

**BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**October 1, 2013**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

*Chairman Robert G. Gatto*  
*Commissioner Gregan T. Crawford*  
*Commissioner James M. Raley*

*County Administrator R. Lamont Pagenhardt*

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER OF PUBLIC SESSION**

**PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

1. Additions/deletions to public meeting agenda. Mr. Pagenhardt indicated there was one addition and no deletions to the Public Meeting Agenda for October 1, 2013. The Board of County Commissioners will conduct an Executive Session to discuss economic development matters. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Chairman Gatto, and made unanimous by Commissioner Crawford, approved the Public Meeting Agenda for October 1, 2013.
2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, approved the Public Meeting Minutes for September 24, 2013 and September 30, 2013.
3. The Board of County Commissioners provided an update of the boards, committees, and commission meetings they have attended and participated in since the last public meeting.
4. The Board of County Commissioners executed a Proclamation designating October as "I Can Swim Month".
5. The Board of County Commissioners was presented with departmental updates from:
  - a) Garrett County Chamber of Commerce. Statistics on the Youghiogheny Welcome Center, Hotel Rental Tax collections fiscal year-to-date, and a presentation of the Chamber Marketing Plan (which is on file in the Board of County Commissioners' Office for public review).
  - b) Garrett County Engineering Department. Project status update to include Bayard Corona Bridge completion, AYSO soccer field design and inspection, Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI) improvements, a number of County road improvement and right-of-way work, Cherry Glade site development, Landfill Cell 4 and 5 closure and construction, engineering work related to Deep Creek 2014 site improvements at ASCI, Glendale Road Realignment Project, Meadow Mountain Trail System survey design, engineering project work on the Western Conveyance Water and Wastewater Project for the Department of Public Works - Division of Utilities, and other ongoing and pending projects.

- c) University of Maryland Extension. Staff assignment and personnel issues with the University System and the Western Maryland Region; 4H Program community activities update; data on the impact of agriculture on Maryland's economy; food stamp food supplement program to include healthy habits initiatives; master gardener basic training course; gypsy moth suppression update; and other agriculture related issues.
  - d) Garrett County Department of Facilities and Maintenance. Status and update on exterior painting of the Visitor's Center, maintenance and repair work at ASCI, Center Street Location work, completion of Court House sidewalk repair, painting of Court House rotunda, mechanical upgrade of heating and air conditioning systems, ongoing work on the energy conservation audit, and other work completed or pending.
6. The Board of County Commissioners held the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Garrett County's Most Beautiful Person Ceremony to honor and recognize persons nominated for their contributions and volunteerism. Five (5) nominations were received and each received a Certificate of Commendation and a gift of Garrett County Syrup. Jan and Judy Finkel were presented to the Board of County Commissioners and those in attendance as Garrett County's Most Beautiful Persons for 2013.
7. The Purchasing Department presented the Board of County Commissioners with the following recommendations of bid award:
- a) Recommendation for bid award – Winter Abrasives (bid #13-0926WA). The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, awarded the bid to a number of contracts for different products and Roads Division locations. Copy of final award details are on file with the Purchasing Department.
  - b) Recommendation for contract award – Contractual Snow Removal Services (bid #12-0927SR), contract renewal). The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, awarded the bid to a number of contractors for various County Government locations. Copy of final award details are on file with the Purchasing Department.
  - c) Recommendation for award – Request for Proposals – Adventure Sports Center International Commercial Lease Space (RFP #13-0827). The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Commissioner Crawford, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, awarded the bid to Everbright Pacific, LLC dba Wisp Resort. Terms of 7.5% of gross sales from equipment rentals and retail sales projected at approximately \$12,800 annually; square footage seasonally adjusted 1,800 to 5,100 square feet; and utilities seasonally adjusted and based on a set percentage. The County Attorney and Risk Manager will prepare lease agreement for final execution.
  - d) Recommendation for award – Request for Proposals – Design/Build Construction Keyser's Ridge Business Park Tenant Building (RFP #13-0910). The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Commissioner Crawford, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, awarded the bid to Beitzel Corporation for a total contract amount of \$1,024,000.00 with a contract duration of 210 calendar days. Fiscal Year 2014 Budget includes an appropriation for this project in the amount of \$1,600,000.00 with \$625,000 in State of Maryland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Strata Safety Systems has entered into a 5 year lease with multiple extensions included and will occupy this building upon completion.
  - e) Recommendation for award – Request for Proposals – Public Relations/Marketing Services 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships (RFP #13-0730). The Board, on a motion by

Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, agreed to reject all proposals. Deep Creek 2014 decided to handle public relations and marketing efforts for the upcoming event internally through collaboration with the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce.

8. Commissioner Raley presented an overview of Friendsville Revitalization Plan. These are attached to the Public Meeting Minutes as **Exhibit 1**. Commissioner Raley proposing to on this date that the Board move forward and \$25,000 be directed to this plan starting point. Reinventing Rural One Town at a Time. Comments from Chairman Gatto and Commissioner Crawford were made and they will take this under advisement.
9. The Board of County Commissioners executed a Proclamation that recognized and proclaimed the worthiness of the "Garrett County Gives" cause and urge all citizens to recognize, participate in, and support this important program.
10. Carol Riley-Alexander, Executive Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator, reviewed the Board's meeting and committee schedule for the forthcoming weeks.
11. Public Commentary.

#### **ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC SESSION**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION**

1. Mr. Pagenhardt reviewed a number of administrative, personnel, and managerial matters under his authority and jurisdiction with the Board of County Commissioners. No official action was taken by the Board at this time.
2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, appointed Pastor James A. Tedeschi to the Garrett County Local Management Board. This appointment fulfills the position previously held by Reverend Larry Walbrown. An official letter under the signature of Chairman Gatto will be sent to Pastor Tedeschi outlining the terms of this appointment.
3. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, moved into Executive Session under section 10-508 of the Maryland Open Meetings Law on this date to discuss economic development matters. The same motion ended the Executive Session.

**Attest:**

**By Order of the Board,**

\_\_\_\_\_  
R. Lamont Pagenhardt,  
County Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert G. Gatto, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **EXHIBIT 1**

### **Presentation to the County Commissioners - October 1, 2013**

Gentlemen:

I have spoken with you individually about a vision of the entire Interstate 68 corridor and especially with a start in Friendsville. Thank you for allowing me time on the agenda to discuss the issue of revitalization for the town of Friendsville. First and foremost, I want to emphasize that this is a part of a much larger plan for “growing the population” and “economy” for Garrett County. It is not singular but instead is “Reinventing Rural: One Town at a Time” and does not have any selfish or one sided notion in mind.

As we embark upon the problems we face in Garrett County and as the governing Board who will soon celebrate 3 years of being in office, we have a lot of work to do to keep Garrett County relevant and viable. We cannot do so without deliberate efforts to market ourselves beyond tourists. We must establish new public/private partnerships to move forward much like what we are currently doing in other venues. We must energize our communities and offer opportunities for new engagements. We must be more of a regional community. We have invested in many ways to enhance the opportunities of our museums in downtown Oakland, the arts community, the ASCI acquisition, the MEDCO building, Keyser’s Ridge Park, our new founded energy consultant, and working with speculative businesses and entrepreneurs desiring to locate and do business in Garrett County. We are about to embark upon the deployment of TV whitespace into one community where we hope to reach a larger number of an unserved population, thus focusing in a strategic way. We have worked with the municipalities to strengthen each town and assist with some infrastructure needs and plans over the course of many years. Have we done enough....that question remains to be answered as we continue to face the “brain drain” problem?

So, why do I want to discuss Friendsville and why the I68 corridor? It is not about north verses south as clearly our entire county needs to grow. When I look at enrollment numbers for our schools and know that when I worked as a classroom teacher at Southern Middle School in 1980 and it had 750 students and now 535 there is a problem but somewhat nothing unusual in looking at rates of the current birth producing generations. While some will say we have recovered from the Bausch and Lomb closure I am not sure we will ever fully recover as our region was hit with large scale rollbacks of many large employers. One may say the prisons saved Allegany County and the Deep Creek Lake boom and second homeowner housing industry saved Garrett County. We have made strides to backfill those jobs and said actions were deliberate and with much assistance from other governmental agencies.

Friendsville sits in the Northwestern corner of Garrett County, Maryland and was founded in 1765 by John Friend Sr. (1728 to Aft. 1808). So, in two years Friendsville will celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. At exit 4 on I68, Friendsville is for travelers the eastbound gateway and welcome to Maryland and the last town when heading westward. In 2000 the census data indicated: 539 residents, 232 households, and 134 families. In 2010 the data showed: 491 residents, 219 households, and 128 families with an average age of 44.6, 20% under age 18 and 30% age 18-44.

During the past months, I have met with the town governing body, investors, developers, business owners/entrepreneurs, Habitat, Community Action, bankers, DBED, and numerous individuals to discuss a vision for growing the population strategically in the Friendsville area and ultimately Garrett County. It started as an effort about saving a school and providing housing; however it has evolved into a focus on saving a community and saving our County. You see if this works it expands and grows exponentially to other areas, such as Grantsville where hopefully someday we will see a new I68/Route 219 connection and a true north/south highway corridor connecting our area to other more populous areas. The museums and train station in Oakland, the barn quilts throughout the County and the potential for expansion of other towns and areas is within reach. Our population grows and we expand the number of families who make Garrett County home. The town of Friendsville becomes a “must stop” location and boasts of a vibrant downtown like we see in Harper’s Ferry and a vibrant weekend attraction like we see at Ohiopyle. Please check the numbers as they are not much different than Friendsville.

So again, why Friendsville? The strategic location of Friendsville makes it attractive. The infrastructure of Friendsville with fiber connections makes it attractive. Its location to an Interstate highway and only 15 minutes from a federal prison and 30 minutes to Morgantown, a very fast growing City where there are currently jobs available, makes it attractive. The vision of Friendsville being a small scale of what Frederick is to our urban growth centers in Maryland and the futuristic possibilities makes it attractive.

And most of all, Friendsville has what millennial and generation x are looking for in a community. It has many caring individuals who are ready to evolve into a 21<sup>st</sup> century town of the future. In the past few weeks, the town has completed bikeways and safe routes to schools grant applications. There is consideration of a grant application that addresses sustainable communities and local grower's efforts throughout the County and region. What it does not have is an abundance of housing opportunities or a vibrant downtown and Main Street business district. But it could with some effort. That is where we can help.

FSU rolled out its new marketing strategy the other day "One University, A World of Experiences" as their new brand and I know we prepare to soon roll out the same for Garrett County. We have the opportunity here with the upcoming 2014 event to open the door of future opportunity for Garrett County to our international community and what better opportunity to showcase the "whitewater town" of Friendsville, Maryland and Garrett County while they are here in the US.

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, I have been told by Mike Koch, the keynoter from MACO will be in Garrett County to view the landscape. Jason Broadwater talked with us about the "millennial generation" those born between 1980 and 2000 who outnumber the baby boomers by some 17 million if the sources I have read are accurate. They are also referred to as "generation y" but they seem to prefer the millennial designation. Then we have the "generation x" folks born between 1965 and 1980. I bring up these groups as those of us from the "baby boomer" 1946-1964 time periods are settled into a community and looking toward retirement. I still see the "boomers" as relevant in this conversation as some are looking to ways to make capital investments and plan on working a few more years to enhance their retirement portfolio. The "Gen X and Y" are the ones searching for communities and areas of opportunity some of whom are the work from home generation mentioned above and may actually live nearby currently and can live anywhere with a high level broadband connection.

Friendsville lends itself to revitalization. A revitalized town could provide some new job opportunities but will still be able to rely upon surrounding areas to provide workers with employment. An enhanced business district that boasts of locally grown foods and an arts and entertainment district with an abundance of recreational opportunities provides a new and expanded opportunity for Friendsville and Garrett County. The weekend visits offer opportunity for visitors to view other areas of the County including other towns during frequent visits, both day trippers and overnighters. The new and revitalized housing provides energy efficiency and sustainability something of importance to generation x and y, while we "reinvent rural-- one town at a time." And most of all, we show our citizens and the citizens of Maryland that we truly are working to help ourselves in new ways and in deliberate ways.

As we look to enhance and get the Keyser's Ridge Business Park in full swing what better way to begin the process today and not five years from now when businesses take notice. I feel with a moderate level of certainty that a lot will change and evolve over the next five years as we roll out many new opportunities. We are poised to position ourselves in a new way with a new brand and a new set of ideas.

Idealistic....MAYBE. Simplistic....NO. Risky....YES. Remember what we found in much of the research conducted for our branding study especially about being risk takers. Today, I would like to see some of that change. I would like to see more of a visionary and risk taking approach to building our County. I would like our State officials and local citizenry to recognize that we are working tirelessly every day to help ourselves.

Now for the price tag and MY vision that I hope becomes OUR vision. I would love nothing more than to say this is a TEAM approach as there is no I in team. Well first there have to be a few ground rules:

The first part is a commitment that we are going to stop the school closure discussions countywide. That means the hammer of school closures is put away and instead it is an approach of how we fund education into the future. It is

working together. No one is going to come here and invest in our community or move into an area where elementary children could be put on a bus for over one hour per day each way. No one is going to take a chance on winning a dying community which we heard at the meeting of September 30<sup>th</sup> repeatedly. But they will take a chance on a community where the elected officials pledge to do everything necessary to bring vibrancy and vision to the table and a willingness to engage all in the process. With over 70% of the students who left our schools last year going to other areas it is obvious that families are relocating and in most instances likely for better job opportunities. I do not see our region attracting large employers but do see the area of Morgantown doing such. I also see the possibility for us to foster growth of small businesses but we must retain a quality and available workforce along with quality schools.

The second part is a commitment from the Commissioners and the citizens of Garrett County. The caution that has been handed to me by several is the attitude of "what about me" and why "them and not me." That attitude of pitting one against the other has to stop as we have seen that in school closures, the mini marina issue, and ASCI. We must work together as a community and a region if we are to be successful in this challenging economy. I am more than willing to discuss with the mayors such a vision into the future. Attitudes must focus on positive outcomes. Difference has to go beyond indifference. I am seeing such a consensus building surrounding the issue of gas development and not how to stop it but how to make it as beneficial and safe as possible to all involved. I know for some this is a smokescreen but others recognize that gas will likely be a part of our national energy future.

And, the final piece is the price tag. Clearly, this has to be a public/private partnership and the public piece ends up coming first. My initial ask would be to devote a sum of money and staffing, to be determined, to a plan for revitalization and population growth combined that could be used by other towns and areas of Garrett County. I include this as areas such as Bloomington, Finzel, and Crellin are not municipalities but areas for potential strategic and marketed growth. This would not include paving streets, fixing town halls or parks, and doing sidewalks unless these become part of the sustainable communities and a master plan that incorporates the true definition and focus of the project: population growth, especially with school aged children and sustainment of current population.

In order to launch the Friendsville vision it would likely take \$25,000. This would include approximately \$12,000 for concept drawings that show a pictorial vision of the Maple Street revitalization including the gateway to town with the new whitewater facility currently planned, the town hall, the Old Mill, a new downtown streetscape and façade improvement, a library and outlying housing on side streets, green space and sustainability features, renovated buildings and homes, trails, parks and other items that turn the downtown into an arts and entertainment district specializing in locally grown food products. The remainder would be for consulting work to develop written plans, facilitate focus groups, the employment of grant writers, and development of infrastructure needs and ordinances to be adopted by the town. The future could involve acquisitions such as was done with the old MEDCO building and the Keyser's Ridge Business Park to facilitate opportunity for purchase with a plan to return to the hands of private investors/developers. Much of the Maple/Main Street of Friendsville is for sale and there are some who anxiously await this visionary plan to make business investments. This broad vision and plan opens doors to secure other funding sources, develop tax incentive programs and a multitude of other opportunities to bring money into our community. I would like to see a vision of a community effort to raise funds necessary to build a new library.

I have waited patiently for this and hope you agree that the time to strike is now. If all the pins do not fall we throw the second ball and at least hope for a spare. If the fear is we risk failure or we risk accusations then I am not sure we have focused on the vision of what put us in office three years ago and that is to make a difference.

Commissioner Jim Raley