

Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2019, 4:30pm - 6:00pm
City of Chester Regional Agribusiness Center

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 5:04pm. Attendance: Councilwoman Angela Douglas (Chair), Councilman Carlos Williams, Mrs. Stephanie Jackson (City Administrator).

Invited Guests: Brenda and Mike McBrayer (Chester Citizens Alliance), Jamey Wooten and Devon Beaty Bagley (Chester Downtown Development Association), Anthony Worthy (County Morale Wellness and Recreation Department), Gloria Kellerhals and Courtney Lee (Catawba Farm and Food Coalition). Invited but *not attending*: Liz Anderson (Chester Historical Society), Brooke Clinton (Chester County Chamber of Commerce), and Lauren Medlin (Chester Arts Council).

Chester Live

The Committee chair reviewed all of the known public events that occur in the City each month to help determine the need for a public event calendar. Each attending event partner gave an overview of their events. We all recognized that this was a start to a much needed conversation.

Chester Downtown Development Association

Mr. Wooten and Mrs. Beaty Bagley gave an overview of and discussed the “Hilarity” and “Hog on the Hill” events. Major requests were to help solicit company sponsorships for local entrants, marketing, volunteers, and potential accompanying and/or feeder events in the nearby vicinity.

Catawba Farm and Food Coalition

Ag & Art Tour – Mrs. Kellerhals and Ms. Lee discussed how well this annual statewide event is going well. However, the major request was to help get the word out to the Citizens. We also discussed revisiting the Farm-to-Table dinner at the Agribusiness Center as the Ag & Art Tour kickoff.

Use of the Agribusiness Center was the larger discussion by CFFC. Farmers have moved to other market locations. So, the Agribusiness Center hasn't had a steady farmers market. Holiday market events will happen this year to reconnect the market to farmers and the community with hopes of recruiting them longer term. Specific requests were: LED sign for hours, etc., change in the pricing for caterers and event rentals, collective marketing, and more frequent community use of the space for exposure. Additional brainstorming for space usage (i.e., call ahead food, cash bar and music events, cook-off events, pop up restaurants, etc.) was briefly discussed. Plans for future discussions with the CFFC staff will occur after the holidays.

Chester Citizens' Alliance

Christmas in Chester – Mrs. McBrayer discussed how this children's holiday festival has grown to serve 400-700 children and so has the cost. The organization cannot sustain decorating the City and raising funds for the activities. Besides “Heroes on the Hill,” the city employees do not readily participate anymore. Parks and Recreation used to do gingerbread houses several years ago. Police provides security only as paid off-duty officers. Councilman Williams asked why were the day-of security paid when the police and fire departments set up and participate in the festival. Funding and marketing assistance were the chief requests.

Another suggestion was to move the City of Chester's Christmas parade to either the Friday or Saturday of the Christmas in Chester events for greater synergy.

Other

Earth Day 2020 – We didn't have a big Earth Day event in 2019. There was a Creek Sweep for Tanyard Branch. In addition to picking up the bags of trash from the sweep, the City sponsored a tire and TV disposal event. Mrs. Beaty Bagley suggested that we do another Creek Sweep for 2020. Volunteers, volunteer recruitment assistance, marketing, clean-up supplies, and trash disposal were the major asks for such an event.

CURES representative, Ken Lebbon, informed the group of the renovations at their event center at the old Masonic Temple.

The committee adjourned at 7:30pm.