

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY**  
109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

**WORK SESSION**  
September 18, 2018

Present: President, Larry C. Porter; Vice President, Wilbur Levengood; Commissioner, Daniel J. Franklin; Heather Price, County Attorney; Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff; and Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator

**Topic One: Office of Tourism Update and Strategic Plan Discussion**

Ceres Bainbridge, Director, Office of Tourism, greeted the Commissioners and stated that the Office of Tourism has worked hard over the past six months to boost advertisement of the many family friendly events and locations in Caroline County. She informed the Board of the marketing strategies she has used which involve the office website, Instagram, and monthly e-newsletter. Ms. Bainbridge explained that the website analytics shows a 178.7% increase in users and 208.54 % increase in pageviews, since she began boosting the site. She went on to stated that spreading awareness and having a key marketing strategy is still the most important aspect of the Office of Tourism, because many people are not aware of the attractions and events that are held throughout the County. Ms. Bainbridge stated that partnerships are also important, and she has continued to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Caroline Arts Council, Downtown Denton Main Street, Mid-Atlantic Tourism, and many more.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Bainbridge for her time and ask if she could present them with a more detailed description of the amount of funds the Office of Tourism uses towards promotional and marketing plans, and to have an idea of how many people those plans reach. Ms. Bainbridge stated that she could work on collecting that data, however when it comes to advertising, it can be difficult to see exactly the number of viewers you are reaching.

**Topic Two: Potential Amendments to Legislative Bill #2018-2, Chapter 167 –Development Impact Fees—Creation:** Ms. Visintainer stated that the Board had requested staff to look into developing detailed amendments on how farm lots, refunds, and how previously levied excise tax is handled. Ms. Price stated that the governmental interest in collecting impact fees is to require all new development to pay its proportionate fair share of the costs for capital facilities necessary to accommodate development impacts on public infrastructure. She explained that the rationale behind the current farm exemption is to retain farms and agricultural land in families in the County. The Commissioners agreed to move forward with that amendment and they stated that a farm in Caroline County was still defines as a 20-acre lot.

Ms. Price stated that refunds should only be given if a building permit or certificate of occupancy is revoked or is voluntarily surrendered and is, therefore, voided, and no construction or improvement of land or change of use has been commended, then the fee payer shall be entitled to a refund of the impact fee paid as a condition for its issuance.

The Commissioners stated that they would like staff to draft all the amendments to the bill discussed and they would consider them during their next meeting, however they would like to have another public hearing scheduled, due to the potential amendments. Ms. Visintainer stated she would work on draft the legislative calendar and add a public hearing on October 9, 2018 at 6:15 p.m. in the Commissioners Hearing Room located at 109 Market Street.

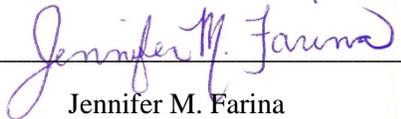
**Topic Three Commissioners Open Discussion:**

Debbie Bowden, Director, Caroline County Economic Development, stated that she was recently informed of a development opportunity for Caroline County. She explained that the United States

Department of Agriculture is looking for an area to have their National Institution of Food and Agriculture. She stated that the facility would be used for economic research services, and she felt the Ridgley Tech Park could host such a business. She asked the Commissioners for feedback on whether or not she could move forward with an application which would allow Caroline County to be in the running for the location of the facility. She stated that it will be a competitive process, however she feels that Caroline County should show initiative in trying to gain more business. The Commissioners stated that Ms. Bowden should move forward with the application.

**Topic Four: Commissioners Open Discussion**

The Commissioners stated that they attended the Chamber of Commerce event to formally introduce Ms. Bowden to the business community and thought she did an excellent job outlining her vision for Economic Development. They also thanked the staff at the Department of Emergency Services, especially emergency planner Jeff Ludwig, for providing detailed updates on the path of Hurricane Florence, which thankful did not impact the County.



Jennifer M. Farina

Administrative Coordinator