

**Campbell County
Economic Development Commission**

January 21, 2010

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, January 21, 2010 in the Campbell County Board Level Multi-use Room, Haberer Building, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Lester Wooldridge, Chairman
William Calohan, III, Vice Chairman
William Anderson
Gary Cantwell
Richard Carroll
G. Michael Damron
D. Vance Driskill
William R. Reeves, Jr.
Kyle Rosser
Scott Tweedy

Also Present:

J. Michael Davidson, Director, Economic Development
R. David Laurrell, County Administrator
Brandon S. Turner, Program Manager
Brian P. Gleason, Administrative Assistant

Member Absent:

Herbert W. Guthrie
William F. Overacre

// Chairman Wooldridge called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

// The October 15, 2009 minutes were presented for approval. Hearing no changes or corrections, upon a motion by Mr. Damron, seconded by Mr. Tweedy, and duly adopted by unanimous vote of the members present, the October 15, 2009 Economic Development Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Matters from the Economic Development Director

Project Updates

// Mr. Davidson reviewed economic development project updates. He mentioned that prospect activity for commercial sites has picked up, in the manner of phone and email contacts, but it has not generated any deals.

Update on County Fiscal Status

// Mr. Davidson next discussed the fiscal status of the County, stating that Campbell's situation is considerably better than other counties in the region. Mr. Davidson credited the leadership of our

Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator. He noted that local revenue has actually increased slightly, while funding from the state will certainly decline. Mr. Davidson said the school system will likely suffer significant cuts for the next couple years. He explained that even after the economy improves it will be several years before state revenues catch up. Mr. Davidson next outlined the purpose and effect of the County's budget set-aside fund. He explained that the budget set aside acts as a reserve fund and a self-insurance fund. He then reviewed the County's hiring freeze policy, which increased from 90 days to 365 days, but remains at 90 days for Public Safety positions, with additional exceptions for certain core positions. Mr. Davidson explained that if need be, existing employees will have to take on the duties of any vacant position. Mr. Anderson noted that the County's mission of "Governing with Vision" has guided the Board and the County Administrator, and resulted in the County's sound fiscal footing. Mr. Davidson credited the Commission with aiding the Board in its perspective of economic development. Mr. Davidson briefly mentioned the \$9 million judgment in the landfill case.

Update on Board Planning Session

// Mr. Davidson next discussed the importance of planning and forward thinking, using the Board Planning Session in October 2009 as a launching point. He provided background on the structure and purpose of the Planning Session, and then discussed the outcomes of the session.

Mr. Davidson pointed out the key components related to economic development that were addressed, to include transportation, targeted marketing, broadband availability, attraction of new business and existing business retention. He explained that the Board prioritized those key components, with expanding and retaining existing businesses as the highest priority.

Mr. Davidson highlighted the challenge of transportation in attracting new businesses, citing the lack of interstates in the County. Mr. Davidson explained that in this regard, the Board prioritized working on a business model that does not depend heavily on interstates.

Another critical component Mr. Davidson reviewed from the Board Planning Session was broadband connectivity. He said the Board recognizes the provision of broadband access for public safety agencies and schools as a core service of government, and hopes to facilitate or incentivize the provision of broadband access for residents and businesses.

Mr. Davidson next discussed the priority of increasing median household income, as determined by the Board. He said the Board hopes to achieve that priority by supporting Liberty University's expansion and increasing the number of higher paying skilled and technical jobs.

A discussion ensued regarding some of the challenges and opportunities identified in the review of the Board Planning Session. The discussion focused on the benefits and drawbacks of having interstates, the need for technology-based economic development, and the need for innovative educational strategies to train young people for more technical careers. Administrator Laurell concluded the discussion by commenting that it is critical to match resources to demand and opportunities for economic development and education.

Matters from the County Administrator

// Administrator Laurell then focused the discussion on issues with the Lynchburg Regional Airport, specifically the difficulty working with the City of Lynchburg. He stated that the County and the region are missing opportunities because of the lack of cooperation and synergy on economic

development initiatives in the Airport corridor. He encouraged the commission members to do what they can to encourage city leadership to realize these opportunities.

A discussion ensued regarding the Airport, including the subsidy paid by the city, further comments on opportunities lost, and the often political nature of the lack of cooperation between city and County.

Matters from Committee Members

// Mr. Cantwell inquired about any significant demographic trends in the County that came out of the 10-year vision as discussed in the Board Planning Session. Mr. Davidson explained that the historic trend of low to moderate growth will likely continue. He stated that Liberty and its growth will likely have more and more of an impact on the County. Administrator Laurell added that the population will also be older, and he pointed out migration trends from the southern part of the county to the northern part, and gains in per capita income that still lag behind the state. He further explained that these demographics help to direct things like infrastructure improvements. He also commented on how the increasing numbers of new residents to the County are impacting the demands and expectations of core government services.

// Mr. Reeves inquired about the status of the Crossroads Colonnades project. Mr. Davidson explained that project as it was proposed was effectively dead, but that the potential for some sort of shopping center development at that site still exists.

// Following a general discussion of the aforementioned matters and with no other items presented for consideration, upon a motion by Mr. Anderson and seconded by several members, the meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.