



March 8, 2024
60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis
9:00 -11:00am
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Will Castleberry, Chair	Netflix
Matthew Bjonerud	Cerebro Capital
Loren Douglass	MKD Partners International – Virtual
Vernon Thompson	CEO, Strategic Path Forward
Reza Jafari	e-Development International
Ambassador Karen Kornbluh	German Marshall Fund of the U.S. – Virtual
Jerrod Moton	Goldman Edwards
Brian Pieninck	CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
Alec Ross	Author, Bologna Business School - Virtual
Sudhir Sekhsaria, MD	MedStar Union Memorial Hospital – Virtual
Herman Singh	
Dana Stebbins, MSW, Esq.	The Cornelius Group
Christy Wyskiel	Johns Hopkins University - Virtual

Ex-Officio Members:

Due to a conflicting cabinet meeting, ex-officio members could not attend.

Guests:

Meryam Bouadjemi	Office of the Governor
Michael Thomas	Office of the Lt. Governor – Virtual
Andy Schaufele	Office of the Comptroller
Ben Seigel	Office of the Comptroller
Heather Gramm	Department of Commerce
Jennifer LaHatte	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Walter Donoughe	Department of Commerce
Jim Palma	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Ashley Sharp	Department of Labor
Larry Twele	Eastport Partners

I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Will Castleberry called the meeting to order at 9:06am and welcomed members and attendees. He commended the Maryland Chamber of Commerce for continuing to host the Council’s meetings.

II. Minutes of the February 9, 2024 Meeting

Upon a motion duly made and second, the minutes of the February 9, 2024 meeting were approved with no additional amendments.

III. Chair's Report

Maryland Department of Commerce – Young Adult Workforce Marketing Campaign

Chair Castleberry recognized Ms. Heather Gramm, Assistant Secretary of Business and Industry Sector Development, Department of Commerce, who briefed Council members on Commerce's new campaign to attract young people in advanced manufacturing, technology, and life science sectors to work in Maryland. The campaign is funded by the Maryland Marketing Partnership and was officially launched as part of Governor Wes Moore's visit to Commerce's World Trade Center office on March 6th.

Ms. Gramm first played Commerce's new Be Moved video advertisement for Council members. She shared that the advertisement would run across multiple forms of digital media, including on social media platforms and websites. She then guided Council members through Commerce's new [liveworkMaryland.com](https://www.liveworkmaryland.com) website, highlighting several aspects of young life in Maryland. The website includes information on job opportunities in the state, testimonials from young professionals in the state, and details about Maryland's regions.

Council members thanked Ms. Gramm and praised Commerce for launching the campaign. Some members offered constructive feedback, which included tailoring parts of the campaign to attract remote workers and retain students at Maryland colleges and universities, identifying influencers and ambassadors to strengthen the ethos of marketing initiatives, and further highlighting attractions outside of central Maryland. Ms. Gramm thanked members for their input and promised to take their suggestions to Commerce's digital marketing staff.

Presentation on State Economic Development Entities – Lawrence Twele

Chair Castleberry then recognized Larry Twele, Principal, Eastport Partners, and former CEO of the Howard County Economic Development Authority, who presented the history, scope, and strategy behind Maryland's state and local economic development entities. Mr. Twele described the gradual overlapping of duties between Commerce, the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and noted differences in the levels of scope, strategy, and expertise between state and local development agencies.

Mr. Twele and Council members then discussed possible solutions to improve the clarity and coordination of economic development activity among state and local entities. Suggestions included the establishment of an independent board of directors to oversee the defined duties of state agencies, a top-down strategy modeled after successful case studies in the United States, and improved channels of communication between state officials, business owners, and political actors.

Based on the conversation among members, a separate Economic Development Structure Workgroup was formed to be led by Vernon Thompson. Interested members were encouraged to reach out to the Team.

Mr. Twele's presentation is on file.

IV. Legislative Briefing

Mr. Walter Donoughe, Council and Commission Program Specialist, Department of Commerce, updated Council members on the status of bills that the Council is monitoring as they progress through the Maryland General Assembly. He informed Council members that written testimony on behalf of the Council had been submitted in support of three bills introduced by the Moore Administration—the Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act, the Transparent Government Act, and the Pava LePere Legacy of Innovation Act—all of which have received hearings in both the Senate and House of Delegates. He thanked members who appeared to testify. Mr. Donoughe also submitted written testimony in support of the Talent Innovation Fund, introduced by the Department of Labor, at the request of Ms. Ashley Sharp, Deputy Chief of Staff to Labor Secretary Portia Wu. Chair Castleberry approved the letter of support on behalf of the Council.

Mr. Donoughe then gave a brief overview of bills that the Council was monitoring but decided not to take an official position. He stated that he had been in touch with members of Governor Moore’s legislative office, who told him that they are working with legislators to finalize details of the Administration’s bills before final passage. Mr. Donoughe recommended that the Council use its discretion before testifying on any additional bills, noting the Council’s primary charge to advise the Governor directly. Chair Castleberry emphasized Mr. Donoughe’s recommendation and shared that he received similar advice from the Governor’s office prior to the meeting.

V. Good of the Order

Chair Castleberry presented members with a rough outline of the Council’s draft report, the final version of which is due on October 1, 2024. Sections of the outline are divided among topics covered by the Council’s Workgroups and include a discussion of several elements of Maryland’s economic ecosystem as mentioned in Governor Moore’s Executive Order which established the Council in 2023. Council members gave their feedback on the outline and made edits to expand the list of economic factors that would be analyzed to evaluate Maryland’s business climate. Members agreed to begin intensive discussions to complete a draft of the report by August through the Council’s Workgroups.

VI. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Next meeting: April 26