

Perry County Economic Development Authority  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 13, 2018  
Perry Business and Tourism Center

In attendance: Patti McLaughlin, Frank Campbell, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Russ Hover, Dawn Lowe, Duane Hertzler, Shawna Weller, Morgan Tressler, Greg Gordon, Rich Pluta, John Gerner, Brenda Watson, June Reisinger, Marti Roberts, Jim Fuller, Paul Rudy

Excused: Derek Whitesel, Emory Yoder

Absent: Mike Lawler, Steve Peters

Guests: Jason Finnerty

Meeting called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:02

**Public Comment**

Jason Finnerty, the County Planner, highlighted the following items:

- 67 land development plans have been submitted for review and approval so far this year - 12 more than last year at this same time. These plans contain 237 new lots in the county for the year.
- Tri County Planning Commission met with Howe Township regarding a project on the US 322 bridges over PA 34. Frank Campbell was at the meeting and added that current state Secretary of Transportation has background in planning and is implementing a PennDOT Connects program to keep local governments informed on what PennDOT is planning.
- Mr. Finnerty has begun work to update the county's All Hazard Mitigation Plan and has put an "on line" survey on the county's website to gather information on prioritizing the hazards facing the county. Mr. Finnerty encouraged all residents to complete the survey on the website.
- He has reviewed zoning amendment for Watts township and Duncannon Borough.
- Traffic counts were taken last month on the "free admission day" at the Perry County Fair
- He is currently working on acceptance of digital plans in lieu of paper plans as now required.
- Next Return On Environment meeting is set for Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at the New Bloomfield Borough building.

Rich Pluta asked Mr. Finnerty for a copy of the updated comprehensive plan status documents. Jason Finnerty suggested holding the first quarterly Comprehensive Plan Review meeting in October and said he will send out a suggested meeting date request. June Reisinger asked if the grant funding for the hazard mitigation plan update had been received. Mr. Finnerty said that PEMA gathers up the interested counties and then submits a combined funding request to FEMA. PEMA then distributes the money.

**Secretaries report:**

John Gerner advised that copies of last month's meeting minutes had been sent out via email to all Board members for consideration. He noted that the italicized words in the Treasurer's Report will be removed. It was determined that June Reisinger seconded the motion to accept the Treasurers Report, not Patti McLaughlin. This correction to the minutes will also be made.

Kevin Fitzpatrick proposed a motion to accept the minutes as revised, Russ Hoover seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a voice vote.

### **Treasurers Report:**

Russ Hoover reported the bank account shows a balance of \$ 34,698.15, but that a \$40 check and a check for the telephone bill have not cleared yet. The “Misc” category in the report has and is being used to post payroll processing costs since there is no other way to log these costs at this time. Mr. Hoover said that he will work with the Robert Morris accountants to get that specified more accurately. Patti McLaughlin made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report, Dawn Lowe seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a voice vote.

### **Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported the following:

- She characterized the branding event held last week a “great success”. Nine initial brand ambassadors attended the event and spoke about their ads. Our website, cultivateperry.com, is up for all to see. She said that now it’s time to promote it’s use to other businesses. We are working on a strategy for releasing it to public. Ms. Roberts would like to host another strategy ad hoc session on further rollout options. Rich recalled an 80/20 strategy which focused on getting 20% of the businesses on board with the brand and then the remaining 80% of the businesses and public will follow. A date for a future strategy session will be proposed.
- Ms. Roberts announced that PCEDA got an email last week that it one of 44 organizations that had been awarded the Local Food Promotion Program grant for an extensive agriculture study on “creating a local food economy” with many collaborators, to study how to produce, aggregate and distribute locally/regionally. The \$50K funding is essentially a pass-through to an independent consultant who will work with EDA to conduct the necessary interviews and market research. An initial project proposal was included in the grant, and since this is a proposal for professional service, we don’t have to seek bids per state procedures. We must act to accept the grant today because the grant period starts September 30<sup>th</sup>. Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion to accept the USDA award, June Reisinger seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a voice vote. June Reisinger offered that the American Planning Assoc has certified planners who can establish local food systems. Kitchen Table Consultants (KTC) came highly recommended by the state Department of Agriculture and they already have relationships established. Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion that we accept the proposal from KTC that was included in the grant request so that this work can begin quickly. Brenda Watson seconded the motion. June asked if the proposal was available and was told that it has been available since the original grant request was submitted. Ms. Roberts suggested that PCEDA will need to have a workgroup organized to oversee this project’s implementation. The motion to award the contract to KTC was approved by a voice vote without opposition.
- Ms. Roberts noted that the last strategy meeting was to be about branding, but focus changed because we were recently made aware of state funding. It has been appropriated for legislative support and Perry meets the eligibility requirements. It must be applied for. It is believed that this funding was originally intended to support and promote the county’s Business Campus. However, the Business Campus is a private entity that makes it ineligible to receive the funding and now the EDA can make use of this funding. The funding comes

through DCED, who assisted with the application process. The authorizing language for possible uses of the funds is broad and can apply for up to \$250,000 in funding. The funds are available for use through 2020. Ms. Roberts has been working on an application for the funding.

- A meeting was held in the EDA office regarding the future of the Carson Long property on September 6<sup>th</sup>. Participants in the meeting included 2 members of the school's Board of Trustees and community leaders. They will be dissolving their foundation and must go through the Office of Attorney General (AG), who will make recommendations on disposition of the land and buildings to Perry County's Orphans Court. We, (county people who are interested) have no real standing to impact this decision process in terms of who buys it and what happens with it. Brenda Watson mentioned that it has been reported that the state court has already turned down two offers. Marti Roberts, Malinda Anderson (Bloomfield Borough) and Rich Pluta (Chamber of Commerce) are suggesting that letters of support from the community should be sent to demonstrate to AG that we have real people who care about the outcome of their decisions. John Gerner suggested that an amicus brief could be filed with the court to outline the community's interest. Frank Campbell made a motion authorizing the EDA to continue to act on behalf of the county in this project, Brenda Watson seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a voice vote. Michelle Jones will draft bullet points/sample letter.
- Rich Pluta, Frank Campbell, and Marti Roberts participated in a Roundtable Meeting with US Senator Pat Toomey to ensure he is aware of needs and concerns of Perry County. Frank Campbell is following up with the Senator's office regarding grant needs.
- A draft of possible internal financial procedures had been distributed to all board members in advance of this meeting. John Gerner noted that these procedures were developed following a review of a DCED handbook, a discussion with the County Treasurer and an accountant. These procedures outline internal controls on receipts and disbursements and how those actions can be tracked and audited. The EDA will be being funded through multiple grants or funding streams. The funds from each of these sources will have to be accounted for and our accounting system will have to clearly show how the funds were spent. Other options discussed included employing an outside accounting firm to manage the EDA accounts or to hire a part-time bookkeeper to free up Ms. Jones' time for overall management duties. A discussion of our budget approval process and subsequent spending approvals also ensued. Ms. Roberts suggested that this item be carried over to our next meeting to allow the Board to more fully review and consider the issues at hand. On another subject, Mr. Gerner suggested that PCEDA should investigate bonding both the Treasurer and Staff positions.
- It was noted that the County Commissioners will begin their consideration of the 2019 County Budget on October 23.

**Staff report:**

- Ms. Jones began by saying Ms. Roberts covered most of everything she had been working on the past month, i.e., the brand roll-out effort.
- A second meeting with a potential start up business was held to develop a business plan with the software program EDA recently subscribed to. In addition to helping the prospective business person, these sessions help EDA staff develop their approach to helping new entrepreneurs.

- Kevin Fitzpatrick noted that Keystone Opportunity Zone proposal for Howe Township will come before the County Commissioners on Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, and suggested as many as possible attend to support this proposal.
- The State Director for the USDA is planning to visit the PCEDA office on October 17 at 10:30. Board members are invited to attend.
- John Gerner made a motion to formally thank Michelle Jones for all the hard work she put in to pull off the successful branding roll-out, June Reisinger seconded the motion and it was passed by a voice vote and applause.
- Jim Fuller reminded everyone of the upcoming Farm Fest event schedule for September 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Roberts farm outside Newport.
- Michelle Jones reminded everyone that school is back in session and she will again be promoting the development of internships for interested students.

**Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 was made and approved.