



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) March 17, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on March 17, 2025, with Ed Regina (Chairperson) presiding.

Board Members: Ed Regina (Chairperson), Joe Memoli, and Charlie Stecker (Secretary) attended in person.

Beverly Brown and Deborah Emin (Vice Chairperson) attended via Zoom.

Absent: Gina Bertucci

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

Township Residents/Guests: Kristin McKeown and Andrea Palmieri.

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

Minutes and Agenda

- Charlie Stecker made a motion to approve the Feb. Minutes, seconded by Joe Memoli. Motion passed 5-0.
- Ed Regina made a motion to approve the Mar. agenda with the amendment of adding an item under New Business to discuss the effect recent layoffs at the National Park Service (NPS) will have on the Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area(DWGRA) and Middle Smithfield Township Businesses. Deborah Emin 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 Car Cleaners at Gary's Car Wash and Mobil Gas plans to open in March.
- Big Ridge Self Storage will be submitting plans and its Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) application for the project at the intersection of Milford Rd. and Big Ridge Dr. Beverly Brown noted that Zoning should make sure landscaping is a requirement and Annette Atkinson confirmed it was part of the land development.
- Plans for Phase II of Mt. Nebo Apartments are anticipated in 2025.
- Charlie Stecker noted that the Pocono Ridge Inn (Old Deerfield Spa) anticipates reaching out for its final inspection and opening in the spring.

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

- The Rotary Club Free Tax Preparation at the Middle Smithfield Township Community and Cultural Center has updated its hours. The service is now held from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Wednesdays through 4/9/25 and remains by appointment only. Interested parties were directed to contact www.Rotary-GP.org for more information.
- The 3rd Annual Women's Art Show is displayed at the Middle Smithfield Township Community and Cultural Center (CCC) through Thurs., 3/27/25. Spearheaded by artist Tricia Lowrey Lipper, the exhibit features 30 local artists and is open to the public during hours of operation at the CCC.
- The Pocono Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Lunch is Friday, 3/21/25. EDC were encouraged to attend.
- The Township's Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt is at Resica Park on Sat., 4/5/25, at 12 pm.
- The 1,000 Feet of Street Litter Clean Up will be on Sat., 4/26/25, at 8 am. Volunteers for the day should contact Chris Rain at crain@mstowtnship.com, or call 570 / 223 – 8920 x 119. Volunteers who are not able to attend on the day of can do a litter pick up on another day of their choosing.
- The East Stroudsburg University (ESU) Economic Summit is Friday, 5/16/25, from 7:30 am to 12 pm at Kalahari Resort. Members of the committee were invited to attend.
- The Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau (PMVB) Tourism Summit is Thurs., 5/22/25 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm at Kalahari Resort. Members of the committee were invited to attend.

National Park Service (NPS) Staff Cuts / Effects to Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area (DWGRA):

- Annette Atkinson provided statistics to the committee for an overview of the DWGRA's economic impact on the area; namely the more than \$235 million for local businesses, support of 2,686 jobs, and nearly \$3 million in hotel and sales tax revenue for the area, according to a report from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).
- The committee had a discussion about what the cuts would mean to the local economy; Directly, the staff who lost their jobs and, indirectly, the services that could be cut, ultimately affecting tourism and businesses in Middle Smithfield.
- Joe Memoli noted that the Delaware River was recently named the River of the Year and that there would be a celebration for it on 6/18/25, which may be affected.
- Deborah Emin noted that the EDC should bolster efforts to support the local businesses that sell recreation retail and would be affected by a decrease in tourism. Joe M. furthered that the committee should reach out to these businesses directly to see how it can help.

- Ed Regina noted that the Friends of the Park Group noted most of the cuts are reported to be maintenance workers and seasonal help had not yet been hired. Ed R. noted he would reach out to NPS to confirm what has been reported versus what is actual. James Brechbiel noted he reached out to the DWGRA but had not heard back by the time of the meeting.

Old Business:

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Update:

- James Brechbiel thanked EDC members who attended the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD) Board Meeting on 2/24/25. At the meeting, the Board renewed its approval of extending LERTA for 10 years.
- James B. reported Monroe County was reviewing language for its resolution and expects a determination soon.

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

- Mobil Gas's project for siding the mechanic building was reimbursed.
- Liberty Plaza submitted its reimbursement materials for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and it was approved.
- Jinyin Temple submitted an application with three (3) updated quotes for the Revitalize 209 Committee to review. The Revitalize 209 Committee asked for a revised application for its arcade building and an additional quote.
- The apartment rental property at 5027 Milford Rd. submitted its application to reside the house. They are currently awaiting two quotes.
- The committee discussed canvassing in the last week of March (3/30 – 4/5/25), particularly on the dates of Wed., 4/2/25, and Thurs., 4/3/25:
 - The committee discussed that it would canvass in pairs so as to not overwhelm applicants, but to have support.
 - Joe Memoli and Beverly Brown volunteered to do canvassing in the morning.
 - Ed Regina and Charlie Stecker volunteered to do canvassing in the afternoon.
 - James Brechbiel noted that he would provide materials to canvass with and was available as well.
 - It was noted that Deborah Emin would abstain from canvassing as she is part of the Revitalize 209 Committee.

EDC Applications:

- The committee reviewed three applications to fill the EDC vacancy.
- Ed Regina thanked Andrea Palmieri and Kristin McKeown for attending the meeting and there was a discussion with the two candidates. The applicants left for the committee's deliberations.
- The committee noted that all three candidates were exceptionally qualified, and expressed the challenge of selecting just one individual. There was additional discussion about how the strengths of each applicant could benefit not just the EDC, but other Township committees and initiatives.
- Ed Regina made a motion to recommend Ashley Takacs for the EDC, seconded by Deborah Emin. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements:

- None

Public Comments:

- None

Meeting adjournment: Deborah Emin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m., seconded by Beverly Brown. The motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,
James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township