

Avery County Economic Develop Committee  
August 15, 2017

An interim meeting of the EDC was held on August 15<sup>th</sup> in the Avery County Commissioners Board Room at the Avery County Administrative Complex, located at 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC

Present:

Ken Walter – chairman  
Roy Reynolds  
Larry Hazen  
Trey Oakley  
Carmen Lacey  
Tim Phillips – commissioner representative

Absent (excused):

Susan Siirila  
Mark Parlier  
Phillip Barrier – county manager

- The meeting was called to order at 502 pm by Ken Walter.

Approval of the July 31<sup>st</sup> minutes was deferred until the next scheduled meeting (4<sup>th</sup> Monday)

The agenda was reviewed by Ken, with questions for Tim regarding the Commissioners response to the Committees questions. Tim indicated that he could not recall discussion regarding the specific agenda items of:

- EDC proposed community outreach plans
- Reporting responsibilities
- Level of independence
- Tax incentives for repurposing of derelict buildings
- Business cards

- Tim states that he and Phillip talked personally about the money that has been appropriated for the EDC and that his opinion is that the members can utilize it for whatever it was felt was necessary.

Larry talked about the EDC's need for autonomy in meeting with chambers, TDA's, etc. with prescribed talking points. However the Bylaws, Section 11 "Limitation of Powers" is prescriptive, and the Commissioners should consider revision (particularly items 1 & 2).

- Tim indicates that he has received notice that the August 21<sup>st</sup> Commissioners meeting has been cancelled, with the next scheduled meeting probably occurring on September 5<sup>th</sup> after Labor Day. Since this meeting will occur after the next scheduled meeting of the EDC, Ken indicates that he will contact Phillip tomorrow to determine if clarification on the above issues can be reached prior to the scheduled August 28<sup>th</sup> EDC meeting, or if

we should reschedule until after the Commissioners meeting in September. He will notify the EDC members when he receives clarification from Phillip regarding this.

- **Committee Reports:**

Marketing Committee: Ken reported that he received notification from Mark Nystrom, Associate Professor of Graphic Design at ASU, that he will discuss with his department the possibility of the logo design being taken on as a class project. Ken will be in touch with him to determine next steps. Larry presented a copy of the Avery Chamber pamphlet that is distributed throughout the state. He also found an area in southwest Virginia that has a very robust economic development committee and will send the marketing committee information on this.

Youth/Athletics Committee: No updates – Trey indicates that they need direction from the Commissioners – i.e. programming vs building an infrastructure.

Lodging/Food Services Committee: - no updates

- Tim reported that the report from Phillip to the County Commissioners indicates that high speed internet is “looking favorable”. Discussion with Tim about the possibility of incentives being offered to those who are repurposing buildings for economic development. Tim indicated that he would be in favor of this but has not had a discussion with the other commissioners. Ken asked if there was anything that the county currently does to encourage businesses to come to the community. Tim said that he was not aware of anything specific, but if someone approaches the county or the planning board with something that the county could do that would encourage development, there is consideration.

- Additionally, Ken received the following from Mark, who was unable to be at the meeting today:

I would like to encourage our group to pursue the idea of a welcome center in the elk park area. I think the commissioners need to get behind this too and start working on our state representatives to secure funding for same. Additionally, I think we should talk to the town of elk park and ask them to come on board with support of such a facility.

- Ken will call Phillip tomorrow regarding specific questions that need to be addressed by the commissioners before moving forward.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45

Respectfully recorded and submitted by Carmen Lacey