



## **SPECIAL EDA MEETING AGENDA**

January 12, 2024, 10:30 AM

A special strategy meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Stafford County will be held in the Virginia Smart Community Testbed, 2143 Richmond Hwy, Stafford, VA 22554.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS
2. LUNCH
3. MISSION & VISION
4. GOAL SETTING
5. COMMITTEE BREAKOUT GROUPS AND REPORT
6. CLOSING COMMENTS & ADJOURNMENT - The next regular meeting is Scheduled for February 9th, 2024 at 9:00 AM at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 1300 Courthouse Rd, Stafford, VA 22554.



To: EDA Members  
From: Dale Hendon, Secretary  
Cc: Kyle Alwine, Director, Stafford County Department of Economic Development  
Date: 10/27/2023  
RE: September 19, 2023 Joint Board of Supervisors and EDA Meeting Minutes

Enclosed as an attachment to this memorandum you will find the Board of Supervisors approved minutes from the joint meeting held on September 19, 2023. It is my recommendation that the EDA incorporate the minutes by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors in addition to the statement in this memorandum as the EDA's official meeting minutes.

STATEMENT:

The EDA is a separate and distinct legal entity and acts for the benefit of the inhabitants of the County of Stafford, Commonwealth of Virginia, for the increase of their commerce, and for the promotion of their safety, health, welfare, convenience and prosperity (EDA Bylaws). As the EDA considers and outlines strategic priorities for the coming year, we wish to thank the Board of Supervisors for sharing their priorities and the valuable discussion. Based on the meeting minutes, and general discussion at the joint meeting, the EDA recognizes the following priorities from the Board of Supervisors.

- 1) Support and advise on incentives and programs that will allow Stafford County to better recruit, retain, and expand restaurants and quality-of-life-oriented businesses through the Department of Economic Development or other means.
- 2) Seek opportunities through grants and direct investment to develop pad-ready sites, redevelop properties, and invest in infrastructure (such as broadband or transportation) to support the community with a focus on business needs.
- 3) Serve as a conduit for County and State incentives for new and expanding businesses in Stafford to include the potential development of data centers.

MINUTES APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard C. Owen".

Howard Owen  
EDA Chairman

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Hendon".

Dale Hendon  
EDA Secretary

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
MINUTES

JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER** – A joint work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors and the Stafford County Economic Development Authority was called to order by Dr. Pamela Yeung, Chairman, at 5:20 p.m. on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 in Conference Room ABC, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford, VA.

**ROLL CALL** – The following members were present: Dr. Pamela Yeung, Chairman; Thomas C. Coen, Vice Chairman; Tinesha O. Allen; Meg Bohmke; Darrell E. English; Monica L. Gary; Crystal L. Vanuch

Also in attendance were Randal E. Vosburg, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Julia Homes, Assistant Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

The following Economic Development Authority Members were present: Howard Owen, Chairman; Heather Hagerman, Vice Chairman; Danielle Davis; Jeff Roosa; Jack Rowley; Marlon Wilson. Price Jett was absent.

Dr. Yeung called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

**WORK SESSION**

Dr. Yeung said the meeting had run a little behind schedule, but it was still on time at 5:20 p.m. She said that members engaged in conversations with the person next to them to discuss what was best for their area, what they had learned, and together what they thought Stafford County should look like. She said that later in the program, EDA's Chair Owen would talk about the EDA project. She said that her person was Vice Chair of the EDA, Heather Hagerman.

Ms. Hagerman introduced herself as Heather Hagerman and said that this was her eighth year on EDA. She said that she learned a lot and there were wonderful people who helped them along the way. She said that the EDA looked at everything as a whole County, but after meeting Dr. Yeung and hearing some of her thoughts, she began to think specifically about Garrisonville. She said that one of the committees she served on for eight years was real estate, and when the Board gave real estate in the past, they monetized it throughout the entire County, not just in her district.

Ms. Hagerman said there should be focus on quality of life in the Garrisonville District, which

included things that made living there better and more exciting, such as restaurants and entertainment that generated tax revenue for the County. She said that as a citizen, she would like to see some workforce housing because she heard from business owners about their employees struggling to afford to live near where they worked, which was a concern for her. She said that she would like to dedicate time and energy toward addressing this issue.

Dr. Yeung said that Ms. Hagerman's comments and observations were well taken and they would have a follow-up conversation about it. She said that she served on the committee, and she understood the concern raised by others. She said that they could look into the matter further.

Mr. Owen introduced himself as Howard Owen, and he represented the Falmouth District in the EDA. He had been appointed by Ms. Bohmke several years ago, though he was not exactly sure when. Prior to becoming Chair, he had served as Treasurer for the organization. He expressed excitement about the future of the EDA, noting that they had a talented group of professionals who were eager to serve the County and implement their vision.

Mr. Owen emphasized that the EDA worked for the people of the County and wanted to hear from them about how they could best serve their needs. The goal of the EDA was straightforward: to attract businesses, retain existing ones, and improve the quality of life for residents by bringing in beneficial economic development. Overall, he was optimistic about what lay ahead and praised the dedication and expertise of his fellow Board members.

Ms. Bohmke introduced herself as Meg Bohmke and said she represented the Falmouth District on the Board of Supervisors for 10 years after serving on the School Board for a term. She said that during her time in office, she had seen a lot of change in Stafford County but knew that someone like Mr. English, who grew up there, had witnessed even more changes over the years. She recalled talking to someone yesterday who remembered riding their bicycle down Route 1 when there was nothing there 30 years ago.

Ms. Bohmke said that another person called her about putting a self-storage facility in her district, and he said he had heard through the grapevine that Stafford did not want another self-storage. She said that she explained why and hashed out the conversation. She said that as a member of the VRE Board, she often reflected on how ridership had decreased from 18,000 daily riders to just 6,300. She said that this was significant because Stafford County used to be a bedroom community where most people commuted north or to Dahlgren and A.P. Hill for work, and they did not have many workers living locally.

Ms. Bohmke said that the community had changed significantly due to teleworking, with people wanting more experiences in the area. She said that those who used to commute north during the

week no longer wanted to get back on the interstate on weekends. She said that there were great parks and a bike trail that went over into the city, which she enjoyed riding her bike on. She said that however, that there were only a few restaurants in the area, including El Patron, Vinnie's, and Amy's Cafe.

Ms. Bohmke explained that this was because it had been a bedroom community without much commercial development like Spotsylvania and its warehouses. She said that more businesses were needed to help contribute to the work-life-play balance in Stafford County. She said there were recreational facilities such as Rouse and Chester Park but there was still room for improvement. She said that it was important to think about this as they entered into budget season, because all of these things cost money.

Mr. Jack Rowley said that Mason Dixon was entering Embrey Mills as well, making it another location of interest.

Dr. Yeung said that they had left Aquia.

Mr. Rowley said that it was rightfully so, as the building did not work for them. He said that he felt as an EDA member, he represented the whole County, and while he loved Hartwood, he tried not to focus just on it. He said that the biggest example for him was when he focused on Germanna for 10 years or more and encouraged them to expand, and as a result, they went from five classrooms to their current location at Potomac Church. He said that they also planned to move to Center Street, which would be a \$25 million investment by the time the project was finished. He said that he had worked well with Linda Musselman, Gary Snellings, and also Mr. English. He said that he and Mr. English were on the same page, which made him happy. He said that he was glad they would soon get the Black Rifle Coffee Shop in Route 17, but they needed more restaurants.

Mr. Rowley suggested that the EDA, with the help from the Board of Supervisors, offer appropriate incentives to attract restaurants and make it a focus. He said that regarding Hartwood, they had 500 acres sitting next to UMW on Route 17, however, there were some issues like lack of power transmission, sewer, water, and high-speed cable. He said that he believed that working with the UMW Foundation, EDA, and Board of Supervisors could help find an industry interested in that land. He said that someone had said broadband or a database as a possibility, but he thought it was not suitable for databases. He said that the three sites picked out looked like good sites.

Mr. English stated that Ms. Bohmke had said that he was born and raised in the area, and his parents, grandparents, and everyone else in his family were also from there. He said that he remembered when Garrisonville Road was a two-lane road all the way up, and it still was at certain

parts. He said that his focus was on the Hartwood area which was thriving, but needed more restaurants. He said that he hoped that they could offer some incentives for businesses to come in and provide more dining options. He said that Stafford County should reach out to mom-and-pop businesses from all over the County and not just Fredericksburg, they could offer them incentives to expand into Hartwood.

Mr. English said that they could create a Hell's Kitchen-like area with a restaurant row, which would be great for the community. He said that recreation was another important aspect, and they should consider adding pickleball courts or other recreational activities. He said that Mr. Rowley had done an excellent job with Germanna, and he could handle that niche. He said that he appreciated everything Mr. Rowley had done since he started working with him two years ago.

Mr. Coen said that his EDA member, Price Jett, was out of town on business, but that they had communicated ahead of time when they knew what was the gist of tonight. He said that when they said restaurants, they meant sit-down restaurants, not drive-thru restaurants per se, but something that people actually go to. He said that for quality of life, he was looking for a greater harmony between the EDA and the Board of Supervisors as far as plans and functions and direction. He said that there were parts of his district between I-95 and Route 1 that needed to be revitalized.

Mr. Coen said that it dawned on him while his colleagues were talking that they did a really great job with COVID-19 as far as trying to help businesses and small businesses and restaurants. He said that those people who took advantage of that that they reached out to would be a good starting point to see about expanding their businesses or doing other stuff. He said that there was a database that they used which was already sitting there and could be tapped into.

Mr. English said that the EDA and the Board of Supervisors needed to go back and recognize the businesses that had been here for 40, 50, or even 60 years. He said that they should go in as partners with them and just put a sticker on them saying they had been there for a long time. He said that there should be some recognition given to these past businesses that had been around for so many years, but he felt like they do not do a good job of recognizing these establishments.

Ms. Vanuch introduced herself as Crystal Vanuch and stated that she represented the Rock Hill District. She said that as she listened to some of her colleagues, they talked a lot about a couple of issues in the CEDC Committee since being on the Board. She said that there were a couple of challenges for new businesses. She said that the first challenge was site-ready pads because there were very limited amounts of them and it took a long time to get them approved by the County.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was also costly, especially when they talked about bringing in recreational activities for kids like golfing or baseball or Skyzone. She said that Paul Santay had been leading

changes on this issue and recommending them to the Board. She said that at the last CEDC meeting, they reviewed the first report out of some commercial changes and there were lots of recommendations on fee structure changes.

Ms. Vanuch said that one thing she discussed with Mr. Vosburg when he came to the County was creating a concierge service, so if it was a business that met the retail gap, such as women's clothing or a restaurant, movie theater, bowling alley, something like that, they would have a member of staff or even the EDA as that business's point of contact to help them get through all the different departments that they need to. She said that one of the things in that report where it talked about changing some of the fee structure that they had asked for Planning and Zoning staff to go to the EDA for their feedback was on how they could potentially waive some of that fee structure, what that would look like for the types of businesses that they want to bring here.

Ms. Vanuch said that if a proposed development was not going to meet the retail needs of the community, such as a Burger King or a storage unit, it would not be incentivized and prioritized by Planning and Zoning. She said that this information helped them decide what the constituents wanted and how to expedite the approval process for businesses that met those needs. She said that they were aware of the challenges faced by business owners when dealing with the VDH, including delays and changes in inspection requirements. She said that they recognized the need for strategic tactical outcomes to bring new businesses to the area and make it easier for them to operate.

Mr. Roosa introduced himself as Jeff Roosa and said that he represented the Rock Hill District, working with Ms. Vanuch. He said that he had been in and out of Stafford since 1988. He said that his sister lived in Stafford since 1983 in the same district, which was why he often visited. He said that with his military background, he settled down there in 1999 and remained in the area. He said that he got involved with the community by coaching various sports and even joined the HOA, which could be both enjoyable and frustrating at times.

Mr. Roosa said that everyone present in the room agreed on the need for improvement in the community. He said that residents wanted restaurants and other things, but what they really wanted was a sense of community. He said that Stafford County was unique with its military and law enforcement background, and optimizing this would make Stafford better than Spotsylvania or Prince William. He said that they had the right people and had to find the right trajectory for the County's development. He said that he looked forward to collaborating with Ms. Vanuch and the EDA to continue the momentum toward improvement.

Mr. Wilson introduced himself as Marlon Wilson and that he had been part of the EDA for about three years in the Griffis-Widewater District. He said that when he joined the EDA, one of the biggest issues they were facing was broadband access, and as someone with a background in IT,

similar to Mr. Roosa, it was something that he jumped right into and became involved in addressing. He said that despite the progress made, there was still much work to be done in this area, particularly given the impact of COVID-19 on students and families who rely on broadband for communication with their doctors and schools. He said that he was committed to improving quality of life in Stafford County, specifically the need for revitalization along Route 1. He said that with a new member joining the EDA, he was optimistic that they could work together to achieve great things for the County.

Ms. Allen said that she would be the Debbie-downer. She said that living in the Widewater side of Griffis-Widewater, she had advocated for embracing diversity and entrepreneurship, especially with women and minorities. She said that as a County, she felt that the biggest failure was the lack of infrastructure due to the lack of action from the governing body, which resulted in harm to them and attracted businesses where they needed to be. She said that this was not the EDA's fault but rather the Board's, as they did not have sound economic policies in place.

Ms. Allen said that one of the things she had advocated for last year was a small area business plan to maximize revitalization efforts and growth. However, she asked what the Board had done to really incentivize those plans. She said that there was often conflict between the messages they sent and their actions, as they may put policies out there but did not take action to implement them. She said that for her, the biggest disappointment was that Widewater was the gateway to Stafford, yet nothing had changed in 10 years due to inaction, which she felt was not her fault because she had tried.

Ms. Allen said that oftentimes, the biggest hindrance was the Board because they sent out mixed messaging; they were anti-growth but pro-business. She said that in order to had a small area plan, it entailed having more affordable housing and a little bit of growth, but they did not want that, and then they could not attract certain business. She said that at some point, the Board in general, over the last couple of years, and not just during her term, needed to take ownership that the lack of economic development that had literally turned them into a bedroom flyover community largely fell on the Board's inability to match policies with action.

Ms. Allen said that as much as she enjoyed having great dinner and conversation, that was her introduction. She said that her introduction was that she was disappointed that not much had changed. She said that she looked across at Dumfries, which was literally 12 minutes from her house, and all the growth that was happening in Dumfries of all places.

Ms. Davis introduced herself as Danielle Davis and she had been appointed by Ms. Gary. She said that she had been on the EDA for five years and sat on the loan committee. She said that the members of the EDA were caring about what was going to happen to the community and had the



best intentions for Stafford County, and it was an honor and privilege for her to work with them and the Board to make that happen.

Ms. Davis said that she sat on the loan committee and enjoyed watching entrepreneurs come in with their business plans, which the EDA helped execute. She said that the EDA had an excellent track record with no loans in default for the last five years, and everyone had paid on time and paid off. She said that they had executed their biggest loan last month for a hydroponics farm to a man who was the assistant football coach at North Stafford High School for \$150,000.

Ms. Davis that the EDA had been at the forefront of distributing ARPA funds to assist struggling businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and help revitalize the economy. She said that regarding priorities, she acknowledged that there were several important issues facing the County but emphasized that addressing the state of Aquia Town Center was a top priority for her district. She said that she had hope that this would be addressed promptly to improve the quality of life for residents in her area. She said that there was a need to establish a unique identity for the region and prevent it from becoming merely an extension of neighboring cities or Counties, and by focusing on local businesses and fostering economic growth, they could achieve this goal and stem the outflow of resources from the County.

Ms. Gary said that when she was walking around and knocking doors during her campaign for Supervisor, people were grateful for the opportunities they had to continue in their business and what the EDA did for them. She said that it was interesting because everyone else did not know the EDA was a separate entity, so when she knocked on the door and people said how grateful they were for what the County had done, they did not say EDA.

Ms. Gary said that it mattered for them to understand so that they worked better together to support the EDA better. She said that they knew there was a need for land to generate some revenue, so they would had to grapple with that soon. She said that her priorities were workforce housing and closing the retail gap, and she appreciated Supervisor Vanuch's comments about having plans to move certain things forward more quickly.

Mr. Vosburg introduced himself as Randy Vosburg and said that he was the County Administrator, and had held the position for a year and two months. He said that he appreciated the harmony between the two boards. He said that this dialogue was a great step forward and emphasized the importance of taking small steps toward progress. He said that during his time in office, he had learned to appreciate the value of communication and felt that keeping the boards together and communicating effectively would be crucial over the next year. He said that he believed everyone involved had the best intentions for Stafford and that they should work together to move forward on the same page.

Mr. Morris introduced himself as Mike Morris, Deputy County Administrator, and had all the departments that were external facing. These included Economic Development, Planning and Zoning, Development Services, R-Board, Parks and Recreation, and some others. He said that he appreciated the opportunity to be there that night and hear what was on everyone's mind so they could try to formulate a plan or a path forward.

Mr. Santay said that his name was Paul Santay, Chief Director of Development Services. He gave his gratitude to be part of the meeting that evening as well as previous meetings he had attended for EDA. He said that he had learned a lot and believed it would be great if both groups could start synergizing.

Mr. Kyle Allwine introduced himself as Kyle Allwine, Director of Economic Development. He said that in week three, he was very excited and had loved getting to talk to each of them and hear their stories that night. He said that the most exciting aspect for him was the fact that it seemed like everyone shared a common mission, which was to have a better tomorrow.

Ms. Krauss introduced herself as Donna Krauss and that she was the other Deputy County Administrator for the County. She said that her responsibilities included overseeing all internal matters and support for Mr. Morris. She said how nice it was to be able to participate in this event and hear from everyone, even though she rarely interacted with the EDA.

Mr. Owen said that he would give the project update. He said that he was remiss in not welcoming Mr. Allwine, but they welcomed him. He said that the EDA really looked forward to working with them and staff. He said that as they heard from everybody, they could see that they worked by committee. He said that they had a loan committee, a properties committee, the Germanna committee, and then the broadband, so every EDA member was engaged in a particular activity. He said that he looked forward to getting Mr. Roosa engaged with the test bed committee. He said that they had not been able to make that work yet, but he would like for Mr. Roosa to be the EDA rep on the test bed committee if he was so willing.

Mr. Owen said that he thought they all knew what they had done in the past, the hundreds of loans during COVID-19, the \$750,000 that they contributed to Germanna on 610 on Center Street to help them open that new facility. He said that the RV Parkway was one of the property projects that was underway right now, and somebody said how things can be slow getting approved, and they were very hopeful that that happens really quickly. He said that if it was all successful, it would be about \$180,000, and the EDA will take that money and reinvest it in the community some way or another, through grants, through loans, or helping new businesses, they would put that money back in the community.

Mr. Owen that he hoped everyone understood that every dime they got they put back into the community. He said that moving forward, the property group, Mr. Rowley and Ms. Hagerman, were wildly successful over the last several years in taking dormant property and converting it into property that paid taxes. He said that he drove past Moncure Elementary and asked why something was not happening there, and the EDA would like to propose that they get a chance to take a look at that, take 180 days to work with consultants and see what they can bring to the Board.

Mr. Owen said that he did not know what the Board's mission was for that property, but maybe the EDA could bring some ideas and some alternatives that would get the Board thinking about what could work. He said that the EDA also would like to engage with Mosaic, Aquia Town Center, because they had a beautiful, almost pad-ready site that was flat, cleared, and ready to be developed, and just needed some different ideas to make something happen there.

Mr. Owen said that ultimately, the EDA was looking for guidance from the County administration, from the Board of Supervisors, and even from Mr. Allwine's office. He asked what they wanted the EDA to go out and achieve. He said that the past was pleasant memories and lessons learned, and sometimes they could get a little aggravated with the past, but they should move forward and ask what they can do. He said that he was very sincere in that, and everyone on the EDA Board was very sincere. He said that they wanted to know how they could help the Board, how they could help them succeed, and how they could make the County a better place. He said the EDA would anxiously had liked some direction from the Board about what they could do.

Mr. Owen said that as far as big projects going on right now, he did not want to say they were on the sidelines but essentially they were on the sidelines. He said that they did not had any property left to develop or put back onto the tax rolls. He said the EDA had been like an ATM for a lot of organizations coming to them asking for money, and Dr. Yeung came to him asking for a contribution for the Stafford Christmas Tree lighting, and he would present it to the EDA Board in the next four weeks or so and make a contribution because that was part of their mission to help the County with projects like these.

Ms. Hagerman said that she believed everything everyone had said covered it, but the Economic Development Authority had discussed at their last meeting what Supervisor Vanuch had said earlier about an easier way for some businesses to had a concierge-type service. She said that if they engaged with them and found it too difficult, they would move on. She said that as a commercial real estate broker with 20 years of experience in the industry, she was very familiar with how it works and thought that providing this type of assistance to the EDA would be extremely helpful in attracting more businesses that the County wants to see here.

Ms. Hagerman said that regarding what Mr. Owen had said earlier, the EDA had been successful in monetizing properties like Thompson Street, which they were able to sell for \$700,000 and put back into the market. She said that if they had similar opportunities, she suggested that they could sit down and discuss what would make sense and how they could help each other. She said that the EDA was happy to do so because there was a huge opportunity for them to give back and help the residents and businesses of Stafford County in this way.

Ms. Bohmke asked what was discussed during EDA meetings that the Board could help with.

Mr. Owen said that RV Parkway was an example where he did not know who was responsible and it did not matter, however, what mattered was that the project seemed to be faltering, and the EDA was attempting to hold the owner accountable and keep it within the County.

Ms. Bohmke asked if it was the first line project.

Mr. Owen said yes.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thought that had been resolved.

Mr. Owen said that the past was pleasant as memories and lessons learned were important. He said he did not know what happened there, but they should try to get it right. He noted that when people talk about the County, they often mention how working with zoning or planning was not a pleasant experience. He said that as he was not a developer, he did not know about that experience. He said that they frequently heard this from individuals in Heathersfield whom he meets with on a regular basis.

Mr. Owen said that it had been an ongoing issue for quite some time. He noted that the other thing was that there was opportunity. He said that approximately six years ago, Harris Teeter was planning to build a store. He continued that when they met with them up in New York at the shopping center event, they requested a change in the sign ordinance so that they could had a 75-foot sign on the corner of Aquia, Route 610, and Highway 1. He said that within 90 to 120 days, that ordinance passed. He said he did not know what went on in planning and zoning, but he knew it could happen because he saw it happen.

Ms. Hagerman said that the budget season was approaching and recommended giving the County the necessary staff to ensure efficient planning and zoning processes. She said the department was short-staffed, which led to delays in project completion. She suggested that to address this issue, the number of employees in the department should be increased to meet the growing demand for services. She said that providing adequate resources would help the County realize its full potential

and improve service delivery.

Ms. Gary said that at one point or another, the boards should consider investing in planning and zoning initiatives just as they were investing in economic development. She said that it was crucial for ensuring that businesses get the support they needed and achieved their objectives.

Ms. Allen said that she had spoken with several developers who were interested in coming to Widewater. She said that she had also communicated with some restaurants. She said that the feedback received was that planning and zoning were not the primary issues preventing businesses from setting up in the County. She said it seemed like a small part of the larger problem. She said that the developers did not believe that the Board of Supervisors, the comprehensive plan, and the zoning ordinances aligned with their desired projects.

Dr. Yeung said that she knew Mr. Vosburg was going to discuss that at the conclusion of the meeting. She said she wanted to provide Mr. Santay with enough time to return to the data centers and provide an update before the end of the meeting.

Mr. Rowley said that Germanna was in for about 15 different permits for the Center Street project. He said that it was essential to get those permits through the system so that construction could begin by the end of October. He said that they had already done all the dismantling that needed to be done inside the building, and it was crucial because they wanted to have students there and classes beginning in August of 2024.

Mr. English said that he had spoken with the developers and they were facing numerous obstacles. He said he did not believe it was solely due to the County but rather the health department. He noted that in such situations, the EDA could step in to assist them in opening up. He suggested offering workshops for small businesses that were trying to get started. He said the workshops should focus on identifying the avenues available to open a business within the County. He asked if anyone had ever considered conducting a workshop for new businesses.

Ms. Davis said that they had business workshops designed for small businesses.

Mr. Owen said that he forgot to mention the business acumen series at the University of Mary Washington. He said the EDA bought 50 classrooms for that program, and next week, 10 County residents would be attending a business acumen series because of the EDA. He noted that it had been a tremendous success at the UMW facility, he added.

Mr. Wilson said that veterans were eligible for all those benefits. He said that regarding planning and zoning, they had a staff representative who can attend their workshops to assist and provide

additional information on such matters.

Dr. Yeung said that they needed more staff.

Mr. Santay said that the group in general was more than happy to provide whatever updates were needed for site plans, building permits, status, where things were at, or what the issues might be. He said the issues were not necessarily from the applicant or from the County. He said that they were in this space of property owners and business owners who did not really know what to do and who to come to for answers.

Mr. Santay said that they often came to them for answers but were limited on how often and how much they could help. He said that they were always actively trying to do that and support those businesses and development projects. He said that anytime someone was looking for an update, he or his staff, and Kyle and his staff were getting involved in the process on the front end. He said that it started at an economic development level and then trickled down into planning and zoning and permits.

Mr. Santay said that there were probably no projects bigger than data centers currently happening in Stafford. He said that it was timely to mention this to them all in the forum as he knew that Stafford had become a hub for data center development. He noted that for those who attended the community meeting a few weeks ago, they gave some examples of why Stafford was targeted by the data center industry. He said he wanted to ensure that everyone was aware that the effort toward data center development in Stafford had been ongoing for many years. He said that the comprehensive plan referred to data center development years back. He noted that there had been a regional-level effort and a County-level effort to prepare for when these projects came.

Mr. Santay said that the Board had held multiple community meetings for data center applications, work sessions with planning commissioners, subcommittees at the Planning Commission level, and there was active work being done at the Board level for comprehensive plan changes and ordinance changes. He said that these were not just new developments; staff was prepared to engage and ensure that these developments occurred responsibly.

Mr. Santay said he did want to brief them all quickly on the applications they had for data centers in Stafford County. He said that it really started back in spring of 2023, with two rezoning applications for two data center locations in the Falmouth District: the Potomac Church Tech Center, located near the new water tower by Stafford Hospital, and the Stafford Technology Campus, located off Eskimo Hill Road. He noted the projects were at the rezoning stage.

Mr. Santay said that they would be coming before the Planning Commission and the Board as part

of the public hearing process. He said the Potomac Church Tech Center was going through a proffer amendment, and the Stafford Technology Campus was a by-right application, but it would go through a CUP process for their proposed building heights. He said staff had discussions on pre-application meetings for site plans and grading plans.

Mr. Santay said that they had received a site plan application for Potomac Church Tech Center, and they had held pre-application meetings for building permits. He said that they'll need to come before the Planning Commission for comprehensive plan compliance reviews because substations were involved with the data center development. He said was going to be a lot of opportunity for the Board, the Planning Commission, and the public to hear and comment on those two applications.

Mr. Santay said that in the not-too-distant past, they did receive two applications for additional sites located in Centerport Parkway for data center development. He said one was called the Pemberton Tech Center and the other called Melrod. He said those were on the southern end of the Centerport Parkway area. He said they were by-right developments for data centers, and they would most likely still need to come to the Board for a CUP for building height and compliance reviews for the substations. He said they looked at the existing proffers on the Centerport Parkway area to make sure there was not anything that those sites needed to adjust.

Mr. Santay said they had met back early in March with the work session when they had not officially had any applications. He noted that a few months later, they had a whole bunch of different things happening for data centers. He said he was always more than happy to provide information, the status of the projects, and get further feedback on those projects as they make their way toward the Planning Commission and the Board.

Mr. Santay said that a lot of what's happening with data center development in Virginia was a trickle down from large state incentive packages. He said that should any of these projects move forward with any sort of local incentives that go before the Board, the EDA will be very involved with the process. He added that they wanted to make sure the EDA was informed of where those data center projects would be and when they would be getting involved for the potential incentives.

Mr. Owen asked if it would be helpful if the EDA passed a resolution in support of data centers. He asked if the County was looking for support from the EDA in that regard.

Ms. Vanuch said that she did not think it would be beneficial, as they were not currently providing support. She said that it was a matter of them appearing before the County. She explained that they were working on the conditional use permit regulations and classifications.

Mr. Morris said that their main goal was to provide an update on their progress, especially since the EDA members had not been present during previous meetings. He said the purpose of the presentation was to give them an update on where they were in terms of development. If any incentives were offered, he said they would have to go through the EDA at some point, and agreements would need to be made.

Mr. Owen said that he hoped they could work on the issue of funding. He said that they would like to receive a fee at some point for the work they do, as in the past, there had been no reimbursement for their time and effort.

Mr. Rowley asked if there was a residential area at the south end of the Centerport Parkway.

Mr. Santay said that there were some proposed site development plans for high intensity residential areas down there, but that had not gone through the review process or the approval process. He said it was really up in the air, and development had overturned along the Centerport Parkway over the last few years. He said they had gone from a lot of vacancies to impacts on the airport, warehousing, distribution, and possibly residential. He said there were a lot of new ideas and thoughts out there, but with the latest applications they got, it seemed like there was an interest to have data centers move out into that general area.

Mr. Rowley said that in the past, when they built the centers right next to residential areas, the residential residents typically did not feel happy about it.

Mr. Santay said that from what he had seen on some of these locations, there had been some thought put into where these were being located. He said it would not be able to avoid impacting neighboring or adjacent parcels. He added that due to the data center's need for having power and large amounts of reuse water, there were only certain areas of the County that could really happen. He said that they had selected those specific locations which turned out to be not as close to major, intense residential uses. He noted that there were some that were close to residential.

Mr. Vosburg said that his topic was an MOU and funding for the EDA. He mentioned, regarding the MOU, compensation and how the relationship worked between the two boards. He said that staff felt restructuring the relationship would be more beneficial than what they had now, which was maybe a history of practices. He said that if they can put that together, it was not done in a vacuum. He said the EDA would have input. He noted the MOU would bring the boards together on how that interaction goes. He added that the intentions were to get something going that in the upcoming months, they would get their input and then bring something to the Board and pass it to the EDA.



Mr. Vosburg said that the next topic was funding. He said he had been in several meetings where it had been discussed. He noted they were approaching the next budget season from the County perspective. He said that several members of the EDA had referenced no more land, so there was not anything to sell off to get revenue. He said there were things that the EDA wanted to accomplish, but they would need some dollars to do that. He said he wanted to had a brief discussion for the Board to give input. He said the EDA can help frame what that looks like. He suggested taking a vote on a position to forward to the Board on an official request.

Mr. Owen said that the EDA currently funded its own marketing, legal, financial, and administration. He said it paid for that out of pocket. He said he did not know how many other Board-appointed organizations did that. He said he did not know if that was typical across the state. He said he had no idea because he had never looked at it. He noted that would be part of the MOU and the funding request.

Dr. Yeung said that people often asked the Board of Supervisors for money, and when they did, the Board wanted to see the books. She said she had a one-on-one meeting with Mr. Vosburg where they discussed an audit. She said she wanted to see what it was like so that they could craft the MOU based on what they were looking at and what the Board of Supervisors desired to do.

Mr. Owen said that in regards to the audit, they participated in one with the County along with PBMares a couple of years ago. He said that every year, they were audited. He said his staff had done a wonderful job, so he never had any questions. He added that they were close to completing the audit for the last fiscal year.

Dr. Yeung said that she was going to move on to Kyle Allwine.

Mr. Allwine said that this was week three, and he would be doing a lot of listening and learning over the coming months. He said he and his staff were about to engage in an initiative in the coming weeks, and they wanted the Board's help and participation with that. He said the goal was to visit 100 Stafford businesses in 100 days. He said they aimed to visit a variety of businesses representing every district and different types of businesses. He asked what obstacles, hurdles, opportunities, and wins they could find success for tomorrow.

Mr. Allwine said that as part of that, the boards would receive emails from staff asking to join them if they wanted. He said the entire effort was meant to encourage collaboration and communication. He said they already had a list together of about 78 businesses, but if people had recommendations, they could touch those as well. He said that this was just the beginning, and they would continue to do this engagement throughout the year. He encouraged feedback so that they could act on it.

Mr. Allwine said that there were other opportunities for collaboration between the boards. He said that earlier in the year, the EDA had sponsored an AJGA golf tournament. He said they wanted to present checks to local nonprofits that the AJGA had helped raise money for during the October 17 Board of Supervisors meeting. He said this would show joint support and strength of the County as well as a bigger stage for what the program was and its impact on the community and region.

Mr. Allwine said that there had been many requests over time for updates on projects or upcoming leads, but they could not provide that information due to confidentiality issues. He explained that as soon as the information was emailed to the boards, it became FOIA-able. He said that it could negate their position for negotiation, incentives, and everything else. He noted that many of them had been doing one-on-one meetings.

Mr. Allwine said that he would propose that County staff was more than willing to participate with the boards in those meetings, even if it was just for a few minutes to provide a verbal update of the projects. He said it would ensure they were briefed and aware of those projects. He said it was also an opportunity to discuss the challenges and what the opportunities for collaboration and communication were.

Ms. Bohmke mentioned contact with local businesses made by previous staff and former Economic Development Manager, Rick Cobert. She said that she was trying to understand why the Economic Development department would need to spend the next 100 days going out and visiting all those businesses. She said it seemed kind of duplicative, as the Economic Development department should already be aware of what the businesses want or were doing since they were engaged on a normal cycle.

Mr. Allwine said that the current economic conditions were constantly changing, which affected the way businesses operate. He noted that interest rates fluctuated all over the world, consumer needs shifted, and discussions about expanding to new locations or increasing marketing efforts were ongoing. He said that it was a big push from a marketing and advertising position to let the businesses know that they care.

Mr. Owen said that the last time this was really done was probably four or five years ago, before the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the interactions stopped during COVID. He said there needed to be some engagement with different businesses because models had changed post-COVID with people staying home. He said that all those things had changed over the last three to five years, and they do need to be reexamined. He noted there had been staff turnover, which created some gaps that needed to be reexamined.

Ms. Vanuch said she thought it was a good idea, as the businesses they were engaging with before COVID were mostly government contractors and businesses that brought in a lot of employment. She noted that those businesses were much larger scale than what the residents were currently seeking. She said the community wanted more recreational businesses, such as movie theaters and restaurants. She said that hearing the challenges of the business owners in the community would be beneficial with fresh eyes and ears.

Ms. Vanuch suggested that the findings be brought back to the Board of Supervisors and the EDA to help clarify how to start bringing those types of businesses to the County. She said that they could begin working on re-engaging and re-crafting the talking points and analyses for courting new businesses.

Ms. Vanuch said that in terms of Mr. Owen's point, she made it a point to go out to lunch in Stafford three times a week to make sure that she was putting money in the local economy. She said that the meals tax used to be \$2 million a year, now it was \$13 million. She said it was projected to go up \$5 million, and that would pay for the Sheriff's pay raises. She said she felt like they needed to reshape that message.

Ms. Vanuch said she was not sure they ever had a good message, which was probably why they lost a lot of business to the City of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania. She noted that the EDA in the past wanted to bring in a lot of these employers. She said they had done that, by getting Germanna and expanding Mary Washington. She said that now, they had to start delivering on the things that people can go eat 10 minutes from their house. She said there was nothing for kids to do.

Mr. Roosa said that they were discussing strategically about what the County wanted to do, but he had not heard anything about their strategy for all the undeveloped lots, which was something residents talked about. He said they were over in Garrisonville, across from Embrey Mill and Austin Ridge. He said that it really went to trust and confidence in the County administration. He said he wanted to know what the County's plan was to rectify and figure out what they were going to do with the undeveloped lots. He said the residents did not understand the minutia that went into it, they only understood what they saw, and it was the optics of it. He asked what their plan was to address this and get the confidence back from the residents. He said that it would convey to businesses that wanted to come to Stafford County as well.

Dr. Yeung said that in Garrisonville, those empty lots were not really empty; they just looked empty. She said that to avoid any upheaval among residents, she advised against telling them anything before the plan was completed. She said that previously, there was no restaurant committee because they were always focused on bigger distributors. She said that they needed to

consider the staffing needs as well.

Ms. Allen said that they were going to be right back in the same conversation next year.

Dr. Yeung said that she hoped it was not true, but they simply needed a plan. She noted they had heard from the audience through a survey conducted a few years prior.

Mr. Vosburg said that there was a lot said during their meeting, but also felt that certain points were not addressed. He said staff wanted to know how they could move forward and what would be the frequency of interaction between both parties. He said staff had some suggestions for this matter; they believed it should happen more frequently than once a year. He said their plan, unless there were big objections, was to put this as a suggested twice a year meeting. He said that in working with the Chair of the EDA, there could be a quarterly update to the Board where they would come and give a presentation.

Mr. Vosburg said they had talked about the concept of a liaison to the EDA, and even discussed after some data collection sharing information back to both boards. He suggested having a half-day retreat or work session for both boards to come together. He said they could had data presentations and put some things down on paper to get some action from the boards jointly. He said that if the boards were open to those ideas, they would like the dialogue to begin with the respective boards. He said that they could come together and hopefully get an action plan on how they were going to continue the communication and work together.

Mr. Rowley asked if the minutes from the meeting were going to be published.

Mr. Vosburg replied yes.

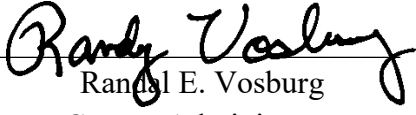
Mr. Rowley said that they needed minutes so that everyone could recall what had been discussed during the meeting.


Mr. Owen said that they were hopeful to come before the Board, potentially in October. He said he was unsure if they wanted to do the check presentation. He said that he would follow up with them. He suggested that they should had at least a quarterly get-together.

Dr. Yeung adjourned the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:34 p.m., Chairman Yeung adjourned the September 19, 2023 Joint Budget Work Session of the Economic Development Authority and the Stafford County Board of Supervisors.

  
Randal E. Vosburg  
County Administrator

  
Dr. R. Pamela Yeung  
Chairman