



Minutes: Revitalize 209 Committee July 22, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Revitalize 209 Committee was held on July 22, 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, and John Kahwaty, in person.

Absent: George Kuchek and Sonny Murray.

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

Township Residents/Guests: None.

Minutes and Agenda

- Nick Theofilos made a motion to accept the June minutes, seconded by Ralph Dinkle. Motion passed 5-0.
- Nick Theofilos made a motion to accept the July agenda, seconded by Ralph Dinkle. Motion passed 5-0.

Correspondence: None.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: None.

New Business:

- **Application – Pocono U-Haul Application**
 - The committee reviewed a new application to remove the stone and parking blocks from the parking lot line facing Route 209 and for the installation of a 48" split rail fence in its place. The project is incomplete as the business owner is awaiting quotes.
 - The committee discussed that it preferred the previous project for a 2 ft retaining wall on the parking lot line, as opposed to the fence. The retaining wall project received a 3.36 out of 5 at a previous meeting.
 - Michael Coffey noted that many hang banners/signs off split rail fences, which he is not in favor of.
 - Ralph Dinkle noted that removing the river rocks and broken/excessive parking blocks and cleaning up the weeds would help move the property towards a better look, but that the fence may not make a demonstrable difference for the property. Ralph D. furthered that a split rail fence would not correct the maintenance of the weeds overall. Deborah Emin noted that the fence may look like a temporary fix and not refresh the property as a whole.
 - John Kahwaty noted that the parking lot is in need of repair.
 - The committee discussed that the project is estimated at \$20k. Nick Theofilos noted that taking all the river rock, broken/excess parking blocks out and hauling them away could cost a significant amount towards the project, upwards of \$7,500 or greater, and contribute to the overall projected cost with the fence installation. James Brechbiel noted the applicant would revise the cost based on the lowest quote.
 - The committee discussed that the applicant should consider getting an architect for an overall sketch plan of the property to refresh the look and pick a project that makes the most difference from that.
 - Nick Theofilos noted the scope of the project has changed and made a motion to give a new metric for the split rail fence project. John Kahwaty seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0, and the committee gave the project a 2.8 out of 5.
- **Application – Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church Application II – Steeple Repair Project**
 - See notes under the Old Business section.

Old Business: James Brechbiel noted the following status updates:

- **Applications – Middle Smithfield Township Presbyterian Church (Project 1 – Paving; Project 2 – Steeple Repair)**
 - **Project 1 – Paving:** The committee reviewed an incomplete application that was revised since its meeting in June. The church submitted (2) quotes for the paving project and is awaiting a third quote to complete the application. The scope of the project also changed from a partial paving of the lot, driveway, and front turnaround circle, to a project for paving the entire lot, driveway, and front circle.
 - James Brechbiel reported that the church confirmed its prep work would be inspected by the paving company before commencing the paving.
 - Ralph Dinkle noted that a paving project would look better than the lot's current condition.

- Deborah Emin noted that the Township has been allowed to utilize the parking lot for many of its events at the Community and Cultural Center (CCC) and that the parking lot is also utilized for voting.
- The committee maintained its metric rating of 3.28 out of 5 and had no notes for the church to review.
- **Project II – Steeple Project:** The committee reviewed a new, incomplete application for a steeple project to repair and repaint the front two steeples. Previously, the church provided a scope of the project in a letter of interest that the committee reviewed at its 05/27/25 meeting. The application has (2) quotes, and the church was awaiting a third quote to complete the submission.
- James Brechbiel noted that the church confirmed that one of the quotes did not note the pricing for the cost of materials. James B. requested that the quote be revised to include the cost of materials.
- The committee previously gave the project a 3.92 out of 5 and made no motion to revisit the rating.
- Deborah Emin asked if the committee needed to select one project over another to present to the BOS. Annette Atkinson said it is probable that the BOS will request the applicant finish one project that it prioritizes before any action/discussion is taken on another. Deborah E. noted she felt the paving project was more of a priority as the election is in November and the lot's current condition is a safety concern.
- **Application – House at 5027 Milford Rd.**
 - The application remains incomplete. The applicant is stalled at two (2) quotes and noted that it will receive a third quote by the committee's next meeting.
 - The applicant confirmed that they planned to redo the deck as well, but the project doesn't fit into the cost.
 - The siding project received a 4.06 out of 5, and the committee made no motion to revisit the rating.
- **Application – Jinyin Temple:** The BOS preliminarily approved the project for the former arcade building.
- **Application – Richards Tree Farm:** The BOS is expected to take action on the application at its 7/24/25 meeting.

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:
 - Pocono Ridge Inn's soft opening is expected summer 2025.
 - 209 Blazin' Grill has permits and is hoping to open in August or September.
 - The Big Ridge Self Storage developer submitted checks for permits and given a LERTA application form.
 - Mt. Nebo Plans are being reviewed by the Planning Commission.
 - Middle Smithfield Community Day is Saturday, 8/2/25, from 12p – 3p at Echo Lake Park.
 - Middle Smithfield Township Memory Makers is Saturday, 8/9/25.
 - Middle Smithfield is currently considering the Department of Community and Economic Development's Main Street Matters Grant Program for planning, program development, façade, and streetscaping projects. The application is due 8/31/25.
 - The Township is looking into software by the name of Placer AI, a platform that can be used by the different Township departments, in particular Economic Development for prospecting new businesses, Parks to gauge event/community attendance, Public Works to get road traffic counts, etc. Deborah Emin noted she had concerns about the technology and environmental impact. Michael Coffey noted he is not in favor of the applications reporting the locations of their users, despite permission being granted, etc.
 - Big Ridge Storage (formerly Winds West Storage) expects to start construction summer of 2025. The unit will be on the corner of Big Ridge and Milford (Route 209) and will be 3 stories and 120 units.

Public Comments: None

Meeting adjournment:

- Nick Theofilos made a motion to adjourn at 7:00 pm, seconded by John Kahwaty. Motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on August 26, 2025, at 5:30 pm at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted, James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township