

Minutes of the PCEDC Meeting
Piedmont Community College Room S100
1715 College Dr, Roxboro, NC 27573
January 26, 2021

Voting Board Members Present:

Mr. Phillip Allen-Chairman
The Honorable Marilyn Newell-Secretary
The Honorable Gordon Powell
Mr. Danny Talbert
Mrs. Elizabeth Bradsher

Mr. Kenneth Perry
Mr. Dale Reynolds-Vice Chairman
Mr. Donald Long

Voting Board Members Absent:

Mr. Ernie Wood

Ex Officios Present:

Ms. Heidi York, County Manager
Dr. Pamela Senegal, PCC Representative
Dr. Claudia Berryhill, Agricultural Representative

Mr. Brooks Lockhart, City Manager

Ex Officios Absent:

Dr. Rodney Peterson, PCS Superintendent

ED Staff Present:

Mrs. Sherry Wilborn, ED Director (via Zoom)
Mrs. Brandy Lynch, ED Senior
Administrative Support
(Minutes)

Others Present:

The Honorable Charlie Palmer-County Commissioner
The Honorable Derrick Sims-County Commissioner
The Honorable PJ Gentry-County Commissioner
The Honorable Derrick Sims-County Commissioner
Mr. George Willoughby
Mr. John Seepe
Mr. Bo Freeman
Ms. Lynda Clayton
Mr. Chris Weaver
Ms. Samantha Bagby

EDC Minutes for January 26, 2021

The Person County Economic Development Commission January meeting was held at the Piedmont Community College Room S100, to allow for social distancing.

ED Director Sherry Wilborn and Person County Attorney Ron Aycock participated in the meeting via zoom.

EDC Welcome and Invocation:

1. At 4:01 p.m., Chairman Allen called the meeting to order.
2. Dale Reynolds gave the invocation.

Officer Nominations and Vote:

3. ED Director Sherry Wilborn opens the floor for nominations for the Chairman position. Nomination of Phillip Allen, for the position of Chairman, was made by Danny Talbert.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed for Phillip Allen as Chairman.

Motion: Danny Talbert

Second: Donald Long

Phillip Allen nominates Dale Reynolds for the position of Vice Chairman.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed for Dale Reynolds as Vice Chairman.

Motion: Phillip Allen

Second: The Honorable Merilyn Newell

Dale Reynolds nominates The Honorable Merilyn Newell for Secretary.

EDC Minutes for January 26, 2021

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed for Mayor Newell as Secretary.

Motion: Dale Reynolds

Second: Danny Talbert

Approval of EDC Minutes

4. Mr. Allen turns the floor to The Honorable Marilyn Newell for review and approval of the September 22, 2020 and November 24, 2020 EDC minutes.

A motion was made seconded and unanimously passed for approval of the minutes.

Motion: Dale Reynolds

Second: "audible but not captured"

Ethics Review:

5. The EDC was provided with a packet of documents which included: prohibition on self-dealing, resolution to clarify ethical responsibilities of certain boards and commissions appointed by the Person County Board of County Commissioners, and conflict of interest policies. Mr. Aycock delivers an overview of the documents and opens the floor up for questions. There were no questions. Wilborn reminds the board of the ethics training requirements that are set forth in the by-laws and again asks the board if there are any questions for Mr. Aycock. This satisfies the ethical review for the year.

Commissioner Presentation of EDC Review and Discussion

6. Chairman Allen recognizes The Honorable PJ Gentry who is on hand to give a presentation on her review of the Economic Development Commission. A similar presentation was given by Commissioner Gentry at the January 19, 2021 Person County Commissioners meeting. Person County Board of Commissioners requested that the EDC have an opportunity to hear Commissioner Gentry's presentation. At that meeting Commissioner Gentry proposed a five-member task force to be formed with the intent to review surrounding economic development structures.

Commissioner Gentry began noting people need to know economic development is taken seriously, noting economic development was the platform many Person County Commissioners ran on. Her intent is not to "dismantle or blow up", noting the health of the county is dependent on economic development.

EDC Minutes for January 26, 2021

Commissioner Gentry states she has been informed that government is slow but we do have control. She goes on to provide a brief history of EDC. From 1981-2011, the county was doing well, GKN came to Person County. From 2012-2020 there were multiple changes to the EDC By-laws. A task force was formed in 2007, however there was no funding or follow up. Reorganization came in 2010, the Person County Commissioners placed the EDC Director under the County Manager and an Assistant County Manager is hired to assist with economic development. Dismantling of the EDC came in 2012 without any notice to the sitting EDC board. The board was also changed again in 2018. Commissioner Gentry continued by noting the lack of progress since 2011.

Commissioner Gentry also reviewed presentations that Person County had received on economic development. According to Commissioner Gentry, there had been 10 power point presentations in 10 years on how to "do" economic development. She continues by saying the county has received the "plans" on what is needed for economic development but, plans are no good without funding and execution.

After review of finances, Commissioner Gentry realizes there has been some of Person County's budget provided to economic development but that appeared to be more of an operating expense rather than funding to grow and actively recruit. She notes over the last decade there has been zero job growth. Over the last five years, there has been no designated funding for EDC to build or recruit any companies.

The presentation turns to research that Commissioner Gentry gathered on other counties' economic development. There were between 5-6 different models other counties are using. Other counties have public-private partnerships in place, noting that even when there is a change in the leadership of the county, there is still a stable funding source. If there was a stable funding in place the Economic Development Director could refocus and go recruit and not have to focus on as much administrative tasks.

In conclusion, Commissioner Gentry believes there is a need to go create relationships. There also needs to be a constant source of funding, as well as county funding. There is no need for the EDC to meet every month without funding. PCBIC needs to be utilized and relationships need to be leveraged.

The floor is open for comments. Elizabeth Bradsher begins by thanking Commissioner Gentry on another great presentation. She notes there were several community comments on the City's Future Land Use Plan that include comments on retail, increased employment, diversity and residential growth. She continues by saying this is the time for change. She concludes with announcing her support of Commissioner Gentry's idea.

EDC Minutes for January 26, 2021

Brooks Lockhart clarifies there was a very low response rate on the City's Future Land Use Plan. Lockhart also notes that planning reports have said the same thing for 30 years. Participation seems to be a downfall of the community. Lockhart reminds the board that he has advocated for a Public Private Partnership, however when you take public funds there are ethical responsibilities that go along with it. He does agree participation is beneficial, the follow through is the problem.

Danny Talbert offered his full support of Commissioner Gentry's plan.

Vice Chairman Reynolds agrees things need to be looked at, not necessarily throwing EDC out but look at things especially on the funding side. Reynolds reminds the board of the ups and downs that EDC has been through in the past and welcomed Commissioner Gentry's comments.

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to support the task force being formed and have that information available.

Motion: Donald Long

Second: Elizabeth Bradsher

Chairman Allen states the board motion of support will be provided to the County Commissioners at their next meeting.

Directors Report:

7. Wilborn apologizes for not including an Ex-Officio update in the agenda due to the other necessary agenda items and the length of the meeting. She requests that the EX-Officios share any update they have with her by email for publication.

At the November 2020 EDC meeting, Melissa Smith with EDPNC provided a project summary that included Person County specific information. Ms. Smith stated she had 58 projects for which Person County was included in the search criteria. Ms. Smith was questioned about the outcome of those projects to which she replied she would research and get the information back to us. Departmental record keeping showed 38 projects that had been forwarded by EDPNC. Wilborn reached out to EDPNC to follow up. Their response was 47 were statewide searches that may have narrowed focus prior to putting out an RFI, these state-wide searches could have never made it to the local level. That could have counted for the discrepancy in numbers. Eleven projects initially listed Person County as the initial search location. Of the 38, the Person County status for those projects are as follows:

21- No inventory to match, 7 were lost to other states.

EDC Minutes for January 26, 2021

11-Submitted, but Person County was not selected, 4 were lost to other states, 3 have paused since Covid, 2 are still active, 1 the company withdrew the idea of expansion.

Other than the future RFP for a shell building, there is also another opportunity on the table, the Duke Site Readiness Plan. This plan has 3 components and requires local investments. It will need to be treated as an RFI, has a \$500.00 fee and requires a letter of intent signed by the county and landowner. Wilborn plans to share more information and possible sites in the coming days.

Lastly, Wilborn advised the board of the need for legal support in the next coming weeks following Ron Aycock's retirement. Wilborn has asked the county manager for permission to engage an attorney that specializes in economic development to support the work of the department on an "as needed" basis. Based on the experience and reputation, Wilborn's recommendation is attorney Ernest Pearson, with Nexsen Pruet.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to support the engagement of Ernest Pearson.

Motion: Dale Reynolds

Second: The Honorable Merilyn Newell

Chairman's Report:

8. Chairman Allen announces a work session that will take place on February 17, 2021 from 1p.m. until 5 p.m. at Piedmont Community College Room S100. Plans for the meeting included addressing issues at hand and appointing special committees. Mr. Allen believes 2021 promises to be a great year with a strong EDC board and the new Person County Commissioners. Allen thanks ED staff members for their hard work.

Next Meeting:

9. The next meeting, a work session was announced as February 17, 2021 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. at Piedmont Community College Room S100.

Adjournment:

10. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:58 p.m.

Motion: Dale Reynolds

Second: Danny Talbert

2/23/2021
Date Approved

Danny Talbert
Secretary