



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) January 13, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on January 13th, 2025, with Jared Acosta (Chairperson) presiding.

Board Members: Ed Regina (Vice Chairperson), Joe Memoli, Deborah Emin, and Charlie Stecker attended in person. Jared Acosta (Chairperson) and Gina Bertucci attended via Zoom.

Absent: Beverly Brown.

Township Staff: James Brechbiel, Economic Development Manager, and Annette Atkinson, Township Supervisor, in person.

Township Residents/Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm with Jared Acosta presiding.

Minutes and Agenda

- Charlie Stecker made a motion to approve the December Minutes, seconded by Joe Memoli. Motion passed 6-0.
- Gina Bertucci made a motion to approve the January agenda. Charlie Stecker seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Correspondence

- None

New Business:

Reorganization:

- Jared Acosta announced that he would be submitting his resignation from the committee as he is no longer in the area full-time and unable to make the commitment. He thanked the committee and noted that he would continue to support them in whatever ways he could and offer insights when able. The committee thanked Jared A. for his service, dedication, and insights and invited him to attend future meetings as a member of the public.
- The committee discussed reorganization and Joe Memoli made a motion to accept a tentative slate of Ed Regina as chair, Charlie Stecker as vice chair, and Beverly Brown as secretary for the February meeting. The committee discussed that it would confirm the slate or make changes at the February meeting and then make its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) from there. Charlie Stecker seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Business Updates: James Brechbiel reviewed the following updates for businesses in the area:

- The Car Cleaners Detail Shop will be the new tenant at the former mechanic building located at Gary's Mobil Gas and Car Wash, a recent recipient of the Revitalize 209 Grant Program. They expect to open in late winter / early spring.
- The Poconos Club had a "Make Us an Offer Sale" at the former Country Club of the Poconos property on Saturday, 1/11/25, and expects to start renovations to the Whispering Pines building over the winter. The plan is to still run the golf course and open it in the spring, and, once renovated, open the Whispering Pines as an event facility at a later date.
- Mt. Nebo is planning a phase II and more details will be provided once confirmed.
- Raj Investments submitted ideas for the former Pocono Palace Property. No plans have been confirmed.
- Charlie Stecker noted that Pocono Ridge Inn is still planning an opening in spring, 2025. Dates to be confirmed.

Community Update: James Brechbiel directed the committee to review the list of events at the bottom of the agenda:

- The Township's Person of the Year Awards are held at 7 pm on Friday, 1/24/25, at the Community and Cultural Center. All EDC members were invited to attend.
- The Pocono Chamber of Commerce holds the Report to Business Breakfast at Kalahari on Thursday, 1/30/25 at 8 am. EDC members were encouraged to attend.

Old Business:

Committee Goals for 2025:

- America 250 – James Brechbiel distributed the list of committees compiled by the county for the EDC to consider its role in. Annette Atkinson noted that the Township expects to hold an inter-committee meeting to see how all can coordinate projects for the event. Annette A. furthered that the Business and Industry Committee and Tourism and Marketing Committee would most likely be the committees to choose from for EDC members.
- Route 209 Grant Support –The committee discussed canvassing in the spring. Charlie Stecker, Joe Memoli, and Ed Regina volunteered to help.
- Website Updates – Joe Memoli asked if the Township could add a feature for selecting a language on the website. James Brechbiel noted that he would follow up.

- Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) –Annette Atkinson and James Brechbiel noted they were working to get on the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD) Board’s agenda to confirm its renewal.
- Farmers Market – Deborah Emin noted that vendors need to be solicited during the winter if there is interest.
- Financial Literacy – James Brechbiel noted that the Home Purchasing Seminar worked well in the fall and asked the committee to consider when that would work best. Charlie Stecker noted the spring should be considered. Ed Regina noted that more than once a year should be considered.
- Shop Local 2025–James Brechbiel confirmed that the Holiday Campaign saw an uptick in 2024 and future campaigns outside the holidays are a consideration.
- Marketing Grant – Gina Bertucci noted that Bucks County offers a grant in step with marketing support and she was going to review the parameters and see how the Township can adapt it.
- Tourism collaboration with stores – Deborah Emin noted for the committee to consider ways stores can collaborate with tourism.
- Veteran’s Luncheon – Charlie Stecker suggested hosting something for Memorial Day. James Brechbiel encouraged Charlie S. to connect with the Township’s Historical Committee to review collaboration opportunities.

Revitalize 209 Status Updates: James Brechbiel reviewed the following updates:

- Mobil Gas and Gary’s Car Wash completed its siding project and passed inspection. They are submitting materials for reimbursement.
- Liberty Plaza passed inspection and is gathering materials for reimbursement.
- Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church is reviewing a steeple project concept and expects to submit an updated letter of interest (LOI) after they meet.

Announcements:

- None.

Public Comments:

- None

Meeting adjournment: Deborah Emin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m., seconded by Charlie Stecker. The motion passed 6-0.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,
James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township