

## Meeting Agenda

**Date:** January 26, 2021

**Subject:** Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION – We are going ahead with the meeting suggestion re. Ken’s e-mail dated 01/08. Thus Phillip Barrier, Dennis Aldridge, Susan Siirila and I will meet in the county administration building, with the rest of our committee joining virtually. This minimizes the number of us in the same room, allows those online to be mask free and aid Susan as she take the minutes. That said for those of us in attendance we will need to be in compliance with COVID-19 social distancing, face mask and all other similar COVID -19 guidelines.**

**Welcome to our newest EDC member Ms. Angela [Angie] Berry.**

**The meeting will come to order.**

1. Approve and or amend the October 27<sup>th</sup>. Meeting Minutes.
2. Election of officers for the 2021 calendar year
3. **Unfinished Business:**
  - a. Web Site Development Project status update – Melynda, Phillip, Jerry and I did a Zoom meeting with Boomer and Krista Stearns, Account Manager on 11-06. Since then Big Boom Design has submitted to draft web site concept ideas and Ken has asked the following individuals to participate – Dr. Dan Brigman, Sherriff Kevin Frye, Carmen Lacey, Jesse Pope, Melynda Pepple, Jerry Moody, Eric Berg, Dave Smith, Kate Gavenus, Susan Siirila and Ken Walter. Using Big Boom Design concept #1 we have “filled in the blanks” – see below & attached.
  - b. Kate Gavenus re. Main Street America in Newland status/progress update.
  - c. f. Other?
4. Phillip Barrier updates & new Bojangles' building progress status.
5. Dave re. Newland strip mall property development status.  
Ken re. IRC/Structall.  
FYI from Ken - according to Site Selection magazine North Carolina ranks as the nation’s top business climate state in 2020, in a two-way tie with Georgia. North Carolina held the No. 2 spot in the magazine’s annual business climates study for five straight years before rising to the top spot this year. North Carolina enjoyed a six-year run in the top spot from 2005 through 2010.
6. **New Business and/or other issues to address:**
  - a. EDC support of a county Occupancy tax?
  - b. Ken updated & improved our EDC website “Resource Directory” page.
  - c. Eric Berg - presentation follow-up re. quality of life and tourist investments.
7. **Agricultural sub-Committee Report [Jerry]:**
  - a. Report?
8. **Residential Housing sub-Committee [Eric]:**
  - a. Report?
9. **Education sub-Committee Report [Susan, Dave & Ken]:**
  - a. We will consider resumption of our Junior Achievement program when it is COVID-19 safe.
10. **Marketing sub-Committee Report [Melynda]:**
  - a. ?

**11. Future discussion and/or action topics:**

a. ?

**12.** What have I/we missed – questions, concerns, other?

**13. Next meeting** – Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Is there any objection to closing the meeting? Hearing no objection, the meeting is adjourned.**

**NOTES:** (1) Opening & closing instructions in **bold** are now in compliance with “Robert’s Rules of Order”, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES:**

1. April 29, 2019 combined EDC/BoC meeting review. For the record our suggestion list was:

- a) The development of an Arts, Craft & Agricultural Products Market. Such a facility appropriately marketed would serve all of Avery County.
- b) Pitch to gated community members our Avery County business opportunities and county needs, in the hope of enlisting their interest and/or support.

NOTE: Susan has made an excellent suggestion - “Next time, instead of calling it a joint meeting, what if we call it a ‘presentation’ to the BOC. We could break the hour in half & in the first half hour, we could share info on what we have accomplished. Then, give the second half hour for feedback or talk time.”

2. Previously Phil Trew, NC Works and Rebecca Bloomquist, High Country Council of Governments have offered their assistance with grant writing - as has Kate Gavenus [many moons ago]. Is investigating grants something we should be recommending to the Board of Commissioners?

3. At the October 28, 2019 meeting a motion was made & passed extending the EDC Meeting times from 6:00 to 6:30 PM, on those dates when the committee has a guest speaker.

**Reminders:**

1. Retaining Employees Workshop – to be rescheduled when it is COVID-19 safe.
2. Allen Cook, Mayland Community College Small Business Center continues to offer assistance programs & services to help business owners understand & apply for grants & loans.

**See the Web Site Development Project material on the following pages.**

## **Proposed Big Boom Design Web Site Option #1 Information & Data:**

1. We need to replace the Avery County Chamber of Commerce logo with our Avery County logo.
2. “Contact Us” – use the Design Option #2 information. Phone number & e-mail information for Phillip & Ken.
3. Eliminate “Live Chat”.
4. “Looking to Relocate - Why Avery County” – Clayton Harpold, attached to Agenda e-mail.
5. “Entrepreneurs Start Here” – Ken Walter

Whether you are starting a new business, growing an established company or relocating these are daunting undertakings. There are so many questions – “Where do I?”, “How do I?”, “Who knows about that?”, “Which is the correct regulatory agency?” and the list goes on and on. Well whether you are considering a move to Avery County or are already here the combination of our county officials and Economic Development staff are at your disposal to assist you each step of the way. We already know all - the who, what, where and how answers, so you don’t have to spend your precious time doing the research yourself. While Avery County may be small & rural that gives us the advantage of providing personalized service to address you specific needs.

Whether you have a business related question and/or concern or seek information about the quality of life here in Avery County check out our web site pages and if you need more information click on our “Contact Box” to call or e-mail us.

6. “Resource Directory” – Copy from current EDC web site page.
7. “Healthcare” – Carmen Lacey

Built in 1999, Charles A. Cannon, Jr. Memorial Hospital is an acute care hospital with a full-service emergency department, medical inpatient care, imaging department, laboratory, general surgery, ophthalmic surgery, plastic surgery, pediatric dental surgery, inpatient and outpatient behavioral health, The Rehabilitation Center offering physical and occupational therapies, and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation services.

Conveniently located in Linville, the center point of Avery county, Cannon is fully accredited by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

Cannon Memorial is a member of Appalachian Regional Healthcare System (ARHS). Other entities include Watauga Medical Center, located in Boone and Appalachian Regional Medical Associates (medical practices in both Watauga and Avery Counties).

Medical practices in the Avery community include The Baker Center for Primary Care in Linville, with 8 providers; and Elk River Medical Associated located in Banner Elk with 3 providers. Additionally, The Tate Clinic, which is a general surgery practice, is located in Linville.

Cannon Memorial is currently undergoing construction for expansion of inpatient behavioral health services. Anticipated completion – late summer 2021.

In addition we have additional private practice doctors, nurse practitioners, dentists and pharmacies located throughout the county.

Carmen Lacey, RN, MSN, BC-NA, President and CNO

Web Site: <https://apprhs.org/cannon/>

8. “Education” – Dr. Dan Brigman, attached to Agenda e-mail.

9. “Agriculture” – Jerry Moody, still a work in progress.

10. Avery County Crime Rate – Ken Walter [per BestPlacesToLive.com stats.]

The violent crime rate in a county is ranked on a scale of 1 = low crime to 100 = high crime. Our Avery County violent crime scale registers 14.3, with the United States average at 22.7, this makes Avery County a very safe place to live and operate a business.

11. “Outdoor Activities” – Eric Berg, attached to Agenda e-mail.

12. “Real Estate” – Dave Smith, attached to Agenda e-mail.

13. “EDC in Avery County” – use our current EDC web page copy, as follows.

The Avery County Economic Development Committee is comprised of nine (9) committee members, our County Manager and a member of the Avery County Board of Commissioners. We are a diverse group of business specialists consisting of retired corporate executives, current CEO's & management professionals and entrepreneurs. Our career backgrounds range across the board from manufacturing, education, health care, utilities, retail and wholesale. Some of our members are Avery County natives with their family heritage going back multiple generations; other are expats from more northern states. Our diversity is our greatest strength.

We have two (2) primary goals, each sharing equal priority: (1) To insure the success, growth and retention of our current businesses. (2) To attract new commerce to Avery County.

Whether you are a sole proprietor, new or experienced entrepreneur, member of a site selection task force seeking a new or additional business site we are your “go to” one-stop referral source.

All of us who comprise the Avery County Economic Development Committee love and live by our county slogan—“Together... We are Avery County”. Please do not hesitate to contact us; it would be our pleasure to share our knowledge, experience and wisdom in assisting you in making your business vision a reality.

The Avery County Economic Development Committee is your one stop referral resource whether you are an entrepreneur, a new business start-up, a business entering a growth cycle or an established company wishing to expand or relocate.

Our goal is to be your “go to” resource to compliment your efforts and assure your success.

We will assist your business with:

- writing a business plan
- startup capital requirements
- rules & regulation compliance
- employee recruitment
- job training reimbursement
- educational & advanced training opportunities and all other aspects of starting or operating a retail, wholesale, tourism, hospitality, agricultural, commercial or light manufacturing business.

Avery County is a diverse community that welcomes new business. Come join us and let our motto be yours – “Together... We are Avery County”.

14. “Frequently Asked Questions” – Melynda Pepple, attached to Agenda e-mail.

15. "Available Commercial Properties" – use current locator as it appears on our Avery County.gov/EDC page.
16. "Avery County Videos" – use current videos with the Avery County video to be offered first.

**Design Option #2 ideas to be incorporated in Design Option #1:**

1. "EDC Services".
2. The 4 town web sites – Banner Elk, Beech Mountain, Newland and Sugar Mountain.
3. "Happy Businesses in Avery County" – Kate Gavenus, Susan Siirila, Jesse Pope & Frank Ruggiero and Ken Walter – Beech Mountain Ski Resort, Fred's General Mercantile, Wilderness Run Alpine Coaster, Grandfather Mountain and Classic Stone Works – attached to Agenda e-mail.

Sugar Mountain Resort - We like to do business in Avery County because the people here are genuine, the mountains are beautiful, and the pace is pleasant.  
Kimberley Jochl, Vice President Sugar Mountain Resort

Note: There are additional/potential businesses that may still contribute "Testimonials".