

**GO Virginia Region 9  
Innovation & Entrepreneurship Taskforce Group  
Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Workgroup  
January 7, 2019  
70 Main Street, Warrenton, VA  
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

As approved by Innovation & Entrepreneurship Task Force on 4.9.2019
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**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** Jim Cheng, Tom Click, Miles Friedman

**Absent:** Leigh Middleditch, Pace Lochte

**Guests:** Denise Hubbard, UVA Economic Development; Renee Younes, Regional Manager Mason Enterprise Center (MEC) Fauquier; Jennifer Goldman, President, Resonance, LLC

**Staff:** Shannon Holland; Helen Cauthen

**Welcome:** Jim Cheng called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm and asked all attending to introduce themselves.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

**Minutes from November 19, 2018 Meeting:** Shannon Holland noted that the word Agenda should read Minutes.

***Tom made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes with the one correction noted. Miles Friedman seconded the motion. The motion carried.***

**Workgroup Membership:** Jim Cheng indicated that Elizabeth Smith has stepped down from serving on the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Workgroup due to business commitments. She will still serve on the Council and the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Task Force Group.

**Regional Entrepreneurship Assessment**

Jim Cheng opened the floor to discuss reactions to the TEconomy assessment as well as possible priorities for the workgroup. Miles Friedman shared background on how Fauquier County had gone from zero business resource centers to three in a short time. The Fauquier County Board of Supervisors (BOS) now fully funds the program with a budget of about \$400,000. The BOS see the value of the centers as growing the tax base and supporting local businesses. It was also critical for the local Chamber to actively support the projects. Renee Younes and Jennifer Goldman both indicated that it is important to gauge needs of the community before creating a center as each of the three Fauquier centers provide different primary services ranging from free drop-in services, co-working space, virtual working to one-room offices. It was also noted that services and programming such as SBDC, Workforce Services, Chamber mentors or networking were different at each location, as well. Miles

Friedman noted that he was willing to help support other rural counties determine appropriate next steps by sharing experiences and presenting to groups, as needed. It was suggested that regional economic developers could take a tour through the Fauquier Centers. Miles also shared that many other benefits have arisen because these centers are in place. For example, the enterprise centers have MOUs with Quantico to help train veterans in entrepreneurship and they are developing a similar MOU with Ft. Belvoir.

Helen Cauthen and Jim Cheng each shared information about the “Venture Hub”, a significant entrepreneurial ecosystem project in development. The project was initiated by UVA, Charlottesville, Albemarle County and the Central Virginia Partnership. Initially, the concept is to serve the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Charlottesville/Albemarle, though expansion to other areas is also expected. This led to a discussion of how to best approach ecosystem projects because of diverse regional needs. For example, the more rural counties can be taking local action to build infrastructure while the “Venture Hub” project develops concurrently. After much discussion, it was decided that the Workgroup would monitor the identified TEconomy priority opportunities by supporting the “Venture Hub” and rural counties while looking for ways to bring the initiatives that develop together over the long term. Helen Cauthen reminded the group that the role of the Council was to promote the GO Virginia opportunity and not to create projects directly.

Tom Click suggested that staff, first, create a survey for Economic Developers and business leaders (via Chambers and SBDC’s) in each rural county, to identify which of the identified TEconomy priorities most resonate with those counties.

#### **Tom Tom Summit – Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Summit (4/12)**

Shannon Holland asked for feedback on the two session abstracts included in the packet. She indicated that a statewide focused GO Virginia session might help shine a spotlight on our region as an innovation center and that Dubby Wynne and Chris Lloyd are interested and are holding the date for more information. She noted that she had a follow up call scheduled with Tom Tom staff on January 8. The group favored the statewide session option. Tom Click asked that she add more job generation statistics, etc., in the abstract. Jim added that the Festival staff will likely ask for more money to support such a session and he suggested that perhaps the GO Virginia Foundation could contribute. Helen Cauthen indicated that the Partnership would consider supporting, as well. Jim shared that the Entrepreneurship Summit during the Tom Tom Founders Festival would happen concurrently with the Hometown Summit.

**Next Ecosystem Meeting:** A meeting date was not discussed.

Renee Younes offered to take the group on a tour of the Enterprise Center after the meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 3:13 pm.**