms. White and Mr. Palmer volunteered their services. The group will convene prior to the 9/14/09 TAB meeting to discuss drafts.

Director will work with Mrs. Nordstrom and staff to deliver the survey to the EDAB for review. Further comment and drafts will be discussed between now and the September meetings of TAB and EDAB. Expected launch is early October, to be consistent with the previous year data collection.

The EDAB members and Mrs. Nordstrom also discussed other projects that the departments and TAB / EDAB can collaborate on. These included brainstorming additional special events, community signage and development of a business discounting card program.

Chairman Burwell and the Advisory Board members thanked Mrs. Nordstrom for the information and cooperative workplan.

#### **Item VI. Discussion on Corolla & Mainland Signage**

Mike Painter, president of the Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on the Corolla Sign Ordinance and the Chamber's involvement in working on new language and ordinance work.

At a joint work-session with the BOC in June, the Chamber of Commerce was asked by Corolla businesses to raise the signage issue and provide relief from enforcement from the County. While temporary relief was not a legal option, the Chamber committed to leading a signage review process.

The first Chamber-hosted meeting is set for October 7 at the Hampton Inn. This will be the first in several workshops. Mr. Painter stated that the Chamber would like the support and participation of the EDAB members at the various meetings.

Director stated that one option discussed includes County-sponsored signage or directional assistance for major shopping areas at Corolla Light, Tim Buck II and Monterrey Plaza. This signage could also be applied to the mainland.

Mr. Palmer asked if a group had been formed to look at these issues. Director stated that one had not, but the advisory board would be an option, and the BOC was supportive of it. Mr. Palmer felt that it was important to have discourse and deliberation for any county-sponsored effort, especially regarding sign placement and businesses advertising.

Ms. Kugler wanted the EDAB and this process to pursue community signage and local identity for the various villages along the corridor. The group was very supportive of working on this project.

Director gave a quick update on the Corridor Sweep. Notice of Violation letters have been sent to the first wave of properties. These will be followed in 30 days by a civil citation for \$100 per violation per day. Mr. Palmer asked about outdoor display. Director stated that new regulations on outdoor display were just passed, highlighting some specific areas that would allow display by right.

Mr. Painter asked the County to research funding for Corridor Cleanup in Phase II, where junk and permits could be costly for business or homeowners. Ms. White also commented that this should be explored and funds should be committed by the BOC. Director stated that CDBG funding would not be available until an existing project is closed out.

**Item VII. Action on approval of the EDAB Strategic Plan**

Mr. Palmer asked that the EDAB complete any discussion related to the Strategic Plan and move forward in taking action and approve the Strategic Plan. Hearing no comment or discussion, Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval.

Mr. Palmer moved that the EDAB approve the plan as presented. Ms. White seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Ms. White noted that several dates needed to be changed in the strategic plan to update to unfinished tasks and milestones. She also requested more alignment with the plan and monthly agendas, to better keep in line with milestones and strategic action.

Mr. Palmer again asked the EDAB to thank and recognize Ms. White's efforts for this project.

**Item VIII. Director's Report:**

- **Maple Commerce Park update**

Director reviewed the progress of the Foreign Trade Zone application and provided a copy of a letter outlining support for this application. Consultant is also working with international companies in the region for support letters. Director will be attending an FTZ outreach meeting in October in Charlotte.

Director shared updated site plans and discussed providing better truck access and a location for wastewater treatment off the major site.

- **Inspection Review**

Director will be making a presentation updating the board of commissioners on this review project on September 8th. The project is approximately 40% complete.

- **Website update**

Director provided an updated view of site design that staff is working on for the fall and winter unveil. Department has not yet signed a contract for services for the project, but from a cost and relationship standpoint, staff is leaning toward Ciniva systems. Logo and branding work is ongoing, and will come forward in coming meetings.

- **CIP work-session**

Director provided a short outline. The Capital improvements policies that are moving forward are related to water line extensions and fire suppression and hydrant placement. Director will provide information and draft policies as they are brought

forward to the EDAB. EDAB members were adamant in their desire to participate more in this process and provide much more input than previously on these deliberations.

- **Buy Local**

The EDAB recommended "Buy Local" policy has been passed and was handed out to each department head for their review and practice. This policy was drawn up by the EDAB in February/March of this year.

## **Item IX. Other Business & Announcements**

- **Airport Days**

In the collaborative spirit of the Strategic Plan, EDAB members have been reaching out to other boards. Mr. Wirth attended the Airport Advisory Board meeting the previous week.

Mr. Wirth attended to discuss events with the AAB, specifically discussing "Airport Days," or something like it, which would be a day or weekend long festival showcasing Currituck Regional Airport and Currituck County. There are several traveling show groups and other groups of pilots from nearby areas that could come to the event, as well as demonstrations by local aviation companies and the military. The events could work well as both a showcase and a long-term marketing initiative, as information for attendees and owners could be gathered.

The discussion with the AAB turned to the formation of a committee to work with members of the AAB, Tourism and the Chamber. The purpose of this committee is to move forward with the "Meet and Greet" becoming part of the monthly "Airport Circuit" and eventually "Airport Days". Mr. Wirth asked Mr. Painter to get the Chamber involved in the planning committee.

- **Discussion on EDAB-BOC Joint Meeting & EDAB-BOC Letter**

Mr. Palmer began the discussion expressing the EDAB's frustration over the rescheduling for the joint meeting and stressed the importance of clearing up communication issues. Mr. Wirth agreed and underlined the point that the members merely want to fulfill their responsibility and contribute to ED-related decision-making.

Ms. White and Mrs. Kugler concurred, stating that the wealth of knowledge and experience the EDAB has assembled could do great things for the department and the County and help push along a more integrated and strategic approach to County-wide issues.

Commissioner Taylor shared some of her frustrations with the rescheduling and empathized with the board members. She expressed her desire to see the EDAB more involved in critical decision making, especially infrastructure growth planning.

Consensus formed around the general opinion that the EDAB lacks credibility in the policy-making process, and that the joint meeting will provide the opportunity for the EDAB to present their strategic plan and state a desired role in policy-making and advisement to the BOC.

Regarding rescheduling the joint session, Commissioners Taylor and Rorer suggested that the EDAB utilize a work-session prior to a regular BOC session to

ensure attendance and discussion. Director stated that the BOC & County Manager had also requested this date for a joint session. The EDAB simply stated that they wanted a set meeting and no more rescheduling. The meeting was set for September 8, 2009. It will be advertised at all appropriate locations asap.

The content of the meeting will remain the same as proposed before: presentation of the strategic plan, discussion of communication and role of the EDAB with the BOC and Staff, and general discussion regarding development in the County. The direction of the EDAB is to present both the letter and the strategic plan at the September 8 meeting.

Chairman Burwell discussed the status of the September 24 regular meeting, given a special meeting on 9/8. That decision will be made during the special session.

**Item X. Closed Session**

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion to go into closed session. Mr. Palmer moved to go into closed session: \*\*Pursuant to **NC GS 143-318.11(A)(4) & 132-6(d)** the board will discuss "Matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in Currituck County, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by Currituck County in negotiations" to discuss Project Forest. Mrs. Kugler seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Mr. Newbern moved to adjourn closed session. Mrs. Kugler seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Item XI. Adjourn**

There being no further business, Mr. Wirth moved to adjourn. Mrs. Kugler seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.