

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; Member Dan Franklin; County Administrator Ken Decker; and Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff

President Porter **called the meeting to order** at 7:00 p.m. Reverend Buddy Dunn, Faith Fellowship Church of Preston provided an **invocation** and the Commissioners lead in the **pledge of allegiance**. The **agenda** was accepted by the Commissioners, as presented.

President Porter called for **public comment** and there were none.

Proclamation of September 28 – October 2 as Economic Development Week in Caroline County by Angela Visintainer, Director of Economic Development, Caroline Economic Development Corporation. On motion by Mr. Franklin, seconded by Mr. Levensgood, the Commissioners unanimously authorized the proclamation.

Presentation of Business Plan for Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Production License Application by Ross Morrall, Brighton Lofton, and Dan Herlihy, Maryland Natural Treatment Solutions. Mr. Morrall, Chief Compliance Officer, Ataraxia, and Chairman of the Medical Cannabis Alliance of Illinois, stated that his company will soon be the first in the State of Illinois to produce medical grade cannabis, and he has partnered with Mr. Lofton and Mr. Herlihy to form Maryland Natural Treatment Solutions, in the hope of developing a similar production facility on an eleven acre parcel within the town limits of Federalsburg. Mr. Herlihy, who is licensed by the Drug Enforcement Agency, the owner of a pharmaceutical distribution company in Howard County, and also carries a Controlled Dangerous Substance license. Mr. Morrall stated that if MNTS is granted one of fifteen medical cannabis licenses to be awarded by the State of Maryland, it is their intention is to build a production facility employing forty to fifty people, with \$50,000 average salaries. He stated that MNTS will be focused solely on the production, research, and application of medical grade cannabis and is not interested in obtaining a dispensary license.

Mr. Herlihy stated that the partners have met with various stakeholder groups, including the Sheriff's Office, Drug Free Caroline Coalition, and Drug Court, in a good faith effort to address security needs and build community partnerships. Mr. Levensgood inquired about security measures, and Mr. Morrall stated that the facility will be fully enclosed, utilizing state of the art biometric accesses, secure transportation protocols, and 24 hour security. No one under age will be allowed on the premises.

Mr. Franklin inquired about the delivery methods of medical cannabis, and Mr. Lofton stated that the oil of the plant is the source of the medicine, and that a variety of delivery methods will be available, depending on patient preference and the most effective delivery method for their particular condition. He stated that MNTS intends to research other delivery methods to improve patient care.

President Porter asked if law enforcement is involved in the Illinois facility and Mr. Morrall stated that unless there is a fire or break-in, the facility has no real impact on law enforcement, and worked closely with the Fire Marshall during the construction of the facility, which is the plan for the Federalsburg facility as well. He stated there had not been any police calls to the Illinois facility.

President Porter expressed concern over the conflicted message of telling Children to avoid drugs, while endorsing a facility to be developed in the County. Mr. Morrallé stated that there are many far more dangerous and addictive prescription drugs in medical use and that medical cannabis is a less addictive alternative. He reiterated that MNTS is not interested in the recreation use of marijuana, and has no plan to add recreational use to its business plan.

Following general remarks by the Commissioners, President Porter opened the floor for **public comment**, which is summarized as follows:

Jim McCormick, Preston, disclosed that he is the Chief Information Officer for the Office of Technology, asked how Maryland Natural Treatment Solutions plans to assist with addressing the methamphetamine epidemic the County is facing, and Mr. Loftin stated by financially supporting programs with that mission, for example, the Drug Free Caroline Coalition.

Bob Chapel, Ridgely, asked what motivated Maryland Natural Treatment Solutions to select Caroline County as their preferred location, and Mr. Loftin stated that the cost of living and the affordable cost of land was attractive to them initially, and after meeting with Angela Visintainer and Economic Development, they appreciated the warm reception and support from the Town of Federalsburg, as well as the other stakeholders.

Angela Visintainer, Executive Director, Caroline Economic Development Corporation, stated that the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors has issued an official Letter of Support, as has the Town of Federalsburg. She stated that this is one of approximately twelve businesses who contacted her expressing interest in this field; however, she felt these gentlemen were the most professional, most qualified and best prepared to meet the need. Ms. Visintainer stated that the Board of Directors was impressed that the business was proactive in reaching out to the Sheriff's Office and other stakeholders, and has displayed a willingness to be good community partners.

Ken Abner, Federalsburg Town Council, expressed support for the business, stating that he lost his father to cancer twelve years ago and began researching medical cannabis and is confident this company is as professional as they represent themselves to be. He emphasized the scientific research showing the medical benefits of medical cannabis treatment.

Reverend Buddy Dunn, Preston, following some general remarks, expressed opposition to the business, stating that the Commissioners should do more research on medical cannabis before deciding to issue an official stance.

Anthony Casey, Mayor, Town of Ridgely, expressed support for the business, stating that he saw it as a big economic development opportunity for the County.

Robert Clendaniel, Denton, expressed opposition, agreeing with Reverend Dunn's earlier remarks.

Wayne Racz, Henderson, following some general remarks, expressed support for the business and the economic development opportunity it would bring.

George Mayer, Federalsburg, expressed support for the business, thanking Angela Visintainer for facilitating the introduction of Maryland Natural Treatment Solutions to the Town.

The Commissioners requested additional time to consider the information presented and directed staff to draft a letter of support for their consideration the following week.

President Porter called for a brief recess at 8:20 p.m.

Presentation of Fiscal Year 2015 Economic Development Annual Report by Angela Visintainer, Director of Economic Development Corporation, who reviewed the following highlights:

- Choptank Transport has announced its second major expansion in the past few years;
- Denton Industrial Park has new businesses including Shoreline Vinyl who expanded their facility and S.E.W. Friel;
- Several area businesses are hiring, including 140 new jobs at Dart Container, Kraft/Heinz in Federalsburg;
- Faulkner Branch Cidery is a great example of value-added agriculture;
- Several new businesses have opened in Denton Plaza;
- There were ten new startups in the County, including Turnbridge Point Bed and Breakfast, Evict Pest Solutions, and D&R Restaurant in Greensboro, with the help of Small Business Manager Rachel Barry who has met with more than fifty small businesses;
- The Five Year Strategic Plan launched in October was immediately implemented, when Federalsburg was designated as an Enterprise Zone;
- Strong progress has been made in the area of Workforce Development; and
- Ms. Visintainer thanked the Commissioners for their support of the Economic Development budget.
- The report is available online at <http://www.carolinebusiness.com/>.

Discussion items:

- **Review of Potential State Legislative Requests –**
 - Adding Caroline to the list of counties able to hunt game birds or mammals on Sundays;
 - Asking for the ability for local governments to opt out of the residential sprinkler mandate;
 - A request by the Liquor Board to amend Article 2B allowing restaurants to sell growlers, or large glass beer bottles to customers;
 - The Town of Denton is requesting a \$200,000 Bond Bill for development of the Sharp Road Athletic Park;
 - A statewide request to review the funding formula for senior citizen active funding;
 - A statewide request to revisit the formula for the disparity grant;
 - A Board of Education request to review Legislative Audits conducted on school systems; and
 - Partner requests consisting of protection and preservation of Program Open Space funding, the State Library Capital grant funding, and Regional Council Funding, and finally funding the mandated but never funded Rural Prosperity Investment Fund.

The Commissioners concurred with each of the requests, directing staff to include them on the State Legislative Request packet.

- **Review of Local Transportation Requests for Annual Meeting with Maryland Department of Transportation.** Ms. Visintainer stated that following the State's announcement that it would fund the complete dualization of Route 404, as well as the replacement of Dover Bridge, Caroline has no major transportation requests, and would only be supporting the requests from the municipalities.

Action Agenda:

- The open session minutes of September 22, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent, with an amendment to the text clarifying Mr. Franklin's stance against reducing the size of the Planning Commission; and
- The Federal Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Child Support Enforcement Grant Agreement was authorized by unanimous consent.

County Administrator's report:

- Mr. Decker stated that the flare installed at the Hobbs Road landfill site is operational;
- Human Resources is now relocated into the Goldsborough House;
- The chiller has been installed on the roof of the Detention Center;
- Renovations of the former 911 Center space is nearly completed, and the Sheriff's Office is preparing to expand the Criminal Investigation Division into it;
- He had a discussion with Milton Nagel, Chief Operating Officer, Caroline County Public Schools, regarding workforce development, workforce training and a future tech center in general; and
- The C-TEAM is reviewing the final designs for the signs for the Route 404 Memorial Garden.

Commissioners Open Discussion Period:

- Mr. Franklin and Mr. Levengood listed the various events and meetings the Commissioners had attended over the past week including the Lincoln Day Dinner hosted by the Republican Central Committee featuring the Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, brunch at Turnbridge Point, and the Rural Maryland Counties meeting; and
- President Porter stated that he attended a meeting with the Caroline Nursing Home Board of Directors, who expressed interest in making sizeable donations towards increasing the access to healthcare in the County.

There being no further business, the Commissioners unanimously **adjourned** the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Amy L. Kreiner, Caroline County Minutes Recorder