

1 **TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION**

2 701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501

3 Richmond, Virginia 23219

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9 **Southern Economic Development Committee Meeting**

10 Monday, June 22, 2020

11 10:30 A.M.

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(By Conference Call)

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1 **APPEARANCES:**

2 The Honorable Edward Owens – Chairman

3 The Honorable Brian Ball

4 Ms. Gayle F. Barts

5 The Honorable James E. Edmunds, II

6 Dr. Alexis I. Ehrhardt

7 Mr. Robert Mills, Jr.

8 Mr. Buddy Shelton

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10 COMMISSION STAFF:

11 Mr. Evan Feinman – Executive Director

12 Mr. Andy Sorrell – Deputy Director

13 Ms. Sarah K. Capps – Southern Regional Director

14 Ms. Joyce Knight – Meeting Coordinator

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1 June 22, 2020

2 MR. OWENS: Mr. Feinman?

3 MR. FEINMAN: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

4 We'll call the roll. I'll turn it over to Andy to lay down some
5 ground rules. But Mr. Owens?

6 MR. OWENS: Here.

7 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Ball or Secretary

8 Ball? Ms. Barts?

9 MS. BARTS: Here.

10 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Edmonds?

11 DELEGATE EDMONDS: Here.

12 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Ehrhardt?

13 DR. EHRHARDT: Here.

14 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Mills?

15 MR. MILLS: Here.

16 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Shelton?

17 MR. SHELTON: Here.

18 MR. FEINMAN: That's everybody on the
19 Committee, Mr. Chairman.

20 MR. OWENS: Okay, thank you. I'm
21 going to turn it over to Andy for some ground rules.

22 DELEGATE AIRD: Hey, I'm sorry. I hate
23 to interrupt the proceedings. This is Lashrecse Aird and am I
24 not on this subcommittee?

25 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate, no. We haven't

1 yet assigned the new members to a committee. But the work
2 of this committee should take about twenty minutes and then
3 we'll have our full Commission meeting at eleven.

4 DELEGATE AIRD: Okay, thank you.

5 MR. OWENS: But you're welcome to stay
6 on though, please.

7 DELEGATE AIRD: Okay, thank you.

8 MR. FEINMAN: Andy?

9 MR. SORRELL: All right, well good
10 morning everyone. Just a few quick ground rules for our
11 electronic meeting. We are recording this meeting and it will
12 be transcribed and that will be up on our website as soon as
13 we are able to get the recording so the folks can listen to it.
14 Folks will be unmuted at the start of the meeting and
15 participants will be returned to mute if there is a lot of
16 background noise or if there is disruptions and things like
17 that. And if it's repeated, then we will remove the disruptor
18 from the meeting. If folks are calling in from a phone and also
19 happen to have the computer up, be connected via their
20 computer, then there might be background noise. So just
21 mute one of those if that happens to be the case.

22 We will be taking public comment at the
23 end of the Committee meeting and at the full Commission
24 meeting. So if a member of the public desires to address the
25 Committee or the Commission when we do our full

1 Commission meeting, please hold those questions until this
2 portion of the meeting. We'll ask for comments from the
3 public at the time of that public comment session. You can
4 use the raise hand feature on via WebX or you send it to us in
5 the chat feature or just speak up, we'll make sure we leave a
6 minute or so, so folks have the opportunity to do that if they
7 desire to address the Committee or the Commission. And at
8 the time of your public comment, please do state your full
9 name, your location and the group that you represent so that
10 we can get that for our minutes. And please keep your
11 comments to a few minutes each if you can. And that's our
12 ground rules. I'm happy to answer any questions.

13 MR. FEINMAN: Thank you, Andy.

14 MR. OWENS: All right. Do we have the
15 minutes on the 5/18/20?

16 MR. FEINMAN: Not yet, Mr. Chairman.
17 They are still with the Court Reporter to get transcribed.

18 MR. SORRELL: They're actually on the
19 website if folks wanted to see them.

20 MR. FEINMAN: Andy, we didn't have it
21 on the agenda, so I think let's let folks adopt the minutes at
22 the next meeting.

23 MR. SORRELL: Fair enough.

24 MR. OWENS: Just make a note of that. I
25 want to turn it over to Sarah Capps for the extension request

1 3148 Halifax County and the extension request Town of
2 Alberta.

3 MS. CAPPS: Good morning, Mr.
4 Chairman, members of the Committee. The first on the
5 agenda 3148, the Halifax County Tobacco Heritage Trail
6 extension. That is one that is on the list as needs to be
7 queued up for a vote by the Full Commission. My
8 understanding is or recollection is that your Committee took
9 action on it May 18th and you recommended approval to it.
10 However, it was just an oversight. During the full Commission
11 meeting it was not taken up for vote at the full Commission
12 meeting. So, no action required by your Committee at this
13 time. It will be brought up at the eleven o'clock meeting.

14 MR. OWENS: So when I get my notes for
15 that that should be on there, right?

16 MR. FEINMAN: Yes, Mr. Chair. And the
17 recommendation from the Committee remains as it was before,
18 which is actually that it remain on the table until the
19 September meeting, which will not be a particularly
20 controversial vote.

21 MS. CAPPS: That one was a different
22 project this is 3148 --- Trail, the phase one project and we had
23 recommended approval of a six month extension until
24 November 24th, 2020 on that one. It's a different project than
25 what you are thinking of.

1 MR. FEINMAN: My apologies, Sarah, you
2 were talking about 3148 not 3149. I apologize.

3 MS. CAPP: Yes, the written agenda for
4 the meeting will have the Halifax County project first. Okay,
5 so the next project on the agenda, the one that will have a
6 little more dialogue associated with it is grant request number
7 3149 or extension request for grant 3149. This is the Town of
8 Alberta grant that was discussed at the last meeting. And you
9 may recall in this project the Southside Committee, the staff
10 recommendation and the Committee recommendation had
11 been for no further action on their extension request.
12 However, during the full Commission meeting, the project was
13 tabled to be reconsidered based on additional information that
14 had been brought to light.

15 So I'll just give you a little bit of an
16 overview and update on what we've learned and staff has a
17 new recommendation on the project. So this is a grant from
18 May 2016. It supports the Tobacco Heritage Trail project. It's
19 titled Alberta to Danielstown.

20 The scope of the project included two
21 primary elements. One of those was for engineering design on
22 the 5.2 mile segment from Alberta to Danielstown. This is
23 entirely within Brunswick County. The second element of the
24 project was for construction of a six-tenths of a mile trail
25 segment in the Town of Alberta. And when the Commission

1 approved the award for this project, the element of the scope
2 related to the 5.2 miles, the engineered design as what was
3 most compelling to us because that longer trail segment and
4 the ability to get that constructed in the future is what had the
5 possibility of drawing visitors from outside the region and
6 contributing towards tourism outcomes. So that's a little
7 history on that project. The matching funds for this project
8 and the majority of the funding for this project in general is
9 coming from VDOT from two MAP21 awards. One award from
10 their fiscal year '16 funds and a second award from their fiscal
11 year '18 funds.

12 Staff learned that when we were
13 reviewing the status of the project for consideration of the fifth
14 year extension request, we became aware that the engineering
15 design component of the project had become a lower priority.
16 There were cost escalations for engineering and also for the
17 trail construction. So the priority had shifted to the six-tenths
18 of a mile trail construction. And that was the reason for the
19 staff not recommending --- at the previous meeting.

20 The concern that had been brought
21 forward during the full Commission meeting when this was
22 tabled was that the Town of Alberta, which is a very small
23 town in our region would be obligated to pay VDOT back for
24 about \$111,000 that had been spent on the project so far
25 related to engineering design work for this extensive amount.

1 Staff has looked into this further. We did confirm that if the
2 six-tenths of a mile trail segment was not constructed that
3 Alberta would need to pay back the funds. Although, we also
4 would like to note that an alternative to paying back the funds
5 would be for Alberta or other partners that they could identify
6 to actually come up with the funds to construct the trail. And
7 so by our estimation if the estimates came in based on what
8 the engineers had identified, it would be approximately
9 \$57,000 for trail construction.

10 The status of the project at this point, it
11 had gone to bid for paving of the six-tenths of a mile. Those
12 bids came in far over budget. So it's in the process of being
13 re-bid based on a gravel trail as the base bid and paving as an
14 additive to that bid. Both the Town and VDOT are optimistic
15 that the bids would be more favorable given the current
16 construction climate, current economic climate.

17 Staff has, we've had a lot of dialogue with
18 the program administrator for Alberta; that would be the
19 Southside Planning District Commission. They manage and
20 administer this project on behalf of the Town. The Town has,
21 the PDC has --- engineered to do the engineering design work
22 for the 5.2 mile segment. It was a substantial amount of
23 money. It was \$195,000. The PDC continues to look into
24 alternatives for how to accomplish the original project
25 objectives. And that includes doing the design engineering to

1 different standards and also reaching out to other local
2 government and nonprofit partners to see if there are others
3 that might be interested in being involved in seeing the project
4 to completion.

5 At this point in time, staff is
6 recommending an extension until your next meeting. So we're
7 recommending an extension to September 30th, 2020 for
8 reconsideration at the September Commission meeting. Once
9 the new bid pricing is known and to allow time for the Town to
10 provide a proposed plan for accomplishing the TRRC approved
11 objectives. And to the extent necessary, staff also
12 recommends that the Town be allowed to be permitted to seek
13 reimbursement for costs associated with rebidding
14 construction of the six-tenths of a mile section of trail. So that
15 is your recommendation. I'll be glad to answer any questions.

16 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Chairman, really
17 briefly here. The Town was approved basically to work on two
18 sections of trails. One short segment I think the Town was
19 committed to and engineering for one longer section that was
20 the primary objective that made it a good grant for the
21 Commission. They then sought and received and expended
22 VDOT money in pursuit of a re-scoped project that really
23 didn't meet our objectives. And so entirely frankly, what we
24 are doing here is giving them some time between now and
25 September to see if we can come up with a plan for them to

1 accomplish the goals that this Commission wanted.
2 Otherwise, they are, they will have gotten themselves into
3 some trouble and will either have a shortfall or need to repay
4 VDOT a certain amount of funds. So, hopefully we can avert
5 that by September. But by giving it that limited extension, we
6 give them the opportunity to figure that out.

7 MR. OWENS: Okay. Any questions? We
8 have the staff recommendation, do I hear a motion to approve
9 the staff recommendation?

10 MR. MILLS: Robert Mills, I make the
11 motion.

12 MR. OWENS: Second?

13 DR. EHRHARDT: Second.

14 MR. OWENS: And who was that?

15 DR. EHRHARDT: Alexis Ehrhardt.

16 MR. OWENS: Second, okay thank you.
17 It's been moved and properly seconded. Any other discussion?
18 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye. (Ayes.)
19 Any opposed? (No response.) Okay, that's the
20 recommendation. Other business, Mr. Feinman? Business?

21 MR. FEINMAN: I apologize, Mr.
22 Chairman. A matter of clarification. Mr. Mills, was your
23 motion to adopt staff recommendations on both 3148 and
24 3149?

25 MR. MILLS: If that cleans everything up,

1 that's fine.

2 MR. FEINMAN: That does, Mr. Mills.

3 MR. MILLS: That will work.

4 MR. FEINMAN: And with that
5 clarification, is everyone still, Ms. Ehrhardt, are you happy
6 seconding that and does anyone wish to change their votes on
7 any point?

8 DR. EHRHARDT: That's fine.

9 MR. FEINMAN: Hearing no objection, you
10 have completed your Committee business for this morning.

11 MR. OWENS: How about the other
12 business?

13 MR. FEINMAN: There is no other
14 business for you, Mr. Chairman. We like to put that on there
15 just in case something pops up between when we send out the
16 agenda and when you sit down. But we have no other
17 business for you this morning.

18 MR. OWENS: So all the other things that
19 are going to be moved to the Commission meeting.

20 MR. SORRELL: Evan, this is Andy. Mr.
21 Chairman, this is Andy.

22 MR. OWENS: Yes.

23 MR. SORRELL: I think there were a few
24 items of other business for the Chair. I think the ---

25 MS. CAPP: You guys, just of note on the

1 document, we did identify just for reference for the Committee
2 four projects that had previously been referred or tabled to
3 your Committee. And we are recommending that those be
4 considered at the September meeting. So we do have,
5 currently have a July 16th application deadline and any new
6 funding awards from that deadline are to be considered in
7 September. And with that, we are also recommending that the
8 tabled and referred projects be considered at that time.

9 MR. FEINMAN: But no action needs to be
10 taken here. That would be a new Committee and it will be
11 able to take up those matters ---.

12 MR. OWENS: Okay. All right. Is there
13 any other public comment? No? If there is no other comment,
14 meeting adjourned.

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16 PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED.

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CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER

I, Medford W. Howard, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Virginia at large, do hereby certify that I was the court reporter who took down and transcribed the proceedings of the **Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission Southern Economic Development Committee meeting when held on Monday, June 22, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. by conference call.**

I further certify this is a true and accurate transcript, to the best of my ability to hear and understand the proceedings.

Given under my hand this 30th day of June, 2020.

Medford W. Howard
CCR #0313137