

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY
Minutes of 03/25/2015 Meeting

Attendees:

Andrew Williamson - Chairman
Michael VanSant
Frank Dertzbaugh
Bob King, Council Liaison
Paul Clay
Bill McCullough
James Linton
Zach Peters

Also attending were Melissa Hoyle, Town Staff; Bill Butts, Chairman, Planning Commission; Terry King; Mark Ripper, Carroll County Director of Technology Services; Donnamarie Needle and Denise Davis of Weichert, Realtors; and J.A. Burke, Mount Airy Messenger.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. at Town Hall.
2. During the open session for business concerns, Donnamarie Needle and Denise Davis introduced themselves and announced that they will be opening an office in Mount Airy that will be staffed with 12 realtors with the potential of housing up to 30 agents. The grand opening event will be held on April 9, 2015. During a period of questions, they acknowledged that parking in the downtown area might be an impediment. They were also asked if they would house any commercial sector realtors to which they responded they will not and they recognize that may be a need.
3. Mark Ripper, Carroll County Director of Technology Services came to discuss the Carroll County Public Network, which is primarily a fiber optic network for Carroll County. He indicated there is a 126 miles of fiber in Carroll County with 133 locations off the fiber that includes public schools, public libraries, police stations, fire departments and town halls. For Mount Airy there are hook ups available for the library/senior center, college on Back Acre Circle, and the Fire Department. Connection to the fiber network will require investment by the Town and individual businesses and public users. A question arose as to whether the Mount Airy Town Hall has been wired, which needs to be checked out. While fiber optic cable is the current preferred mode, Mr. Ripper indicated that the future for connectivity will be wireless, depending on FCC licenses, because of cost for installation.
4. Minutes for the EDC meeting of 11February 2015 were reviewed and approved as written.
5. Melissa Hoyle, as a part of her staff report, spoke on behalf of Larry Hushour who

could not attend the EDC meeting on 25 March 2015, in presenting to the EDC three options for location of the rehabilitated Caboose in Mount Airy and a proposed site picture for a preferred location by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The three options cited are (1) Ben Gue Building lot, (2) Old Train Depot lot, and (3) Municipal Parking lot green space. The picture provided shows a vision of the Parks and Recreation preferred location in the Ben Gue lot.

Discussion by the EDC related to the caboose location identified the following concerns:

- Location anywhere on or near Main Street will cause a loss of parking spaces
- Location next to Ben Gue building will allow visibility for visitors traveling South on Main Street but will not be visible traveling North
- Location at the Ben Gue lot will cause the loss of more spaces than identified because of requirement for handicap ramp access
- There is a fire safety concern locating the caboose next to the Ben Gue building, because the caboose will make difficult for the fire department to get close to the building in the event of a fire.
- Placing the caboose next to the Ben Gue building, will restrict complete access to parts of the caboose for viewing by visitors
- Rail yard site is tighter than Ben Gue lot/Prospect Mill property
- Any location on Main Street might lead to safety concerns for visitors and might require fencing
- If locating at Ben Gue lot area, might consider grassy strip next to Prospect Mill (old bank) project
- Should consider Watkins Park as option
 - o Visibility from Rt. 27 better for attracting visitors to Mount Airy
 - o Access from Rt. 27 available
 - o Parking available
 - o Space for visitors to roam
 - o Provide accessibility to Rails/Trail
 - o Restroom facility available
 - o Center Street vision, in the recent Master Plan update, as a primary access to Mt. Airy would make Watkins Park a great location announcing Mt. Airy

The following priority is recommended by EDC for location of Caboose in Mt. Airy

- (1) Watkins Park – Access, parking, amenities
- (2) Rail yard (Train Station) – downtown, handicap ramp that can be used
- (3) Ben Gue/Prospect Mill – consider grassy strip between two sites
- (4) Municipal lot

Melissa Hoyle reported Mr. Cary Wilson of the Carroll Community College Miller Center for Small Businesses spoke to small business in Mount Airy on effective merchandising. She is working to line up Jon Weetman to speak to downtown businesses later this year. She also announced that Carroll County is supporting a light-up Main Street and is offering grants (up to \$500.00) to light up building windows in shops. Melissa is working on a second newsletter for the fiscal year 2015 which will be

published in April. She is looking for suggestions for the newsletter. Melissa reported also that the town is working on an updated website that will include emergency update alerts, announcements, house page slider and revised business listing with new categories for ease of use. She also identified that Mount Airy has a Downtown Façade Program, which can help businesses improve the appearance and soundness of building facades with co-sharing grant based upon business submittal of proposals. She also reported that she would be attending the MNL conference in June where she will be manning a booth for Mount Airy.

6. Movement is continuing, with a developer working with the Beck family for development of Center Street. It is recognized that it will be important to continue work on mixed use zoning ordinance to support this concept. Planning Commission is currently working on its development.

7. Parking alternatives will continue to be an agenda item for the EDC. Future meetings will focus on disabled parking and alternatives options for the town.

8. Creation of an Office Park Employment Zone ordinance is in rough design, but continues to require clarification of County and Town needs which is ongoing. It is important that recognize that any mutually agreed document would need to be shaped so the community can understand the concept and importance.

9. Work is continuing to incorporate all business vacancies into a report useful for publishing availability in Mount Airy. Reported this month is that Co-Star will give the town monthly updates (Frederick/Carroll County) that will be put on-line within the Mount Airy web site.

10. Melissa Hoyle reported the planned opening on 28 March 2015 of the Toy Exchange in the Twin Arch Shopping Center as a new business in Mount Airy.

11. Discussions are ongoing regarding APP/Web site improvements and will continue to be an agenda item. Definition of cost to help with the APP updates has been requested for the next EDC meeting.

12. Melissa Hoyle met with Missie Wilcox of Market Works to discuss a development of a strategic marketing plan. Ms. Wilcox has worked with Westminster, Taneytown and others to develop marketing campaigns for city marketing. There is a cost with seeking a consultant such as Ms. Wilcox and Melissa was asked by EDC members to see if she would be willing to meet with the EDC before any commitments are made.

13. Input from EDC members on an updated A Revised Guide to How to Establishing a Business in the Town of Mount Airy developed by Terry King were provided to her for incorporation into the revised document. That input will be reviewed at the next EDC meeting.

14. Melissa Hoyle passed out a handout addressing Economic Development Marketing and Attraction for EDC members to read and consider at future meetings.
15. The next EDC meeting is scheduled for 22 April 2015 at the Old Town Restaurant to start at 7:00 p.m. (Subsequent to the meeting, in order to meet with Missie Wilcox, the meeting has been rescheduled to 20 April 2015 at Town Hall. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.)
16. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Minutes Approved on 20 April 2015