



September 17, 2024  
307 Washington Ave.  
Towson, MD 21204  
SPAR-AR1221 Conference Room  
3:00 – 5:00pm  
Minutes

**Commissioners in attendance:**

Dana Stebbins, Chair  
Paxton Baker  
Ken Banks  
Dr. Nia Banks  
Sherri Blount  
J. Russell Fugett, PMP  
Elizabeth Georg  
Seth Goldman  
Reginald Hilton  
Arnold Jablon  
Israel “Izzy” Klein  
Qili Li  
Leon Pinkett, III  
Eben Smith  
Darius Stanton  
Kevin White  
Miguel Wilson  
Scott Zakheim

The Cornelius Group, Inc.  
PKB Enterprises  
Banks Contracting  
Beaux Arts Plastic Surgery, Art of Balance Spa  
Fitch Even Tabin & Flannery - Virtual  
Jumla Network - Virtual  
Deep Creek Title Group – Virtual  
Eat the Change – Virtual  
EZRA, Coaching LHH  
Attorney – Virtual  
Klein/Johnson Group – Virtual  
Worldshine Group - Virtual  
Baltimore Arts Realty Corp. (BARCO)  
Three|E Consulting Group, LLC - Virtual  
The Stanton Group, Inc. – Virtual  
Executive Director, Global Vision 2020, Inc. – Virtual  
Miguel Wilson Collection, Inc. – Virtual  
Landmark Ventures

**Ex-Officio Members:**

Kevin Anderson  
Troy LeMaile-Stovall  
Tom Sadowski

Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce  
Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)  
Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) –  
Virtual  
Secretary of Labor – Virtual

Portia Wu

**Guests:**

Elizabeth Waibel

Maryland Department of Legislative Services

**Commerce Staff:**

Julie Woepke  
Jerel Registre  
Jennifer LaHatte  
Tim McGowan  
Jayson Knott

MEDC Executive Director  
Chief of Staff  
Managing Director  
Council and Commission Program Specialist  
Senior Director

**I. Call to Order**

Secretary Anderson called the meeting at 3:04pm.

## **II. Review and approval of July 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, minutes of July 11, 2024, were approved.

## **III. Chair's Report**

Secretary Anderson stepped in for Chair Stebbins, who was running late due to traffic. Secretary Anderson presented a slideshow that included the administration's achievements, the department's business pipeline, industry data, outreach initiatives, and various economic indicators highlighting Maryland's strengths and weaknesses. One graph showed that Maryland's budget increased dramatically while the state's GDP remained stagnant, illustrating the reality of Maryland being "asset-rich and strategy-poor." Another slide displayed the GDP growth rate per county, highlighting Maryland's uneven growth between its more urban and rural counties. Troy Stovall suggested that displaying GDP per capita would be more helpful, as it would account for changing demographics. Furthermore, Kevin White, along with other commissioners, was surprised by the data and requested more details from the Commerce research team. The high GDP growth rate of Baltimore City was of particular interest, as the data indicated a more positive economic outlook than many commissioners expected. The presentation is on file.

Secretary Anderson also discussed the Baltimore Convention center, which is outdated and thus not attracting as many tourists as other convention centers around the country. Tom Sadowski mentioned that it would likely require USD 800 million to complete a modern renovation of the convention center. Given the budgetary landscape such an investment is unlikely, however, the establishment of the Baltimore Convention Center Task Force indicates that Governor Wes Moore is making it a priority. Furthermore, despite its issues, the convention center was able to secure the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) convention in 2030. This event typically attracts around 5,000 attendees and generates \$18 million in economic impact according to the ASAE.

Chair Stebbins arrived approximately 20 minutes late and thanked the commissioners for their diligent work. The strategic plan took an immense amount of effort and could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of the entire commission.

## **IV. Meet the Commissioners**

Chair Stebbins invited Darius Stanton to introduce himself and provide some background on his personal and professional life. Mr. Stanton began by thanking the Chair for her efforts and the commission for its success. He then spoke about his family, specifically his close relationship with his grandfather, who helped mold him into the leader and father he is today. After giving a brief overview of his upbringing, he described the Win, Win, Win Leadership System, a strategic marketing and human development firm he founded. He emphasized the importance of leadership and highlighted how Maryland and the country lack effect leaders in many areas. The current political landscape underscores the urgent need for leadership within our society, which his firm aims to address. Great leaders can harness the potential of people and transform organizations. This ties back to the "asset-rich and strategy-poor" critique that Secretary Anderson often raises.

## **V. Strategic Plan**

Chair Stebbins invited Jerel Registre to briefly update the commission on the progress of the strategic plan. He described the initiatives the commission identified as crucial and explained how the updated plan reflects that feedback. For example, the plan focuses on retaining Maryland's talent, which is currently depleting at a faster rate compared to regional states. Regarding the focus of the strategic plan, Mr. Registre reiterated Governor Moore's intent to make the plan more specific. The industries identified in

the plan are quantum, computational biology, and position, navigation, and timing (PNT). Given the state's highly educated workforce and its current position within these fields, Governor Moore is confident that Maryland is well-equipped to become a leader in these industries with the right investment. The final draft of the strategic plan is under review by the governor's office, and once approved, it will move on to the implementation phase.

Chair Stebbins explained that although the MEDC's statutory requirement has been completed, it is vital for the commission to assist commerce in the implementation phase. Secretary Anderson and Governor Moore should leverage the commission's expertise to realize the strategic plan's full potential. Chair Stebbins also emphasized the importance of building a strong economic ecosystem for the plan to succeed, specifically ensuring that the housing and labor markets are robust. Given the topic, Secretary Wu presented a slide on Maryland's labor data, focusing on participation rates among different demographics and how Maryland compares to other states.

Mrs. Woepke reminded the commission of its duty to review the annual reports of the Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), and the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO). These reports will be reviewed at the next meeting in December.

#### **VI. Good of the Order**

Mrs. Woepke invited the commissioners to a social hour hosted at a nearby restaurant. Otherwise, no additional comments were made.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Upon and motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38pm.