

**Campbell County
Economic Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

July 17, 2008

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, July 17, 2008 in the Campbell County Historic Courthouse Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Herbert Guthrie
William Overacre
William R. Reeves, Jr.
Kyle Rosser
Richard Carroll
Gary Cantwell
William Anderson
G. Michael Damron

Also Present:

R. David Laurrell, County Administrator
J. Michael Davidson, Director, Economic Development
Rebecca Schwarz, Economic Development Administrative Assistant

Members Absent:

Lester Wooldridge, Chairman
William Calohan, Vice-Chairman
Vance Driskill
Scott Tweedy

Due to the absence of Chairman Wooldridge and Vice-Chairman Calohan, Mr. Davidson presided over the meeting. Mr. Davidson called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm.

// Mr. Davidson opened the meeting by asking if the Commission members had any changes or corrections for the April 17, 2008 meeting minutes. Mr. Overacre noted that on page 2 in the first line, the sentence reads "retain an easement," and it needs to read "obtain an easement." With this edit made accordingly and with no other changes or corrections recommended, upon a motion by Mr. Overacre, seconded by Mr. Cantwell, and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the April 17, 2008 Economic Development Commission meeting minutes were approved as read.

Matters from the Director:

// Mr. Davidson addressed his first item on the agenda, the Project Updates. He said that he had one more update to the Project Updates sent out in the meeting packets. As the Commission members probably saw in the newspaper or on television, Airport East's road construction is finally getting underway. According to Mr. Davidson's understanding, Burleigh Construction is the main contractor. Lawhorne and Johnson will be doing the grading for the road, and George E. Jones has the contract on water and sewer lines. Everything has been officially ordered, and they were supposed to begin construction at the beginning of the week. Before long they will be turning ground.

Mr. Laurrell asked if Simons Run is open at the Wards Crossing West shopping center. Mr. Davidson said that it will be open by August 1 or before. The final coat of asphalt is not yet on the road, but that will only be a 2 or 3 day process to complete. The opening of the road by August 1 will fulfill the contractual obligation to the City of Lynchburg for the Wards Crossing West project.

// Mr. Davidson moved to the next item on the agenda, Public Outreach. Mr. Davidson said that at the last meeting there was discussion regarding public outreach and ways of interacting and getting the word out to the public. Mr. Davidson said that not everybody uses the various forms of mass media, from radio, television, newspaper, the internet, and so on, but a large part of the population can be reached through those various forms of media. Mr. Davidson reviewed the various means by which the County gets information out to the public. For the websites discussed, Mr. Davidson used a media projector.

Mr. Davidson explained that Campbell County operates an in-house website. Later he did a virtual tour through the website. Mr. Davidson then said that the County Chronicle is mailed to every resident in Campbell County. He said that if someone does not receive the County Chronicle, this is a mistake, and he asked that if anyone on the Commission knows of people who are not receiving the Chronicle, please inform the County so that we can fix this. Economic Development typically has one or two articles in the Chronicle.

The County produces a bi-annual guide to Campbell County, a booklet which contains general information on the County. Because it is updated bi-annually, information that is subject to becoming outdated during that period is not included. The County Guide is available at the public libraries and through Recreation. Recreation edits and oversees the printing and distribution of the guide, the County Chronicle, all press releases for the County, and a monthly newsletter. The Library has a website, though its website is through the Campbell County School System. The School System has its own separate website from the County, and Mr. Davidson reviewed it and the Library's website later when giving the virtual tour of the County's internet resources. The School System also produces newsletters that are sent home with students.

Whenever special events take place in the County, the County typically advertises in the newspaper. For local events pertaining to Brookneal or Altavista, the County usually only advertises in the local papers, but for County-wide events the County advertises in the Lynchburg News and Advance.

Business Appreciation Week is the County's biggest outreach to businesses. An annual luncheon is held for all major County employers. Letters are sent to every business with a business license or registered for Machinery and Tools. Mr. Davidson further described the Business Appreciation Week efforts.

From a marketing perspective, Campbell County Economic Development has its own independent website. The County website is in the format of content management, to provide a great deal of information to citizens, whereas the ED website is more advertising/marketing and promotional oriented. During the demonstration of the County websites, Mr. Davidson reviewed and explained the various functions and services of the ED website. Mr. Davidson also demonstrated the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's site marketing website.

Economic Development also produces a periodic newsletter called the Caliber. The Department of Economic Development sends this electronically to site consultants and the state's Economic

Development organization. ED tries to produce the newsletter on a quarterly basis, though if there is nothing current or relevant to report ED postpones releasing its newsletter so as not to allow the newsletter to become stale or to be seen as junk mail by its recipients. Mr. Cantwell asked that the Economic Development Commission members be added to the mailing list for the newsletter.

Economic Development does limited print advertising, and when it does advertise in print publications, it focuses the ads completely on driving people to the ED website. The department also looks for ad packages that will incorporate some type of online advertising, since the internet is the most profitable form of advertising out there. Recently Economic Development began advertising with Google AdWords. Mr. Davidson described to the Commission the details of advertising through Google. In addition, Mr. Davidson discussed web optimization.

Mr. Carroll asked who put together all the information on the ED website. Mr. Davidson said that Sisson Creative serves as ED's webmaster and designed the template and put things together. As far as the information on the website, ED staff was responsible for that task, as well as website maintenance, updates, and website traffic tracking and analysis. Mr. Carroll commented on how much information is on the website and highly praised the website.

General discussion regarding all these public outreach efforts and media followed, and Mr. Davidson answered various questions.

Mr. Anderson asked what the top three (3) things prospects are looking for when looking for a site. Mr. Davidson said that first prospects look at employment to see if there are enough workers to meet their workforce needs in both the present and in the future. Second, employers look at workforce training, and third, employers look at site criteria.

Mr. Cantwell said he thought this was a good review of Campbell County's public outreach. Mr. Anderson said that the ED website is a good website, and he uses portions of it daily. Mr. Carroll said he found the website to be very impressive.

Mr. Damron asked if Mr. Davidson presents the website at commercial conventions. Mr. Davidson said that when he goes on trade shows, due to cost and limited County resources, the only trade shows he goes to are ones in which he participates as a regional or state representative for the regional and state organizations.

Matters from Commission Members:

// Mr. Davidson next asked for any items from the Commission members. Mr. Carroll asked for an update on the recreation park at Bear Creek and Village Highway. Mr. Davidson said he believes they're master planning it, though Recreation knows the details on that project. General discussion followed.

// Mr. Cantwell asked the status of the planned outreach to the School Board on the Economic Development Commission's position on economic education. Mr. Davidson said that unfortunately with the amount of projects going on he has not had time since the last meeting to work on this. The position was sent to the Board of Supervisors, and the Board approved it. Mr. Davidson will get back on this project and pursue getting on the agenda for the School Board.

Following a general discussion of the aforementioned matters, and with no other items presented for consideration, upon a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Carroll, and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the Economic Development Commission adjourned at 1:14 pm.