

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES
December 19, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

Directors present: Don Long, Chair; George Ray, Vice-Chair; Andrea Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer; Jeff Morrill; John Mottola; David Storm.

Directors absent: Stephen McNaughton.

Staff present: Jeff Richardson, County Executive; Trevor Henry, Deputy County Executive; J.T. Newberry, Assistant Director of Economic Development; Ashley Perry Hernandorena, Business Development Manager; Liz Hatcher, Administrative Assistant; Richard DeLoria, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Tori Kanellopoulos Principal Planner; Ben Holt, Senior Planner II; Diantha McKeel, Board of Supervisors Liaison to the EDA, Jack Jouett District.

Guest presenters:

1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Chair Long called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Long established a quorum.

a. Introduction of Ann Wall, Deputy County Executive

Trevor Henry, Deputy County Executive, introduced Ann Wall, Deputy County Executive.

b. Introduction of Barry Albrecht, Director of Economic Development

J.T. Newberry, Assistant Director of Economic Development, introduced Barry Albrecht, Director of the Economic Development Office.

2. Matters from the Public

Ms. Hernandorena confirmed no speakers had signed up or raised their hands to speak.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. September 19, 2023

Motion to approve minutes from September 19, 2023 made by Mr. Ray and seconded by Mr. Morrill.

MOTION: The motion passed unanimously.

4. Financial Report

a. Period ending December 1, 2023

Ms. Johnson provided the financial report to the Board. She noted that \$548,833 was available in the EDA funds, and she and Ms. Hernandorena would be working with the Finance Department staff to streamline the report for better comprehension and utilization moving forward.

Ms. Hernandorena explained that the expenditure line-item funds originated from economic development fees and interest on bank statements that were appropriated amounts to be used during the fiscal year. She said that the Economic Opportunities Fund included Community Investment Collaborative funds, VJIP incentives, and other incentives which had been appropriated in December 2022 by the Board of Supervisors to give the EDA flexibility and the opportunity to provide timely support to those agents.

Mr. Morrill asked where the money from the WillowTree clawback went.

Ms. Hernandorena said that due to low employment at the state level, the organization had determined that it would be less of a strain on resources and more streamlined to administratively issue \$30,000 in a tax rebate and a payment of \$70,000 rather than the original \$100,000.

Motion made by Mr. Morrill and seconded by Mr. Mottola.

MOTION: The motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

a. Input on Draft Goals and Objectives of AC44, Economic Development Chapter

Mr. Newberry introduced Tori Kanellopoulos and Ben Holt from the Community Development Department, who would be presenting the draft goals and objectives of the economic development chapter of the comprehensive plan for Albemarle County 2044 (AC44).

Ms. Kanellopoulos provided an overview of the comprehensive plan, the work that led up to the current phase in the process, and the draft goals and objectives for economic development. She said that feedback was requested from the Board on the information presented.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that goal #1 was that Albemarle County will lead the growth of targeted industries, existing primary businesses, and emerging opportunities, recognizing the different expectations for land uses and development in the development areas and rural area based on the growth management policy.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that goal #2 was that Albemarle County will attract additional financial resources into the community through responsible economic development activities that result in quality job creation and career employment opportunities, increased tax base, an enhanced natural environment and community character, and an improved quality of life.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that goal #3 was that Albemarle County will collaborate with partners to support local start-ups, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that goal #4 was that Albemarle County will foster opportunity for upward economic mobility with pathways for all community members to thrive through local and regional partnerships.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the next steps regarding the economic development chapter were a work session with the Board of Supervisors on January 17, 2024, drafting of action steps in February and March, and presentation of action steps for the AC44 phase 3 kickoff in the spring.

Mr. Morrill said that based on what he had seen in the County's past economic development work and what he saw in the plan, they had done a great job attracting people with advanced degrees, but he would like to see emphasis on providing opportunities for additional job training to provide current County residents with additional vocational training and schools to fill the vacancies that already existed in blue-collar industries.

Ms. Johnson said that she agreed with Mr. Morrill. She said that if they did not keep the base infrastructure of skilled laborers such as plumbers, electricians, and mechanics, the economy would suffer. She noted that PVCC was an outstanding organization and she would like to see more support of that as well as CATEC. She said that they should also be supporting the businesses who created those essential jobs.

Mr. Holt said that the same idea had been reiterated in community feedback on the chapter goals. He said that it had also been suggested to begin that vocational training during grade school to make people aware of different career paths. He said that there were also employers that would provide their own training for employees, and some would offer employment opportunities for high school students directly after graduating.

Ms. McKeel noted that the high school model for CATEC required updating to be as effective as the adult program they offered. She said that there also needed to be a deeper integration of vocational training in the new center model for Albemarle County High School.

Mr. Ray asked if there was opportunity to focus on vocational training in the section of the plan related to workforce development.

Ms. McKeel said that she would like to see the matter addressed as an action item rather than a goal.

Mr. Storm said that if there was a way for the EDA to support a broad spectrum of employers being integrated in the schools, it would allow for learning of diverse skillsets and would be a beneficial public-private partnership.

Mr. Newberry confirmed that much of the economic development work accomplished had relied primarily on partnerships in the region, and it was not until recently that the EDA had the opportunity to discuss the opportunities for workforce training within the school system.

Chair Long said that he would like to see support and opportunities for those without advanced degrees who wanted to start businesses in the County. He said that he also saw reference in the plan to redevelopment and reuse, and a part of that was that the process must allow for those

things to happen more easily than development of a greenfield site, because redeveloping a site with a preexisting structure could be more difficult than developing a site with nothing on it.

Ms. McKeel said that she had concern with the rezoning of light industrial properties in the development area, as it limited opportunity for economic development. She asked if it was known how much property the County owned or where it was located.

Mr. Newberry said that over the course of the past five years of Project ENABLE, blue-collar employers had told the County how expensive it was to develop and operate their businesses in Albemarle County, so the surrounding Counties became much more attractive for those types of jobs. He said that for special use permits, the Economic Development Office did have the opportunity to weigh in on the viability of the lands designated and zoned. He noted that the land use buildout analysis identified 39 parcels owned by the County.

Mr. Albrecht said that the workforce development through collaboration with the schools and other local entities had been proven to be effective in other localities, and he believed that the EDA would be working to solve the issues being discussed.

Mr. Storm said that he was unsure of the EDA's purview in this instance, but reducing licensing barriers for certain careers would be a state-level initiative that would allow them to be more competitive and fulfill needs.

b. Work session: Virginia Industrial Development Authorities Training

Chair Long said that they would discuss some of the highlights of the VIDA training and encouraged those who did not attend to watch the recorded sessions.

Mr. Newberry provided an overview of the training. He said that the AC44 topics would help inform the Directors on how to best accomplish their goals within the capacities of the EDA.

Mr. Albrecht said that he appreciated the insight into specific Virginia programs and projects and being able to compare them to other states' projects.

Mr. Storm said that he was most intrigued by the industrial sites piece, as it became apparent to him that Albemarle County must seek additional opportunities in that regard to keep up with competing localities.

Chair Long said that he found the most benefit for the EDA was in tax increment financing options, and they must work with the Board to figure out how to make that specific financing feasible and to identify how the EDA should be involved. He said that also, if they were to take on those types of projects, they must find if the EDO or EDA was responsible and how they would allocate the work between the groups.

Ms. Johnson asked if the County was doing anything in terms of site preparation and development of infrastructure to attract businesses.

Mr. Newberry said that Albemarle County had an agreement with the UVA Foundation to accelerate site readiness at North Fork, and had used their partnership to request a \$7 million matching grant from the state for that purpose. He said that while that was only one site, they were constantly working with their utility and other infrastructure partners to identify optimal sites for development and grant opportunities.

Mr. Storm noted that the most important piece of information he had learned from the training was that it was not solely about economics anymore in terms of tracking these companies and jobs, but was quality of life for employees.

c. Staff Report

Mr. Newberry provided an overview of the staff report.

Mr. Henry provided an update on Rivanna Futures. He noted that the County had officially closed on the purchase of the land for Rivanna Futures.

6. Unfinished Business

There was none.

7. Other Matters

Mr. DeLoria said that the next meeting of the EDA would involve adoption of the schedule and calendar for the upcoming year, as well as elections for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer.

8. Adjourn

The Board adjourned the meeting at 5:26 p.m. The next meeting is January 16, 2024 in Room 241.

Teste: _____
Donald Long, Chairman

Approved: _____
Barry Albrecht, Assistant Secretary