

**Campbell County
Economic Development Commission**

April 16, 2009

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, April 16th, 2009 in the Campbell County Haberer Building Board Level Multi-use Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Gary Cantwell
Scott Tweedy
William Anderson
William Overacre
William R. Reeves, Jr.
Kyle Rosser
Richard Carroll
G. Michael Damron
D. Vance Driskill

Also Present:

R. David Laurrell, County Administrator
Amy R. Allen, Economic Development Administrative Assistant
Brandon S. Turner, Program Manager

Members Absent:

J. Michael Davidson, Director, Economic Development
Lester Wooldridge, Chairman
William Calohan, Vice-Chairman
Herbert Guthrie

// In the absence of either Chairman and Mr. Davidson, Brandon Turner, Program Manager called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm. Mr. Turner explained that Mr. Davidson was unable to attend the meeting due to a death in his wife's family. Mr. Turner asked if there were any additions or corrections to the January 15th, 2009 meeting minutes. With no changes or corrections recommended, upon a motion by Mr. Damron, seconded by Mr. Carroll, and duly adopted by unanimous vote of the members present, the January 15th, 2009 Economic Development Commission meeting minutes were approved as read.

Matters from Economic Development Department:

// Mr. Turner addressed his first item on the agenda, Project Updates. Mr. Turner reported that the Spring Hill Suites hotel at Airport East has opened, however this has not yet been confirmed. Paving of the North bound lane has been finished, and they are working on the paving of the South bound lane. All four sides of the traffic signal are working at this time. A sewer study has been conducted to determine what options are available for Seneca Commerce Park. The County is working with Wiley & Wilson on this study as well as they will be finishing up the storm water retention ponds and the landscaping. The plan is for the County Crew to go in and clean the 30 acre lot this spring. Mr. Turner pointed out that the unemployment for Campbell County is now at 7.5% for February 2009, where as the rate was 3.6% in February 2008. Currently the state is at 7.0% and the US is at 8.9%. Prospect activity has slowed down and any other projects are on hold at this point.

// Mr. Turner discussed the next item on the agenda, Economically Distressed Communities. Mr. Turner stated that Mr. Davidson was seeking the committee's advice on whether or not Campbell County should consider designating the Towns of Brookneal and Altavista as Economically Distressed Communities. Campbell County as a whole does not fall under the EDA's definition of economically distressed county. In the past five or six years, Campbell County has tried three times to have Enterprise Zones around Altavista and/or Brookneal and has failed all three times. The consensus of the members present was that we should not pursue this designation at this time. The consensus was to maybe reduce the current thresholds of the Incentive Policy or make revisions/amendments. Mr. Turner asked if a comprehensive plan needs to be developed for these distressed counties. Mr. Laurrell stated that Altavista already has a comprehensive plan in place, which will be merged with the counties. He also stated that the \$1 million grant that Brookneal just received from the Tobacco Commission requires as a condition of the grant that Brookneal come up with their own comprehensive plan; which will then be merged with the county's. Mr. Laurrell stated that discussions with other counties have already been done. He suggested that the committee may want to redefine the Economic Development Plan for each area where we want to see Economic Development growth and add this to the current comprehensive plan. The suggestion was made to revisit the CEDs at the next meeting.

Matters from the County Administrator:

// Mr. Laurrell assured the members that relative to other areas Campbell County is doing well. Campbell County has a balanced budget, has raised no taxes and has had no layoffs. All of these factors are due to the willingness of the Board of Supervisors to do long term planning. Mr. Damron pointed out that part of the praise needs to go to Mr. Laurrell for his willingness to be a leader in this county. Mr. Laurrell stated that Altavista is not out of the woods, however it is looking better. There is lots of interest in the Timberlake area; however the bad news is that problems are developing in the South East part of the county and those areas are being hit by the economic problems.

Matters from Commission Members:

// Mr. Damron said he would like to mention that sometimes larger water/sewer users encounter connection fees which can be obstacles to doing starting a business in Campbell County. These fees could result in tens of thousands of dollars over time. CCUSA's board is trying to adopt a policy to offset the upfront cost of these connection fees over time. Mr. Carroll asked if this would give Campbell County an advantage over other localities. Mr. Damron stated yes.

// Mr. Cantwell reminded the members about the Economic Education opportunities available through the Board of Education. The Board of Education is putting in requirements for students to take Economic and Person Finance by the fall of 2010 in high schools.

Following a general discussion of the aforementioned matters and with no other items presented for consideration, Mr. Turner adjourned the meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 1:03 pm.