

- Good afternoon. I welcome all our participants at the CSM Velocity Center and those participating virtually today. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about how our county is continuing to open doors, in regard to economic development.
- Our Economic Development Department has new leadership. We thank our former director Darrell Brown for his leadership throughout the last six years that he served in Charles County.
- You may have heard our recent announcement that Kelly Robertson Slagle has been selected to be our new director of the Economic Development Department, beginning November 15. We welcome Ms. Kelly Robertson-Slagle to the Charles County team.
- Kelly is a lifelong Charles County resident and is well known in the community. All the same, Kelly, please stand up so that everyone knows who you are.

- Kelly is a strategic leader with more than 25 years of extensive experience in planning, organizing, and implementing economic development functions from conception to completion.
- With her experience and expertise in economic development, we look forward to her leadership for many years to come.

Welcome home, Kelly!
- As we navigated this year, while still feeling the impacts of COVID-19, the Board of County Commissioners worked diligently to continue our work toward making progress in five key areas: economic development, public education, the environment, quality of life, and good governance.
- Our county has evolved and continues to grow in population and diversity, as shown by the 2020 Census data. This gives County Government the unique opportunity to refocus our

outlook, in order to best serve the community and its changing needs.

- As our population has grown, the county's profile is also increasing regionally.
- One example of this is in recent, new endeavors in the Town of Indian Head. One of these includes that the U.S. Bomb Technician's Association now calls Charles County home. As you know, the College of Southern Maryland's Velocity Center, a unique facility for innovation, ideation, and collaboration for base scientists and other personnel, business, academia, and the community, is in the Town of Indian Head. Our partnerships with businesses and other entities continue to grow and foster economic development in our community.
- Recently, our Economic Development team received a silver rank award from the International Economic Development

Council for the College of Southern Maryland's Velocity Center and revitalization of the Town of Indian Head.

- The project has indirectly delivered 60 full-time equivalent jobs to Indian Head and \$6 million in the enhanced commercial tax base of the town and county. It has also helped to reactivate another nearby blighted and underutilized property that has been vacant for more than 10 years.
- The team also received a bronze rank for their 2020 Annual Report, which was distributed at our Annual Fall Meeting at this time last year. This year's Annual Report was released today, and it is filled with excellent content and information about Charles County's economic development programs. There are copies here at the Velocity Center this morning and it's also available on EDD's website at www.meetcharlescounty.com.
- Congratulations to the team for your diligence and service.

- Also in western Charles County, the land designations of the land around the Maryland Airport will change. The County Commissioners heard from residents on Sept. 22 of this year at a public hearing on amending the 2016 Comprehensive Plan to remove land from the watershed conservation district and designate it as employment and industrial land. On Oct. 19, the County Commissioners approved the amendment. This opens doors to more economic development opportunities around the airport and in Bryans Road.
- There is also proposed legislation for a Commercial Real Property Improvement and Rehabilitation Tax Credit that was presented at the Oct. 26 Commissioners meeting. This is a new program to incentivize the rehabilitation of blighted properties. It encourages reuse and rehabilitation by providing property tax credits related to investment in current properties. We encourage you to participate in the upcoming public hearing.

- The County Commissioners also approved the Zoning Text Amendment 21-164 Business Park Zone at our Sept. 28 meeting, which encourages and promotes economic vitality. It also enhances the community's appearance and fosters flexibility and innovation of design for businesses in this zone.
- In addition, the Agricultural-related Uses Zoning Text Amendment was passed earlier this year. Charles County is considered an example to other local jurisdictions based on its language. It expanded agricultural operations to encourage agribusiness growth and expansion.
- The County Commissioners supported these changes because we continue to support and seek ways to enhance economic development in the county.
- Equity is also important to our Board of Commissioners. As the 2020 Census has revealed, our county is growing not only in

- population, but in diversity. It is important that we continue to provide for our evolving communities.
- The Board of County Commissioners is very aware of and committed to providing equitable resources and services to residents.
 - This increases the need for County Government to redefine how to allocate resources, measure the outcomes, and focus on where there is the most need.
 - We determine this based on feedback from our constituents, public hearings, and interactions in the county and with partnering agencies.
 - With the direction of the County Commissioners and collaboration with the Economic Development Department, there was a disparity study completed within the county.
 - This study focused on evaluating and making recommendations for procurement policies and practices. It also assessed

equitable participation of Minority Business Enterprise businesses.

- It is vital that as our community changes, our practices and policies change with it, so that we can serve with equity and inclusion of all of our residents and business partners.
- Today, our Economic Development team will go more in-depth about the findings and what this means for our county.
- In conclusion, I thank our Economic Development team for your work and efforts to advance the economic development direction for our county.
- The Board of County Commissioners remains dedicated to working with partner agencies and organizations to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in our policies and practices; and support a thriving business community.
- I thank you for your time today and your interest in learning how we can open doors to a vibrant economic future.