

**MINUTES  
ESSEX COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MARCH 6, 2025**

A meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Essex County was held on the 6th day of March, 2025, with the following present:

Present:

Lisa S. Andrews, Chair  
William A. Croxton  
David Holt - Secretary  
Jamie Segar  
Victor Burrell – Treasurer  
Skip Weiss, Vice-Chair  
Woodie Walker –Director of Economic Development

Absent:

Ronnie Sidney

Also present:

Chris Rose – Rappahannock Times  
Lou Spencer  
Tommy Blackwell  
Cupper Dickenson - HDT

**RE: CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lisa Andrews called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. A quorum was met.

**RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made for approval of February 6, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion was seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0

**RE: TREASURER’S REPORT**

Mr. Burrell reported that the checking account balance is \$36,620.62 The 12-month CD value is \$16,513.68. Interest on the CD that matured on 2/13/25 totaled \$201.80. The total fund balance is \$53,134.30. Mr. Burrell also noted that the CD is now in a new nine month CD.

An amendment to the motion for approval of the report was made for the Treasurer to establish a separate account for the Clean Essex Campaign funds.

Motion to approve the report as amended was made and seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0

**RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT – Woodie Walker**

Mr. Walker reviewed his activity report, which is attached.

**RE: OLD BUSINESS**

*Historic Downtown Tappahannock (HDT):*

Ms. Dickenson reported that HDT will be managing the kiosks at Central Park and Hoskins creek.

She also noted that she attended the Virginia Main Street conference in Richmond, which was a great networking opportunity. It also was informative to hear what other Main Street programs are encountering throughout the state.

The Farmers Market is opening on April 19 with a celebration of Earth Day. HDT is working with area schools' science departments and Friends of the Rappahannock to focus on the watershed.

Restaurant week is underway and HDT spent some time with Consociate Media taking photos. In their discussions with the Restaurants, it was noted that information in hotels and or the hotel rooms would be beneficial. A simple brochure or one pager may help increase traffic to local restaurants and sites.

HDT is also working with Soul by the River (Travis Hot Mix).

*Board of Supervisors:*

No Report

*Chamber of Commerce/Town Council:*

Mr. Croxton reported that the Chamber is creating a website.

The Chamber also had a recent event at Act XII that, which was quite successful.

*FY 25-26 Budgets:*

Ms. Andrews presented the budget request to the BOS. She noted that this is the first time that the EDA has requested a budget from the county. The BOS emphasized that the budget request should be for operating funds only and that special grants or projects can e considered on a case by case basis.

Ms. Andrews also noted that the EDA Strategic Plan will be presented to the BOS during the working session on March 11.

*Tourism:*

Destination Management Organization (DMO) - Ms. Andrews and Mr. Walker, at the suggestion of the VTC, will be requesting that the BOS should endorse our DMO Resolution. A motion was made to request that the BOS endorse our DMO Resolution, Motion was seconded. Ayes:6, Nays:0

Meeting with Consociate Media (CM) 2/14 – Ms. Andrews and Mr. Walker met with CM and they will be working on Marketing Plan and \$0 cost. CM has worked extensively with the Town and HDT. They will be planning/building out the application for the EDA’s request for a \$20,000 matching grant from VTC. Total for the project would be \$40,000 (\$20,000 EDA funds matched 1 to 1 by VTC). The grant is due on March 13. It was determined that the EDA will hold a call with CM on Monday, March 10, to review the potential application and the vote to approve or deny.

Chesapeake Gateways Communities – Mr. Walker attended the Chesapeake Gateway Communities Annual Partner meeting on 2/12. Details in the Director’s Report.

VA250 – Mr. Holt reported that the Rise and Fall Festival will be the weekend of 9/12-9/14 this year. The committee will request the VA250 Mobile Museum for that date.

The festival will be free to the public and there will be one or two premium events that will require a ticket purchase.

LaGrange Industrial Park:

The county will provide a plat map of the site. Mr. Weiss met with Bryan Barnes in Planning about promoting LaGrange. Mr. Barnes noted that there were access issues to some parcels, disputes about property lines and that most of the parcels are privately owned. Given the issues with LaGrange, it looks to be an area of expertise for the Planning Commission rather than the EDA.

Mr. Weiss and Mr. Barnes also discussed the potential of property adjacent to the new airport as a potential industrial site.

Business Outreach

Mr. Burrell noted that he and Mr. Walker have been arranging outreach meetings with local businesses. The first upcoming are Tidewater Lumber and O’Malley’s.

Mr. Burrell also emphasized the need for the EDA to set goals and objectives on how many businesses we contact each month and identify items we can accomplish relatively quickly. He also suggested that a brochure be developed that we can hand to existing and prospective businesses. There was also discussion of coordinating with other entities (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) on these outreach meetings.

Tappahannock Rotary

Mr. Burrell reported that Rotary will have Ms. Dickenson and the president of HDT at the next Rotary meeting.

**RE: NEW BUSINESS**

DHCD affordable housing programs

Mr. Holt noted that the recent announcement from the Governor about the over \$100 million program noted in Mr. Wlaker’s report) becoming available appears to be focused on Affordable Housing which is

different from Workforce Housing (different Average Median Income – AMI requirements). Mr. Walker has requested a meeting with DHCD.

Also, Mr. Holt has been talking with Central Rappahannock River Habitat for Humanity (formerly Caroline Habitat for Humanity) regarding opportunities in Essex.

Short-term Rental Incentive Options

Ms. Andrews discussed how the EDA may employ the revenues from the transient tax to encourage extended stays in the Short Term Rentals (STR). Ideas such as a restaurant gift certificate or book 3 nights get a 4<sup>th</sup> night free.

**RE: CLOSED SESSION**

No closed session

**RE: NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 2025 at 9:00AM.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn was made at 11:35 am. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0

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Secretary, David Holt