

**Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation**  
Annual Board of Directors Meeting  
September 21, 2020  
Via Zoom

**Meeting Minutes**

The following Directors were present:

Robby Brewer, Principal, Lerch, Early & Brewer (Chair)  
Kevin Beverly, President & CEO, Social & Scientific Systems (Vice Chair)  
Elana Fine, Chief Operating Officer, VWG Wealth Management (Secretary)  
Carmen Larsen, Aquas Inc. (Treasurer)  
Terry Forde, CEO, Adventist Healthcare  
Angela Graham, President & CEO, Quality Biological  
Leonard Howie, Interim President & CEO, WorkSource Montgomery  
Matthew Lee, President & CEO at FASTech, Inc.  
Sanjay Rai, SVP for Academic Affairs, Montgomery College  
Ola Sage, CEO, CyberRx  
Tien Wong, CEO, Lore Systems, Tech 2000, Opus8, Inc.  
Jerome Fletcher, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County (Ex-officio)  
Andrew Friedson, Councilmember Montgomery County (Ex-officio)

Other members of the public were present, consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act and in accordance with the Corporation's Bylaws. A full list of participants is enclosed.

*Board Chair Brewer called the virtual meeting to order at 8:30 am. A quorum of the Directors was present. Ms. Hardy was designated to take minutes.*

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Mr. Beverly moved to approve the Consent Agenda which included the minutes from the May 28, 2020 and June 15, 2020 meetings and the FY21 Strategic Work Plan, which had been considered by the Executive Committee and submitted to the Board for review. Mr. Forde seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Sage requested an opportunity to comment on the Strategic Work plan and the minutes from the June 15 meeting, however, she did not request that the items be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Sage requested clarity regarding the addition of defense as a targeted industry. Mr. Wu noted that the addition was intended to capture civilian and military work that is based in Montgomery County (e.g. cyber, Walter Reed, Carderock, Lockheed Martin).

Ms. Sage commented on the first strategy in the Strategic Work Plan (Support Montgomery County industry growth and diversification) and suggested that a more active verb be used to describe the impact that MCEDC is expected to have. Mr. Tompkins agreed to change the sentence to read "Advance Montgomery County industry and diversification."

Ms. Sage suggested that in the future, Mr. Wu present an overview of the Strategic Work Plan to the Board for discussion prior to approval.

Ms. Sage requested that the minutes from the June 15 meeting be amended to add the word "some" to the following sentence: *Ms. Sage noted that "some" tech companies are starting to reconsider compensation in response to the ability of tech workers to live in less expensive areas.*

**Introduction of New Staff Members**

Mr. Wu noted that the organization was taking on an increased workload with greater expectations to lead on economic response, reopening, and recovery efforts and therefore has begun to fill staff vacancies created since the beginning of the year. Mr. Wu introduced three new staff members to the Board: Romola Ghulamali, Part-time Business Operations Specialist, Peter Toth, Special Projects Manager and Nicole Merlene, Economic Development Specialist. Mr. Wu provided a brief overview of each staff member's background and their responsibilities.

### **Remarks by County Executive**

Mr. Brewer recognized the participation of County Executive Marc Elrich in the meeting. As a courtesy, the County Executive was given an opportunity to offer remarks. County Executive Elrich shared his concerns on the Subdivision Staging Policy and discussed the referendum questions in the November ballot.

### **County Growth Policy Presentation**

Mr. Sartori presented an overview of the Subdivision Staging Policy, also referred to as the Economic Growth Policy, and highlighted the Planning Board's key recommendations.

Ms. Sage inquired as to whether the County Executive or the County Council has a specific ask of the Board as it relates to the Subdivision Staging Policy. Mr. Brewer noted that the purpose of the presentation was to educate the Board and that there is not a specific ask.

Ms. Fine asked Mr. Sartori to revisit the data that he presented which showed that area where multi-family housing units did not result in more school-aged kids. Ms. Fine noted that while this may be true on average, there are areas in the county in which multi-family housing units are contributing to significant overcrowding in the schools. Ms. Fine asked Mr. Sartori to provide an example of how lifting the moratorium or changing the impact taxes would affect these areas and whether there would be an increase in funding for schools as a result. Mr. Sartori noted that impact taxes are not tied to the areas where they are generated.

Ms. Sage asked Mr. Sartori to speak to the potential implications of COVID-19 on future trends. Mr. Sartori noted that the Planning Board is waiting to receive enrollment figures from MCPS to determine the impact of the pandemic on projections.

Ms. Larsen noted that there have been significant changes in the demographics of the population due to people moving into the county. Ms. Larsen asked whether the trends identified between 2011 and 2015 have changed as compared to data from 2016 through the present. Mr. Sartori noted that the data is largely consistent.

Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC has been asked by external stakeholders and business leaders whether and how the organization would seek to engage in discussions around the SSP due to its impact on economic development. Mr. Wu stated that MCEDC will seek guidance from the Board as to next steps if any.

Mr. Brewer concluded the discussion by asking Board members to submit any additional comments that they have. If there is interest, Mr. Brewer may convene a follow-up meeting, subject to Open Meetings Act requirements.

### **Research University Engagement Report**

Ms. Miller updated the Board on the status of MCEDC's work with Montgomery County Planning to determine whether the lack of a research university inhibits growth in Montgomery County.

Ms. Miller noted that MCEDC and Planning developed a joint scope of work resulting in the production of three companion documents: 1) a case study analysis of satellite campuses (completed by Bolan Smart & Associates and Alvarez & Marshall); 2) an analysis of the possibility of an enhanced University System of Maryland presence in Montgomery County (completed by Margrave Strategies, LLC); and 3) an MCEDC

staff report on findings for a potential non-Maryland research university engagement (e.g. Purdue, Syracuse, University of Edinburgh).

Ms. Miller noted that MCEDC will brief the Planning Board on October 1. A more robust conversation with the MCEDC Board is planned for the October meeting.

Mr. Brewer recognized Ms. Miller, Brandon Bedford and Nadia Khan for their efforts to produce the MCEDC portion of the study and the overall coordination of the project.

### **Reach Advisors Study Update**

Mr. Tompkins discussed MCEDC's partnership with the Montgomery County Business Roundtable to identify collaborative solutions for business growth. Reach Advisors, a predictive-analytics and economic development consulting firm, was engaged to conduct this work.

Mr. Tompkins noted that a series of focus groups with the business community have been conducted since the beginning of the year. An Economic Forum to release the results of the study was scheduled for April but was delayed due to the pandemic but will be rescheduled.

Mr. Tompkins discussed the study's recommendations which focused on: 1) policy development that can be enacted through legislation; 2) areas that the business development community can focus on to further economic growth and, 3) branding targeted industry sectors.

Mr. Tompkins noted that next steps include briefing the Board and the County Executive on the study's findings and recommendations, and to share the results with the business community through a virtual Economic Forum in the next 60 days.

Mr. Tompkins recognized the business community for their financial contributions toward the study.

### **Business Development Update**

Mr. Stewart discussed the Business Development team's rapid pivot to identify and connect businesses to critical federal, state and county resources during the pandemic. Mr. Stewart noted that the team continues to look for strategic opportunities to grow the economy through business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts.

Mr. Stewart highlighted the following activities and accomplishments, among others:

- Aurinia Pharmaceutical selected Rockville as their headquarters (originally based in Canada);
- Viela Bio received approval for their first commercial product;
- Autolus and RegenXBio – new headquarters are nearing completion;
- MCEDC assisted GSK with challenges related to their small-scale manufacturing facility;
- Oncolmmune raised \$56 million in Series B funding, MCEDC assisted them previously in receiving a Montgomery County NIH SBIR matching grant;
- Champions Oncology expanded to a new facility in Rockville;
- Lentigen expanded to a new facility in Gaithersburg;
- Kite is expanding its R&D headquarters in Gaithersburg;
- Neuraly graduated from the Germantown incubator to 704 Quince Orchard in Gaithersburg;
- Nobelpharma (a Japanese pharmaceutical company) expanded its operations in Bethesda; and
- Hansoh Bio (a Chinese biotech company) is expanding in Rockville.

Mr. Stewart noted that over \$3 billion in the past few months has been invested in Montgomery County companies related to the pandemic; much of these funds have been invested in the development of vaccines. Related to the pandemic, Mr. Stewart highlighted MCEDC's efforts to assist the following companies: Novavax, Qiagen, Emergent, Vigene, Maccura, Zalgen and Cartesian. Mr. Stewart noted that two additional companies doing critical work related to the novel coronavirus pandemic have relocated to

the County - OnDemand Pharmaceuticals and Autonomous Therapeutics, both companies have been recipients of DARPA funding.

At least one more announcement is expected in the coming weeks regarding a life sciences company relocating to Montgomery County. Mr. Stewart discussed new resources produced in conjunction with the Marketing team including a Business Resource Guide and videos promoting Montgomery County as the Cell and Gene Capital and Built for Bio. A webinar with NCATS to discuss the SBIR/STTR program will be conducted next week.

Mr. Stewart discussed recent work with the Maryland Tech Council to conduct its Bio Innovation Conference (October 4-5). MCEDC is working with the State of Maryland to recruit participants from foreign delegations. Ten countries and 70 delegates have already been confirmed. Mr. Stewart noted that MCEDC has provided critical support to re-start the post-doc conference, which will be integrated into the Bio Innovation Conference this year.

Mr. Stewart noted that MCEDC has worked very closely with Amazon to expand its Rockville facility, and discuss other projects that Amazon is pursuing including a new last mile distribution center, Amazon Go store in Chevy Chase (Friendship Heights) and an Amazon Fresh store in Gaithersburg.

MCEDC is currently working extensively with the real estate community on a shopping center re-development in an Opportunity Zone. The Business Development team also conducted virtual and physical tours of the Dickerson Power Plant, Twinbrook Quarter, wet lab space (such as Belward Research Park) and Traville/Medical Center Drive.

Dr. Rai commented on the increase in biomanufacturing due to COVID-19 (especially in the area of diagnostics) and inquired about the needs of these companies and whether there will be an increase in manufacturing in the county. Mr. Stewart noted that there will be an increase, although not all production will be considered large scale manufacturing. Dr. Rai noted that 6,000 unique jobs in the biomanufacturing space have been identified and represent a good opportunity for the county.

Mr. Forde inquired how job postings and company recruitment to the county help to increase the tax base. Mr. Forde suggested a more granular look at the impact of these activities on the economy. County Executive Elrich added that the county needs to double down on the production of the talent that companies need.

## **President & CEO Report**

Mr. Wu began his report by recognizing Mr. Wong for his involvement to help close the deal to attract OnDemand Pharma to Montgomery County.

Mr. Wu provided an overview of the county's framework to guide the economic recovery response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this initiative, the County Executive has established five Economic Recovery Task Forces focused on the following areas: 1) Life Sciences and Advanced Technology, 2) Workforce Development, 3) Restaurant and Retail, 4) Hospitality, Culture, Entertainment and Recreation, and 5) Small Businesses.

Mr. Wu noted that the Life Sciences and Advanced Technology Task Force and the Workforce Development Task Force have completed their reports. Mr. Wu discussed MCEDC's participation in the task force meetings and noted that MCEDC is also participating in regular economic recovery meetings.

Concurrently, the Economic Advisory Group (led by Doug Firstenberg) is also expected to deliver a set of long-term economic recommendations by the end of October. The group will focus on talent, speed to market, capital, and retail/restaurants/hospitality. Mr. Wu noted that it is expected that MCEDC will be asked to help implement the recommendations identified in these economic recovery efforts.

### *Westat Longitudinal COVID-19 Study*

Mr. Wu noted that the first round of the surveys for the COVID-19 Targeted Adaptation and Recovery Study was distributed to over 2,400 businesses. MCEDC is working with Westat to implement a variety of strategies to increase the response rate close to its target of 20%. Mr. Wu reported that MCEDC plans to engage a third party to help analyze the raw data. Mr. Wu noted that the Park & Planning Board's research department has expressed a willingness to assist MCEDC with the analysis and those conversations are ongoing.

### *3R Initiative Update*

Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC is continuing a dialogue with Streetsense to look at national trends regarding the consumer preferences around the reopening of restaurants and retail as the winter months and the important holiday season approach. MCEDC is also working closely with the Regional Services Directors to develop consensus on the targeted communities and retail corridors that will be selected for the 3R Initiative.

### **Workforce Development Update**

Mr. Howie updated the Board on the draft report concluded by the Economic Recovery Task Force on Workforce Development, which he chaired. Mr. Howie noted that the Task Force has identified a series of short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives, and highlighted the following:

#### *Short-term*

- Identify a list of job opportunities that are in demand
- Collaborate with college partners to develop trainings to help job seekers and holders thrive in a remote environment
- Develop a county-wide internship program that companies utilize for their workforce development needs

#### *Mid-term*

- Create entry level career pathways
- Convene employer groups who are willing to meet with county leaders to discuss specific career pathways for individuals facing barriers to employment.

#### *Long-term*

- Create entry and mid-level pathways that are aligned to core emergency preparedness functions

### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Larsen presented an overview of the financial statements for the periods ending July 31 and August 31. Ms. Larsen highlighted private external funds that have been received by MCEDC to support strategic efforts and supplement the organization's budget. Ms. Larsen noted that the annual financial audit is underway and that the Finance & Audit Committee will convene to review the draft report before it is presented to the Board in November.

### **New Business**

Ms. Fine reported that she and Mr. Beverly have joined the Board of Advisors for the Universities at Shady Grove's new entrepreneurship initiative. Ms. Fine and Mr. Beverly would like to have a conversation with Ms. Miller about how MCEDC can support this effort.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

**MCEDC Board Meeting Attendees  
September 21, 2020  
Via Zoom**

1. County Executive Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Government
2. Councilmember Andrew Friedson, Montgomery County Council
3. Joanne Antoine, Common Cause
4. Tina Benjamin, Montgomery County Government
5. Kevin Beverly, Social & Scientific Systems
6. Robby Brewer, Lerch, Early & Brewer
7. Ronald Daversa
8. Laurie Edberg, Montgomery County Government
9. Elana Fine, VWG Wealth Management
10. Jerome Fletcher, Montgomery County Government
11. Terry Forde, Adventist Healthcare
12. Romola Ghulamali, MCEDC
13. Cindy Gibson, Montgomery County Council
14. Angela Graham, Quality Biological
15. Stacey Hardy, MCEDC
16. Leonard Howie, WorkSource Montgomery
17. David Kunes, Montgomery County Council
18. Carmen Larsen, Aquas Inc.
19. Matthew Lee, FASTech, Inc.
20. Nicole Merlene, MCEDC
21. Sarah Miller, MCEDC
22. Kristin O'Keefe, MCEDC
23. Sanjay Rai, Montgomery College
24. Ola Sage, CyberRx
25. Jason Sartori, Montgomery County Planning
26. Gene Smith, Montgomery County Government
27. Brad Stewart, MCEDC
28. Bill Tompkins, MCEDC
29. Peter Toth, MCEDC
30. Tien Wong, Lore Systems, Tech 2000, Opus8
31. Benjamin Wu, MCEDC