

SOUTHSIDE PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
Regular Quarterly Meeting
October 15, 2020

A regular quarterly meeting of the Southside Planning District Commission (SPDC) was held in the Commission Conference Room, 200 South Mecklenburg Avenue, South Hill, Virginia on October 15, 2020. Chairman Kim Callis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 Declaration of a State of Emergency and pursuant to Code 2.2-3708.2, this meeting was held by electronic communications, via the Zoom electronic platform. The catastrophic nature of this declared emergency made it impractical and unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location and the purpose of this meeting was to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue the operations of the Southside PDC. This meeting was recorded as required by FOIA for electronic meetings. Roll call votes were taken on all action items.

Executive Director Gosney called the roll. With 17 Commissioners being present, a quorum was met for this meeting.

The Roll Call is as follows:

BRUNSWICK COUNTY	Present	Absent
Garland Baird		X
Bernard Jones, Sr.	X	
Alfonzo Seward		X
Leslie Weddington - Treasurer	X	
John Zubrod	X	
HALIFAX COUNTY		
Stanley Brandon	X	
William Claiborne		X
Ronnie Duffey	X	
Sandra Garner-Coleman		X
Jerry Lovelace	X	
David Martin	X	
Garland Ricketts		X
Scott Simpson		X
MECKLENBURG COUNTY	Present	Absent
M. J. Colgate	X	
Andy Hargrove	X	
Landon Hayes, Jr.		X

Charles Jones	X	
Angie Kellett	X	
Charlie Simmons		X
Glanzy Spain		X
Tom Tanner	X	
SOUTH BOSTON		
Joseph Chandler	X	
Winston Harrell		X
George Leonard	X	
Ernest Vass		X
SOUTH HILL		
Kim Callis - Chairman	X	
Lillie Feggins-Boone	X	
Joseph Taylor	X	
TOTAL	17	11

Staff in Attendance:

Deborah Gosney, Executive Director

Lisa McGee, Administrative Assistant

Stephanie Creedle, Finance Director/HR

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Callis asked for public comments. Hearing none, the public comment period was closed.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

JOHN ZUBROD MADE A MOTION THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY LILLIE FEGGINS-BOONE AND BY ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL COMMISSIONERS VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The July 16, 2020 minutes were previously dispensed to members for review.

JOHN ZUBROD MADE A MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE JULY 16, 2020 MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY CHARLES JONES AND BY ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL COMMISSIONERS VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Weddington presented the financial report as of August 2020 as follows: Assets, \$1,583,541.36; Liabilities, \$1,311,784.18; Retained Earnings, \$236,571.90; and Net Balance, \$35,185.28. Expenditures to date totaled \$147,978.10, which is 16.15 percent of the annual budget. The expenditures are on target for FY21.

TOM TANNER MADE A MOTION THAT THE AUGUST 2020 TREASURER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ANDY HARGROVE AND BY ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL COMMISSIONERS VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY SNAPSHOT

Angie Kellett, Director of Economic Development, and Tina Morgan, Director of Tourism, made a presentation on behalf of Mecklenburg County and presented the County's marketing booklet entitled "Mecklenburg County, Virginia – Your Path to Profit."

Due to COVID-19, Angie Kellett discussed how it has become essential for the County to "pivot" in this changing environment and offer more virtual options for potential clients to view all of the amenities that Mecklenburg County has to offer. Hard copies of the marketing booklet are available; however, a link to their digital format is on their website www.investinmeckva.com and is easily accessible to clients. Another project that will be forthcoming is virtual tours of each Town's downtown area within Mecklenburg County. This virtual format, one of the first in the state, will showcase each Town's offerings without the client having to make the initial visit in person.

Tina Morgan delivered recently released 2019 tourism numbers. She noted that whereas 2019 had record numbers for tourism, 2020 is sure to show much decline due to the stringent requirements surrounding the Coronavirus. To promote local spending, a gift card match program has been initiated to inject CARES Act funding into local businesses. This program has been highly successful and is in its third phase. Small Business Recovery Grants are also part of the CARES Act funding and will aid in the towns' recovery. Mecklenburg County is definitely busy taking care of their people!

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs) OVERVIEW

Contract Staff Ann Taylor Wright provided a quick review of the final 2020 CEDs five-year update. She noted that the document has been posted on the PDC website.

TOM TANNER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE 2020 – 2025 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs). THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JOHN ZUBROD AND BY ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL COMMISSIONERS VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY.

SPDC STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The SPDC was awarded a Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) grant for \$10,819 to conduct a Strategic Planning and Assessment. The SouthEast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) will be conducting the strategic planning process for the PDC. The strategic planning effort will include the following segments:

1. Building Online Surveys – Five online surveys will be administered from October 19th through November 6th. There will be a survey for 1) SPDC Commissioners, 2) Local Government Elected Officials, 3) County and Town Administrators and Managers, 4) Southside PDC Staff, and 5) Other Regional Partners.

2. One-on-One Interviews – Twenty-five individuals that are seen as current or future key leaders that are or should be influential in the future of the Southside region and/or the Southside PDC will be interviewed. These interviews will be conducted in November.
3. Focus Groups – There will be four focus groups held during early December. The four focus groups will be for 1) County and Town Administrators, 2) Regional Partners, 3) Public Works and Emergency Heads and 4) SPDC Staff.
4. Commissioners/Local Government Officials Work Session – A work session will be held in mid-January. The purpose of the work session will be to 1) Review the findings of the data development of the project; 2) Present potential recommendations based on the findings to enhance and make more relevant the SPDC; and 3) Discuss the future direction and succession strategies for the SPDC.
5. Complete Record Report – Within 30 days of completion of the Commissioners/Local Government Officials Work Session, SERDI will present to the SPDC the complete record report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Active Projects – SPDC Staff is currently administering 37 projects throughout the three-county region with grant funds totaling \$17,800,538. These projects are listed in detail on the SPDC Active Projects List. Mrs. Gosney noted that “Current Status” was added to the Project List.

CDBG Approved Applications – Two construction applications were submitted April 2020 totaling \$2,398,861 in requested grant dollars. The Governor announced on August 12, 2020 that both projects were selected for funding.

1. Brunswick County Chestnut Road Scattered Site Project – \$1,000,000.
2. La Crosse Pine Street Neighborhood Project – Phase 2 – \$1,398,861.

CDBG Approved COVID Applications – Three applications were submitted to DHCD requesting COVID CDBG funds totaling \$1,520,000 to provide grants of approximately \$15,000 to eligible small businesses. The projects were awarded on August 7, 2020.

1. Brunswick County Small Business Recovery Project – Submitted June 2020 - \$520,000.
2. Mecklenburg County Small Business Recovery Project – Submitted June 2020 – \$550,000.
3. South Boston Small Business Recovery Project – Submitted June 2020 – \$550,000.

Other Approved Applications – Three grant applications were funded totaling \$320,000 in grant dollars.

1. Chase City Lee Building Community Impact Study (VHDA) – Submitted May 2020 – \$20,000; Awarded September 15, 2020.
2. Chase City Lee Building Disaster Assistance (DHR) – Submitted July 2020 – \$250,000; Awarded \$150,000 on August 20, 2020.
3. Brunswick County Sledge & Barkley Building Disaster Assistance (DHR) – Submitted July 2020 – \$250,000; Awarded \$150,000 on August 20, 2020.

Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – The Plan officially became “current” on September 2, 2020 and will have an expiration date of September 1, 2025 per FEMA’s Letter of Approval. All localities who participated in the update process will need to pass a resolution adopting the Plan for FEMA and VDEM viewing them as having a “current” plan. Adopting the Hazard Mitigation Plan will also make those localities eligible for future grant funds through FEMA and VDEM. As of October 1st, the Towns of Brodnax, South Boston, South Hill, Virgilina and the County of Mecklenburg have all adopted the Plan.

Emergency Operations Plans/Continuity of Operations Plans – The SPDC is working with the Counties of Brunswick, Halifax and Mecklenburg to update their existing Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) and to create a Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP) for all three counties. The EOP focuses on the safety and protection of life and property through a coordinated response to disasters or other emergency events. The COOP’s purpose is to address how essential functions of the County government will continue to be performed during times of disasters or other emergency events. The Plans are projected for completion by the end of December.

Staff Updates –

1. **New Hire** – Erika Tanner will be joining the PDC Staff as the new Community Project Manager on November 1, 2020. Erika will be responsible for grant writing, project administration, and other duties as requested by the PDC local governments.
2. **Andy Wells** – On September 11, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam appointed GIS and Cartography Manager Andy Wells to serve a two-year term on the Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Advisory Board. His appointment to this Advisory Board will allow Andy to share best practices as well as increase his knowledge base from other regional resources.

VAPDC Updates – Kim Callis, VAPDC President, submitted two letters on behalf of the VAPDC to –

1. Lauren Stuhldreher, Virginia Economic Development Representative, written in support of Virginia Tourism Corporation’s EDA grant application totaling \$3.5 million for tourism and economic development initiatives in Virginia and
2. Linda Cruz-Carnall, EDA Regional Director, written in support of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development’s EDA grant application for innovative broadband pilot programs that deliver service to impoverished Virginians.

NADO Updates – After years of federal reporting and abiding by federal guidelines, NADO has accomplished defederalization of the Revolving Loan Fund that is administered by the Lake Country Development Corporation. Having already passed the Senate on August 6th, the bill will now be sent to the President’s desk for signature. This legislation reforms the U.S. Department of

Commerce Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program by eliminating burdensome "in perpetuity" reporting requirements and releasing the federal interest in EDA RLFs after seven years, providing more local flexibility to EDA RLF operators as they administer the program on behalf of their communities.

Upcoming SPDC Meetings – The next PDC meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2021. Future meetings are scheduled for April 22, 2021 and an Executive Committee Meeting on June 17, 2021.

OTHER BUSINESS

Recognition of Service – The following Commissioners were recognized for their years of service and dedication to the SPDC:

- Gregg Gordon – Served 16 years – Vice Chairman for five years and Chairman for two years.
- Garland Baird – Served 16 years.
- Dan Tanner – Served 12 years.
- Frederick Harrison – Served 4 years.
- Dennis Witt – Served 4 years – Vice Chairman for 2 years.
- Lisa Jordan – Served 5 years.

SPDC FY20 Annual Report – The FY20 Annual Report was distributed to Commissioners that were present. A mailing list is being developed to send all other Commissioners, localities, and regional partners one as well.

CARES Act Funding – Chairman Callis informed the Commissioners of the following Press Release from the Governor's Office. *"Governor Ralph Northam announced that Virginia is allocating \$30 million in funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Recovery and Economic Security (CARES) Act to improve broadband access in underserved localities. Localities must apply for the funding and eligible projects are those able to be completed within the time constraints on spending federal dollars, which means more Virginians could get connected to high-speed, broadband internet by the end of the year."* Mr. Callis stated that due to time constraints that this would be a difficult deadline to meet but that the PDC Staff is attempting to research possibilities for obtaining this funding on behalf of localities.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.



Kim Callis, Chairman SPDC



Deborah Gosney, Secretary