



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) June 16, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on June 16, 2025, with Ed Regina (Chairperson) presiding.

Board Members: Ed Regina (Chairperson), Deborah Emin (Vice Chairperson), Charlie Stecker, and Ashley Takacs attended in person. Gina Bertucci and Beverly Brown attended via Zoom.

Absent: Joe Memoli.

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

Township Residents/Guests: Michael Putney.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm with Ed Regina presiding.

Minutes and Agenda

- Beverly Brown made a motion to approve the May Minutes, seconded by Ashley Takacs. Motion passed 6-0.
- Deborah Emin made a motion to approve the June agenda. Charlie Stecker seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Correspondence

- None

New Business:

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

- Big Ridge Storage (formerly Winds West Storage) expects to start construction this summer. The unit will be on the corner of Big Ridge and Milford (Route 209). It will be 3 stories and 120 units.
- The Apartments at Mt. Nebo submitted plans for Phase II (30 units). The Planning Commission expects to review the project at its next meeting (6/19/25).
- Busy Bees Preschool and Daycare will be opening this summer (August projected) in the Retro Plaza.
- The Big A Restaurant is under contract.
 - Beverly Brown noted that the reported prospective buyer could possibly be using the facilities more as a catering hall, which would benefit the community, surrounding golf courses, and more.
- Marshalls Square (Sunoco Plaza) is for sale for \$6.5 million.
- JuJu's Beauty (soaps, lotions, candles, and more) is projecting a grand opening in August and will confirm soon.
- Pocono Ridge Inn (former Deerfield Inn) and expects to have its final inspection on 6/18/25.

Community/Township Updates: James Brechbiel directed the committee to review the list of events at the bottom of agenda:

- James Brechbiel notified the committee that the Township was successful in its grant application to the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce (GLVCC) for the Marshalls Creek Explosion Memorial expansion and was preliminarily awarded \$1,979.80 (max ask was \$2,000). The committee discussed the goal of having more banners at the site, markers for each of the victims, and Ed Regina noted he would like to be involved in the landscaping portion of the memorial site once PennDOT safety improvements and widening for Route 209 are established and complete.
- The EDC and Revitalize 209 Committees submitted letters of support for the establishment of Fort Hyndshaw as a national monument. The letters were sent by Danny Younger to Congressman Rob Bresnahan's Office.
- Middle Smithfield Township Community Day is on Saturday, 8/2/25, from 12 pm to 3 pm at Echo Lake Park.
- An EDC initiative, The NeighborWorks Home Buyers Seminar, is booked for Saturday, 11/1/25, from 9 am to 4 pm at the Community and Cultural Center.

Christmas in July:

- The committee discussed that the goal is to get around 20 businesses participating in the abbreviated campaign.
- The campaign will primarily be marketed on social media, and a press release/notifications to past users will be sent.
- A blurb will go in the summer newsletter with current offers and "go to www.MiddleSmithfieldTownship.com (<https://bit.ly/Christmas-In-July2025>) and www.Facebook.com/MstShopLocal/" listed for the offers/updates.

Social Media Assistance to Small Businesses:

- The committee discussed working with businesses to educate on social media and how to help optimize presence, so to help showcase, etc. Deborah Emin noted that business owners do not always have the time/resources.
- Gina Bertucci noted that the EDC's efforts should concentrate on promoting the businesses on their behalf and utilize the Township's resources (Facebook page, Shop Local campaign, etc.) to bring attention to them. Charlie Stecker noted spotlighting a business of the month/week could be a consideration as well. Ashley Takacs noted that organic content is the most effective to showcase businesses, and EDC members should incorporate their patronage of the small business on their own accounts, etc. to help promote them.
- Annette Atkinson noted that EDC members can do short reels/videos on their phones with the business owners, and coordinate with EDC members for sharing content, etc. to maximize efforts.
- The Committee discussed "Google My Business" to help ensure local businesses appear in search results for terms like "hairstylist near me," and similar queries.

Old Business:

Revitalize 209 Status Updates: The Committee reviewed the following updates:

- **Jinyin Temple** – The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is awaiting the solicitor to finish reviewing Jinyin's application and plan to take action on it at the 6/26/25 meeting. The Revitalize 209 Committee gave the project a 4.38 out of 5.
- **Richard's Tree Farm** submitted an application and is awaiting 1 additional quote for the Revitalize 209 Committee to make its recommendation to the BOS. The committee has kept its rating of 4 out of 5.
- **Rental House at 5027 Milford Rd.** is awaiting 1 quote to complete its siding project for the Revitalize 209 Committee to make its recommendation to the BOS. The committee has kept its rating of 4.06 out of 5.
- **Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church** submitted an LOI for its steeple repair project. The committee gave the project a rating of 3.92 out of 5. The committee also reviewed a paving project for the church and gave it 3.28 out of 5.
- **Gulf Station** at 5243 Milford Rd. submitted a LOI for a siding and shingle awning repair/replacement project. The Committee gave the project a 3.72 out of 5. The applicant was notified to follow up with Zoning.

America 250: The Committee reviewed the following:

- The Township is trying to coordinate with the County to bolster the project and not be redundant.
- An idea the EDC discussed is having a punch/stamp card go out in the newsletter and have the stores participate in a "scavenger hunt" type of game with prizes from businesses, etc.
- The Township is looking for (1 – 2) "representative" members from each of its committees to work on initiatives/collaborations for the anniversary next year. The committee discussed possibilities for this, and Charlie Stecker and Ashley Takacs noted they would consider the opportunity.

Announcements:

- None.

Public Comments:

- None

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,
James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township