

Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2021
MCEDC
Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

The following Committee members were present:

Robby Brewer, Chair – Lerch, Early & Brewer
Kevin Beverly, Vice Chair – Social Scientific Systems (arrived late)
Elana Fine, Secretary – VWG Wealth Management
Carmen Larsen, Treasurer – Aquas, Inc

The following attendees were present, consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act and in accordance with the Corporation's Bylaws:

Ben Wu, President & CEO
Bill Tompkins, Executive Vice President & COO
Brad Stewart, SVP of Business Development
Stacey Hardy, VP of Operations
Sandra Magwood, Executive Assistant and Project Coordinator
Ron Daversa, Member of the public
Cynthia Rivarde, Rockville Economic Development, Inc.

Chair Brewer called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. A quorum of the Committee members was present. Ms. Magwood was designated to take minutes.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Beverly moved to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2021, meeting as presented. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

President & CEO Report

Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Wu reported that on December 31, 2021, in fulfillment of the statute, the Montgomery County Comprehensive Economic Strategy Plan draft was shared with the County Executive, the Council President and Council staff. The County Executive has 31 days to provide input and then starting in February through April the Council will have the opportunity to schedule a public hearing, as well as any actions before ratifying the plan. Mr. Wu thanked Mr. Tompkins for leading the team to develop the plan and also thanked Ms. Larsen and Mr. Beverly for their input on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Tompkins noted that the version of the plan with graphics will be available in the next week online. Mr. Tompkins reported that in the last 6 months many reports were developed with a focus on economic development and strategy and can be viewed online. The WorkSource Montgomery Strategic Plan for 2024 is scheduled for release in the next few weeks.

Federal EDA Grant Applications: Build Back Better & Good Jobs Challenge

Mr. Wu report that MCEDC and Montgomery County have participated in 3 applications, the Federal EDA grants, the Build Back Better program, and the Good Jobs Challenge. Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC decided to participate in regional collaborations that were applying for the BBB program: 1) Connect the DMV for Quantum 2) the Maryland Tech Council's Bio-Hub program and 3) the Maryland National Capitol

Regional Economic Government Alliance to support Howard County's application for Cyber Security Workforce. Howard County's application was selected and MCEDC will continue to work with the regional alliance and Howard County on their BBB program.

Mr. Wu also reported that MCEDC will apply for the Good Jobs Challenge to develop an application for hospitality and hospitality tech which is one of the components from the Connecting the Dots report and the Comprehensive Economic Strategy Plan. Mr. Stewart and his team will lead the application for the Good Jobs Challenge which is due February 10, 2022.

International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Equity Communities Initiative Selection

Mr. Wu announced that Montgomery County and MCEDC were one of 5 organizations in jurisdictions to be selected for the national competition. The Equity Communities Initiative is designed to help create national best practices for equity and inclusion. MCEDC will participate in this year long program to help develop and support lessons learned and best practices for the country. He announced that to start Mr. Tompkins and Ms. Benzion, who was the leader in developing this application, will attend the IEDC Leadership Summit at the end of January.

Personnel Update

Mr. Wu announce that Jerry Sanford was hired as the Director of Local and Small Business Engagement effective January 3, 2022. Mr. Sanford will lead the Equity Communities Initiative and will attend the IEDC Leadership Summit along with Mr. Tompkins and Ms. Benzion. Mr. Sanford is a Montgomery County native and resident and has three decades of professional experience in economic development, public policy, public private partnerships, community engagement, and external affairs. His experience includes senior level roles in a downtown business district management in Silver Spring, business recruitment and site selection at the Maryland Department of Commerce, BR&E/Business Attraction in Alexandria, VA and utility economic development for Washington Gas.

COVID-19 Omicron Variant: Return-to-Work Delay

Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC will not resume on-site operations in January due to the COVID-19 Omicron surge. Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC will adopt a hybrid approach which will require employees to work a minimum of two days in the office.

Mr. Brewer suggested conducting a virtual Board meeting in January due to the COVID-19 surge rather than hosting the in-person Board meeting at the Maryland-National Park & Planning Commission Headquarters in Wheaton.

Legislative Agenda and Board Selection

Mr. Brewer inquired about the status of draft legislation to expand the Board and selection of new Board members.

Mr. Wu noted that the draft legislation to expand the Board [was transmitted to the County Executive

Mr. Wu reported that Dr. Rai has reached out to the Board members to solicit potential candidates for the Board's consideration and will present a list of candidates in March. There was discussion on the selection process and timeline.

Mr. Brewer stated that this is an important endeavor. The County Executive makes the selection, and the County Council approves it however the Board has a vested interest in helping to influence the selection.

January Board Meeting Agenda.

Ms. Fine suggested that since this is the first meeting of the year, the Executive Committee should decide on the agenda for the Board for the year. Ms. Fine recommended that the Board consider edits to the draft meeting agenda to allow for more discussion around strategic priorities. There was discussion on distilling a series of action items from the Connect the Dots report, the Comprehensive Economic Strategy and other studies that the Board can focus on and be effective.

New Business

No new business presented.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 am.

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Monday, February 7, 2022