



Economic & Tourism Development Commission

November 12, 2025

Commission Members Present: Bob Jacob, Judy Crow, Cathy Bramble, Creigh Rahenkamp, and David Bowman

Commission Members Absent: Joanne Rich

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Abbott, Economic Development Manager, Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager, Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, and Kristina Hyland, Social Media Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development

At 3:00 p.m., Mr. Jacob called the meeting to order.

Mr. Jacob requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025, meeting. On a motion by Mr. Rahenkamp, seconded by Ms. Bramble, the minutes of the October 8, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

Ms. Williams shared that the Housing Subcommittee had questions regarding the update to the 2025 Unified Development Ordinance that Ms. Gerber will address in her presentation and that they will be scheduling an upcoming meeting with Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, to discuss denied access and explore ways to overcome limitations.

Ms. Crow shared that the Tourism Subcommittee has received approximately 50 RSVPs for the December 2, 2025, Road to Growing Tourism in Kent County Forum. This is an opportunity for Kent County businesses to come together, share ideas, support one another, and continue to grow tourism.

Mr. Bowman shared that the Nominating Subcommittee is reaching out to various community members to generate interest in the open seat on the Economic and Tourism Development Commission (ETDC). He advised that there is some interest from the education and healthcare sectors.

Ms. Williams shared updates on the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund's Regional Projects.

- Ms. Williams, Ms. Abbott, Nancy LaJoice, and Janice Palmer from Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) met with Tom Porter and Brett King at Kent County High School to tour the Career Technology Education (CTE) programs and discuss how Ms. LaJoice can assist. The CTE program is currently seeking apprenticeship opportunities in auto mechanics and HVAC.
- The ETD staff met with Heather Gramm, Vice-President of Strategy for People and Places Reimagined (PPR), as part of a regional marketing program. Ms. Gramm will be meeting with the three counties to develop a regional marketing strategy for business attraction.

- The USRC has hired a consultant, Jenn Cooper, to work on the Business Mentor Program and to be the liaison between the Economic Development offices, as well as the mentors and mentees.
- The USRC published a Request for Proposal to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region. Working with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to be an Economic Development District (EDD). Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's have not qualified for EDDs because they did not meet the quantitative criteria for a CEDS.

There has been interest in continuing the URRC STRT1UP Roadshow, Pitch Competition from the USRC and Washington College, which will be scheduled for the Spring.

The Incumbent Worker Training Fund (IWTF) Grant is scheduled to end on December 31, 2025. Any business wanting to participate in the grant needs to have its employees complete the training, get their certificate, and receive their refunds before the end of December.

Carla Gerber, Acting Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, was present to report on the changes to the new 2025 Unified Development Ordinance. Ms. Gerber shared that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are allowed in any residential zoning district in the County. ADUs can be rented but cannot be sold separately. Ms. Williams shared that the Housing Subcommittee questioned ADUs on commercially zoned properties and whether an employer could construct units to house seasonal employees. Ms. Gerber shared that specific criteria apply to each of the zoning districts regarding density requirements.

Ms. Crow acknowledged the amount of attention they have received from bloggers, social media posts, etc. Ms. Boulden shared that she has been working with the Maryland Office of Tourism on their efforts to highlight more of the Eastern Shore. Ms. Williams acknowledged Ms. Hyland's efforts in her posting efforts on our social media pages. She also shared that having public ambassadors who share and like the content is critical to reaching a broader audience.

Ms. Williams shared that the 2022 Economic and Tourism Development Strategic Plan update will begin after the first of the year. She encouraged ETDC members to start reviewing the current plan and identify areas where they feel we need to focus on updates. Ms. Williams also shared that she is considering a budget request to hire a consultant to assist with this project and is reviewing software through OpenGov, a program that the County currently utilizes.

A new company has submitted a zoning text amendment that received a favorable recommendation from the Planning Commission to allow cannabis processing in the commercial district. Ms. Williams requested the Commission to consider sending a position letter to the County Commissioners once the draft is received for review.

Ms. Williams shared that December's guest speaker will be Sara Rich, President and CEO of Choptank Community Health Systems, and January's speaker will be Carla Gerber, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Bramble, seconded by Ms. Crow, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:01 p.m. The Commission will meet again on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD
Director