



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) February 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on February 24, 2025, with Ed Regina (Chairperson) presiding.

Board Members: Ed Regina (Chairperson), Gina Bertucci, and Joe Memoli attended in person. Beverly Brown and Deborah Emin attended via Zoom.

Absent: Charlie Stecker.

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

Township Residents/Guests: Ashley Takacs

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm with Ed Regina presiding.

Minutes and Agenda

- Gina Bertucci made a motion to approve the Jan. Minutes, seconded by Deborah Emin. Motion passed 5-0.
- Gina Bertucci made a motion to approve the Feb. agenda. Beverly Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Correspondence

- None

New Business:

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

- The Pocono Club (formerly County Club of the Poconos) is doing renovations in 2025. When complete, the former Whispering Pines will operate as an event facility. The golf course is expected to reopen in the spring.
- Raj Investments (formerly Pocono Palace) is in the process of renovating rooms in the existing buildings.
- Pocono Ridge Inn (formerly Deerfield Inn) is expected to open in the spring of 2025 as a bed and breakfast.
- Plans for Phase II of Mt. Nebo Apartments are anticipated in 2025. Stay tuned!
- The Car Cleaners Detailing Shop will be going in the former mechanic bldg. at Gary's Mobil Gas & Car Wash in 2025.
- ESSA Bank & Trust intends to merge with CNB Bank by the third quarter of 2025 and will operate as "ESSA Bank, a division of CNB Bank."
- A new passenger commuter bus (55 seats) by the name of Sattar Luxury Lines is offering a daily shuttle service from Middle Smithfield to Port Authority in NYC and back. Membership service starts 3/1/25. For more details on schedule, pricing, etc., please see www.sattarluxurylines.com.
- 5221 Milford Rd.: The former medical office building was sold to EGM Murphy Global Enterprises LLC. According to the new owner, there is a prospect, but the tenant has not been confirmed.
- Mi Casa Es Tu Casa at Liberty Plaza: The business has closed. The tenant took on a full-time job and no longer can commit to the schedule. The property owner is working with potential prospects.
- White Oak & Four Seasons – White Oak is listed for sale at \$995K and Four Seasons is listed for \$699,900.

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

- James B. thanked all who attended the MST Person of the Year where Betti Ann Ricci won Person of the Year and will receive a \$1,500 check from the township to donate to her cause, the 1,000 Pink Lights Walk. Finalists Luz Gonzalez, recognized for her work with Yoga w/ Luz, and Maria Oquendo, for her work with the Incredibowlers, were also celebrated. Each will receive a \$1,000 donation from the township to support their respective causes; Luz G. for the Eastern Monroe Public Library Foundation and Maria O. for the Pocono Autism Society.
- Rotary Club Free Tax Prep is on Wednesdays at the Community and Cultural Center from 10 am – 4 pm.
- The Pocono Chamber of Commerce Legislative Luncheon is on 3/21/24 from 11 am to 1 pm at Camelback.
- East Stroudsburg University (ESU) Economic Summit is Friday, 5/16/25, at 7:30 am at Kalahari.
- The Middle Smithfield Township 2025 Year Preview is Thurs., 2/27/25, at 7 pm. All were invited to attend.

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Update: James Brechbiel reviewed the following:

- The Township presented to the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD) Finance Committee of the Board of Education at its February 10th meeting, requesting a ten-year extension of its program, which is set to expire in July 2025. The Finance Committee recommended the extension to the full school board and placed it as an action item on the agenda for the regular school board meeting on February 24, 2025. James B. noted that the Township would be at the meeting to address any questions from the ESASD Board of Education and invited EDC members to attend.
- Monroe County is reviewing a potential ten-year extension of the program and will confirm a future agenda date once the ESASD Board of Education has made its determination.

EDC Applicants / Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors

- The committee reviewed three applications to fill the EDC vacancy and noted that the applicants were all very strong.
- Beverly Brown and Joe Memoli noted that in the past the committee was able to speak to all the applicants, either in person or via Zoom. James Brechbiel noted that he would try to arrange all by the next EDC meeting. The committee concluded that it would not make a recommendation until it is able to speak with all the applicants.
- Beverly Brown and Deborah Emin noted they would like to find a way to retain all the candidates. Gina Bertucci asked if sub-committees could be considered. James Brechbiel noted the requests would be reviewed.
- Ed Regina thanked Ashley Takacs, an applicant for the EDC, for attending the meeting and asked her to share her background. Ashley T. noted she worked with various non-profits, budget management, networking, local organizations, and wanted an opportunity to work closer with the community to help support it. Ashley T. furthered that she worked with the National Inventors Hall of Fame in the past, supporting innovation, and now works with Adopt a Classroom.org to help raise funds that offset costs for school classroom supplies, etc. Deborah Emin noted Ashley T. also had a background in marketing and cares greatly about the community. Joe Memoli asked Ashley T. if she had a background in cold calling and Ashley noted that she does in her current position.

Old Business:

Reorganization:

- James Brechbiel reviewed the tentative slate of Ed Regina as Chairperson, Charlie Stecker as Vice Chairperson, and Beverly Brown as Recording Secretary for the EDC and asked the committee to confirm the slate or discuss changes.
- Deborah Emin noted she would like to be considered for the Vice Chair position as she wanted to do more for the EDC and also sits on the Revitalize 209 Committee. Deborah E. furthered that it should be a consideration of the committee to have a member of the Revitalize 209 Committee sit in an executive role for the EDC.
- The committee noted that Charlie Stecker volunteered for the Vice Chair position as there were no others who offered at the time and reached out for his review of the considered change. Charlie S. followed up with the committee and noted he supported Deborah Emin being Vice Chair.
- Beverly Brown noted that she was open to doing Recording Secretary, but would like Charlie Stecker to be considered.
- Charlie Stecker followed up with the Committee and noted he was open to being the Recording Secretary.
- Gina Bertucci made a motion to accept the slate of Ed Regina as Chair, Deborah Emin as Vice Chair, and Charlie Stecker as Recording Secretary. Joe Memoli seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

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

- Mobil Gas's project for siding its mechanic building was reimbursed.
- Liberty Plaza submitted its reimbursement materials for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) review.
- The Dutchman is looking to schedule its landscaping project. The BOS is reviewing the owner's request for contractor.
- Jinyin Temple submitted an application with three (3) updated quotes for the Revitalize 209 Committee to review.
- The apartment rental property at 5027 Milford Rd. noted it will be submitting its application to reside the house.
- The committee is anticipating a canvassing campaign for April of 2025 and plan to confirm dates at its March meeting.

Announcements:

- None.

Public Comments:

- None

Meeting adjournment: Ed Regina made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 p.m., seconded by Joe Memoli. The motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 17, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township