

Campbell County Economic Development Commission

October 20, 2005

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, October 20, 2005 in the Campbell County Historic Courthouse Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

William Anderson
William E. Calohan, III
G. Michael Damron
J. Michael Davidson
Herbert W. Guthrie
O. Richard Metz, Chair
William Overacre
Kyle Rosser
Scott Tweedy
Lester Wooldridge

Those Absent

Donald Atkins
Marvin Clements
Frank Wright

Also Present:

Scott Reiter, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service Agent
R. David Laurrell, County Administrator
Jamie Banton, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Richard Metz called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm. The August 18, 2005 meeting minutes were approved without changes.

Matters from the Director

// Mr. Davidson presented the Commission with a Project Updates report. Included in the report were photographs of the IDA Brookneal Building before and after the Sanfaçon Industry renovations. In addition, Mr. Davidson stated that an existing business expansion would be announced tomorrow. Mr. Davidson also discussed the Southeast Plastics Encounter he attended in Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Davidson stated that the Charlotte show was smaller than the trade events he attended in Chicago, but the smaller size made it easier for him to make contacts.

Under his Project Updates, Mr. Davidson also discussed the Dearing Ford Business & Manufacturing Center. The Wal-mart pad site is complete. Campbell County released a request for proposals for engineering work to design a road into the remaining 30-acres of the park. Before a road can be constructed, some master planning of the area must be completed. Due to a surplus of dirt on the Wal-mart site, Campbell County is receiving a considerable amount of fill material to assist with road development and site preparation.

Mr. Davidson also noted that Phase I of the Seneca Commerce Park will be completed about two months ahead of schedule. Photographs of the new industrial access road at the Seneca Commerce Park were presented to the Commission for review.

Mr. Davidson told the Commission that the Small Business & Minority-Owned Business Incentive Policy revisions they recommended to the Board of Supervisors were approved at the August 15, 2005 Board meeting.

// Next, Mr. Davidson stated that Scott Reiter of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service was attending the meeting to allow Commission members the opportunity to question him further. Mr. Reiter presented detailed information on Campbell County's agricultural economy at the Commission's August 18, 2005 meeting. Mr. Davidson asked the Commission for feed-back on Mr. Reiter's presentation. Mr. Reiter stated that even though much of the information he provided appeared negative, he wished to present the Commission with an accurate depiction of the state of the agricultural economy and the challenges farmers are currently confronted with.

Mr. Calohan stated that he felt it was important to maintain the greenspace and type of life Campbell County offers. The Commission discussed how the County could help farmers find other crops to grow on less than 100-acres and still turn a profit.

Mr. Reiter explained that part of the difficulties with marketing agricultural products was because the goods are perishable and have a short shelf-life. Larger chain stores also do not buy locally grown products. Mr. Reiter also stated that new farmland is too expensive for farmers to buy, so a focus on maintaining existing land is essential. Incentives to farmers to maintain farmland could help. The Commission discussed zoning revisions and the transfer of development rights. Many Commission members stated that farmland is aesthetically pleasing to everyone. Mr. Davidson stated that staff would put together a summary sheet of issues and discussion points for the next meeting.

// Lastly, Mr. Davidson advised the Commission that it was time to update and revise the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) completed in 2003. When the CEDS was originally developed, the Economic Development Commission represented the bulk of the CEDS Committee. Federal EDA guidelines recommend periodic (2-3 years) revisiting of the Strategy to keep the information current and its recommendations viable. Mr. Davidson stated that staff intends to begin the revision process sometime in May or June 2006 with the final product presented to the Board of Supervisors in January 2007. The revision process will be conducted by Economic Development staff, and the Economic Development Commission will remain on the CEDS Committee. All CEDS Committee meetings will be held on already scheduled Economic Development Commission meeting dates.

Matters from the County Administrator

// Mr. Laurrell stated that the Region 2000 Partnership was recently reorganized, and he advised the Commission of its current structure. The Partnership is comprised of four components: the Local Government Council (formerly the Regional Commission and the Planning District Commission), the Region 2000 Economic Development Council, the Region 2000 Technology Council and the Workforce Investment Board.

When the Economic Development Council was first formed (1988 - 1989), its primary function was to market the region to attract new industry. In the late 1990s, a shift in

management of larger companies in the region produced reluctance on the part of those larger companies to donate funds to Region 2000 for the attraction of new industry. The main reason for this reluctance was the worry over competition of the region's workforce. Since the 1990s, private sector funding of the Partnership has steadily declined.

Two years ago, the Region 2000 Board recommended the Economic Development Partnership shift its priority from attracting new companies to the retention of existing business. Other new priorities of the Region 2000 Partnership include addressing the changing workforce, the importance of technology and young workers. The Region 2000 Board has mandated a new focus of its members: business retention, workforce improvement and the Virginia Pipeline. The Partnership hopes next year's fundraising campaigns based upon those three priorities will increase private sector participation and funding of the Partnership's activities.

Because the marketing funds for the Region 2000 Economic Development Council are limited, Mr. Laurrell asked Commission members if they felt marketing efforts should be used internally in the region, externally for recruitment or a balance of both? Several Commission members stated that some balance is needed. Mr. Guthrie stated that he felt a two-tiered alignment of marketing efforts was needed in Campbell County because of the different infrastructure capabilities and different environments that exist in the county. Mr. Guthrie suggested a line be placed to delineate the northern end of the county from the southern end with a separate marketing strategy designated for each area. General discussion of the Region 2000 Economic Development Council marketing efforts continued. Mr. Davidson stated that he would place the issue on the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Following a general discussion of the before-mentioned matters and with no other items presented for consideration, the meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm until Thursday, December 15, 2005 at 12:00 pm.