

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
March 8, 2022

Orange County Economic Development Office  
131 W. Margaret Lane  
Hillsborough, NC 27278

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Sharon Hill, Dave Gephart, Estella Johnson, Barbara Jessie-Black, Tom Proctor, Jane Saiers, Kristen Young

**Orange County Staff:** Steve Brantley, Amanda Garner, Lindsey Hirni, Mike Ortosky

---

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Sharon Hill at 10:00 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Dave Gephart and seconded by Jane Saiers to approve the Minutes from the January 11, 2022 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Open Discussion**

The Board spoke about upcoming events in Orange County. Kristen asked for feedback on the upcoming inner-city visit destination and local business anniversaries. The members discussed options for where our next in-person meeting could take place. They decided to postpone the consultant-led Retreat until after the BOCC has their June retreat. The board discussed having one on one meetings with the Commissioners in the upcoming months.

**Old Business**

Steve gave an update on the top two nominees that will be recommend for the BOCC to appoint them for a full term. Kristen Young gave a recap of the Sub-Committee Meeting where a few of the board members discussed Article 46 sales tax and the categories of funding and the priorities and goals for Economic Development. Steve informed the committee that the BOCC will be discussing Article 46 during the upcoming budget so now is an appropriate time to be having these conversations with the Commissioners.

**New Business**

Laurie Paolicelli spoke about a research study they had completed and the results from that showed that there is a lack of diversity for tourists coming to our County. The Visitor's Bureau started to develop a new diversity website. Nancy Largent presented a demo of that website [explorediversitync.com/](http://explorediversitync.com/). She highlighted how it would operate and mentioned the featured black & minority owned businesses, directory, events, stories, local government, etc. The board offered comments and gave feedback to help continue to develop the site. Amanda mentioned that our department and the County will be working with the towns and our partners to help create a business database that will have resources to help new businesses in the area.

**Directors Report**

Steve mentioned that our department is going to have some additional funding for start-up businesses to apply towards our grant program in FY22-23. Steve spoke about the new grant guidelines that are getting updated and should be ready before the next grant cycle ends. AG grant guidelines will also be amended and receive some additional funding for start-up farms. Steve provided an update on various announcements and current active projects in Orange County.

**Adjournment**

Sharon Hill adjourned the meeting at 11:37 A.M.