



Minutes: Revitalize 209 Committee February 25, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Revitalize 209 Committee was held on February 25, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm with Deborah Emin (Chair) presiding.

Committee Members: Deborah Emin (Chairperson – via Zoom). Michael Coffey, Ralph Dinkle, John Kahwaty, and George Kuchek in person

Absent: Nick Theofilos (Vice-Chairperson) and Sonny Murray.

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

Township Residents/Guests: None.

Minutes and Agenda

- Michael Coffey made a motion to accept the January minutes, seconded by John Kahwaty. Motion passed 5-0.
- Ralph Dinkle made a motion to accept the February agenda, seconded by Michael Coffey. Motion passed 5-0.

Correspondence

- None.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

- None.

New Business:

• Application – House at 5027 Milford Rd.:

- James Brechbiel noted that the committee had given the property a rating of 4.06 out of 5 for the siding project referenced in the letter of interest (LOI) reviewed at its October meeting. James B. furthered that the property would remain a rental (residential, non-business) and that the applicant was waiting on two additional quotes. George Kuchek asked if the property would qualify for the grant as it is not a business and James B. noted that it is in the C-1 Zone and, therefore, would qualify for review.
- The committee discussed that the original LOI also noted a deck project. James Brechbiel noted that the property owner removed it from the application as it would put the project over the \$20,000 threshold. The committee discussed that the siding project would make more of a demonstrable difference in comparison to the deck project, but that the deck repair was still very much needed.
- Deborah Emin asked if the work included replacing deteriorated elements underneath the siding. George Kuchek noted that the quote contained in the paperwork mentions the replacement/repair of deteriorated wood, etc.
- The committee noted it will determine action once the additional quotes are received.

Old Business:

• Jinyin Temple:

- James Brechbiel noted that the temple submitted three quotes, each reflecting the cost of the project for buildings A (the Temple), B (the former arcade building), and C (the former laundry building).
- The committee discussed that the projects for all three buildings would be over the threshold of \$20,000, but requested the breakdowns so it could review the cost of each.
- Deborah Emin asked what the temple intends to do with the arcade building in the future and James Brechbiel noted there were no immediate plans for the use of the building, but that the applicant wants to improve the façade and appearance from the road. Deborah E. furthered if Jinyin had construction as part of its organization's model. George Kuchek noted that the workers from Jinyin Temple are not contractors. Ralph Dinkle noted that the projects need to be done by professionals.
- James Brechbiel asked the committee to consider which project it would want Jinyin to move forward with that is within the \$20,000 threshold and if, in the committee's review, Jinyin doing the work was not a possibility since they are not contractors by trade.
- Annette Atkinson noted that the Jinyin quote mentions volunteers and that payment from the organization for the work is an absolute requirement of the grant, complete with receipts showing taxes were paid, workman's compensation, Social Security, FICA, and other deductions. Pay stubs, etc. would have to be referenced and, with volunteers, it was not a possibility. John Kahwaty noted that the

- volunteers would have to be properly insured, etc., which would be hard to determine if they are not on payroll. The committee discussed that proper vetting for the work is a necessity and that professional contractors are the only way to ensure the project stays within the scope of the program.
- George Kuchek noted that the project for Building B (the former arcade building) came under the \$20,000 threshold, was the most in need of repairs, and would make the most demonstrable difference in appearance compared to the others. George K. further noted that an additional quote by a professional should be received for the project of Building B.
 - Deborah Emin made a motion for Jinyin to get an additional quote for Building B and that the applicant revises the paperwork to be only for Building B (the former arcade building). The motion was seconded by George Kuchek and passed unanimously.
 - James Brechbiel noted the following updates to one (1) LOI, one (1) application, and four (4) preliminarily approved applications.
 - **Letter of Interest – Middle Smithfield Township Presbyterian Church** has not submitted a revised LOI for the meeting date.
 - **Application – Pocono U-Haul** has not submitted the required materials and quotes to complete its application for the meeting date.
 - **Preliminarily Approved Application – Gary's Mobil Gas and Car Wash** was reimbursed on 2/21/25 for its siding project. The reimbursement amount was \$9,750.
 - **Preliminarily Approved Application – Liberty Plaza's** Project submitted its materials for reimbursement.
 - **Preliminarily Approved Application – The Dutchman** noted it was looking to schedule its landscaping project for the spring.
 - **Preliminarily Approved Application – The Big A** commenced its project in November of 2024 and is looking to complete it in the spring.

Announcements:

- James Brechbiel noted the following updates for and within the Township and directed the committee to review the bottom of their agendas for upcoming events:
 - Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Update:
 - The Township presented to the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD) Board of Education Finance Committee at its February 10, 2025, meeting, requesting a ten-year extension of its resolution set to expire in July 2025. The Finance Committee recommended approval of the extension to the full school board, which placed it as an action item on the agenda for its regular meeting on February 24, 2025. The extension passed unanimously.
 - Monroe County is reviewing a potential ten-year extension of its resolution and a decision is anticipated for March 2025.
 - The Pocono Club (formerly County Club of the Poconos) is doing renovations to the former Whispering Pines Hall. 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.
 - Plans for Phase II of Mt. Nebo Apartments are anticipated in 2025.
 - The Car Cleaners Detailing Shop is going in the former mechanic bldg. at Gary's Mobil Gas in the spring.
 - 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. 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.
 - White Oak & Four Seasons –White Oak is listed for sale at \$995K and Four Seasons is listed for \$699,900.
 - James B. thanked members for attending 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 Middle Smithfield Township 2025 Year Preview is Thurs., 2/27/25, at 7 pm.
- Annette Atkinson noted that the Township anticipates decisions for LSA Grants (State and ..) will not be known until the fall.

Public Comments:

- None.

Meeting adjournment:

- Michael Coffey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm, seconded by George Kuchek. Motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on March 25, 2025, at 5:30 pm at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township