



Minutes: Revitalize 209 Committee June 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Revitalize 209 Committee was held on June 24, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm with Deborah Emin (Chairperson) presiding.

Committee Members: Deborah Emin (Chairperson), Nick Theofilos (Vice Chairperson), Michael Coffey, Ralph Dinkle, John Kahwaty, George Kuchek, and Sonny Murray in person.

Absent: None

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

Township Residents/Guests: Michael Putney.

Minutes and Agenda

- Nick Theofilos made a motion to accept the May minutes, seconded by Ralph Dinkle. Motion passed 7-0.
- Nick Theofilos made a motion to accept the June agenda, seconded by Michael Coffey. Motion passed 7-0.

Correspondence

- None.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

- None.

New Business:

- **Application – Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church Application**
 - The committee reviewed the application submitted for the paving of the driveway and front turnaround area (visible from Route 209). The application is missing quotes and, therefore, incomplete.
 - Ralph Dinkle noted, in addition to quotes, a sketch with square footage is needed.
 - Nick Theofilos noted that the lot's current condition is in need of repair, with many low spots that need to be cut out, patched to match, etc. Nick T. furthered that the applicant may be able to do a greater amount of surface due to the lot already being paved and giving a base to work with, but all would depend on the low spots and other factors.
 - The committee gave the project a 3.28 out of 5 and is keeping the rating until it sees the complete application with quotes.
 - The application was tabled until quotes are received.
- **Letter of Interest (LOI) Update: Pocono Bazaar**
 - James Brechbiel reported that the property manager for the flea market would like to review other projects for the property and was invited to the meeting, but had to cancel due to a conflict. They have noted they will be attending the next meeting.

Old Business: James Brechbiel noted the following status updates for two (2) complete applications, one (1) application in incomplete status, one (1) Letter of Interest (LOI), and three (3) projects preliminarily approved:

- **Application - Richards Tree Farm**
 - The committee reviewed a complete application.
 - James Brechbiel followed up on the committee's request to review if all the swing gates were going to be replaced and noted that the applicant confirmed the one swing fence will not be replaced as it was custom-made, but will be painted black to match the fence. The other two fences would be replaced.
 - The committee determined to keep the metric rating of 4 out of 5.
 - George Kuchek made a motion to recommend the application to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), seconded by John Kahwaty. Motion passed 7-0.
- **Application – Jinyin Temple**
 - The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is reviewing the narrative and additional quote for the temple and hopes to take action on the application at its next meeting.
- **Application – House at 5027 Milford Rd.**
 - The application remains incomplete. The applicant is stalled at two (2) quotes. They have reached out to other contractors, are awaiting a response.
- **LOI - Gulf at 5243 Milford Rd.**

- The applicant is discussing compliance items with Zoning. No updates have been reported.
- **Preliminarily Approved - The Big A Restaurant**
 - The restaurant is in the process of being sold. The owner is working with the new prospective owner and will determine the project's completion details, etc. from there.
- **Preliminarily Approved - Echo Lake Plaza**
 - The owner asked for an extension as they had a booming spring, which delayed the project. The BOS is expected to take action on the request at its next meeting.
- **Preliminarily Approved - Marathon Studios**
 - The owner asked for an extension as their property is listed as part of the expansion/safety upgrade for Route 209. The BOS is expected to review at its next meeting.
- Sonny Murray noted that the Pocono Auto Center and U-Haul should consider renewing its pursuit of projects. The committee discussed that the business, who had applied for the grant in the past but never completed its application, has been reached out to and canvassed by the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and others several times, and, although multiple attempts were made, the required paperwork was never received. Michael Coffey asked for clarity about the project's barrier wall size in the original concept, and James Brechbiel noted that it did not exceed 2 feet according to his discussions with the owner. The committee noted members could stop in to speak with the owner about future plans that are being considered for the property. Annette Atkinson noted that the customer service she experienced while on the property was exceptional.
- Sonny Murray noted that properties can continue to improve with the grant, but those who are not in compliance will detract from updates. Deborah Emin noted the Property Maintenance Code could be used to ensure those pursuing the Revitalize 209 Program are not hindered by the lack of upkeep on other properties.

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:
 - 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.
 - Apartments at Mt. Nebo submitted plans for Phase II (30 units).
 - Busy Bees Preschool and Daycare will be opening this summer (August projected) in the Retro Plaza.
 - The Big A is under contract.
 - Marshalls Square (Sunoco Plaza) is for sale \$6.5 million.
 - The grand opening for JuJu's Beauty in August. Date to be confirmed.
 - Middle Smithfield submitted an application to the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce for its Main Street Beautification Grant to expand the Marshalls Creek Explosion Memorial Site (landscaping around marker, additional banners, and markers for victims), and was notified that it was awarded for \$1,979.80 . The banners are now displayed at the site.
 - The EDC and Revitalize 209 Committees submitted letters of support for the establishment of Fort Hyndshaw as a national monument. Danny Younger mailed them to Congressman Rob Bresnahan.
 - Christmas in July runs 7/1 – 7/31/25. Deals will be in the summer newsletter and at township for pickup.
 - Middle Smithfield Township Community Day is Saturday, 8/2/25, from 12 pm to 3 pm at Echo Lake Park.

Public Comments:

- None.

Meeting adjournment:

- John Kahwaty made a motion to adjourn at 6:19 pm, seconded by Nick Theofilos. Motion passed 7-0.

The next meeting will be held on July 22, 2025, at 5:30 pm at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted, James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township