



## **Minutes: Revitalize 209 Committee August 26, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Revitalize 209 Committee was held on August 26, 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 George Kuchek, in person.

**Absent:** John Kahwaty and Sonny Murray.

**Township Staff:** James Brechbiel, ED Manager, in person.

**Township Residents/Guests:** Michael Putney.

### **Minutes and Agenda**

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

**Correspondence:** None.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:** None.

### **New Business:**

- None

**Old Business:** James Brechbiel noted the following status updates:

- **Applications – Middle Smithfield Township Presbyterian Church (Project I – Repair and Sealing Parking Lot)**
  - The committee reviewed a complete application with three quotes, TPS being the lowest at \$18,175.
  - Nick Theofilos noted that the project is for repairing and resurfacing/sealing the entire lot, driveway, and front circle, rather than a paving project.
  - Ralph Dinkle noted that the project should be done either way, as it will be a vast improvement.
  - Deborah Emin noted that the wear and tear on the pavement due to overflow from Township events, it being a polling location, etc., also contributes to the church needing to do the project.
  - George Kuchek noted that he originally rated the project on the lower side due to some of the lot not being visible from Route 209, but also thinks the Township's use of the lot should be a consideration.
  - The committee originally gave the project a 3.8 out of 5. Ralph Dinkle made a motion to give the project a new metric rating and recommend it to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), seconded by George Kuchek. The motion passed unanimously, and a new metric rating of 4.08 out of 5 was given. The committee asked that a note be given to the BOS regarding the committee's view of the need for the project due to the community's use of the parking lot. James Brechbiel noted he would include the note with the committee's recommendation of the application.
- **Application – Rental House at 5027 Milford Rd.**
  - The committee reviewed a complete application with three quotes, \$17,500 for Frank Villecco General Contractor being the lowest.
  - The siding project received a 4.06 out of 5 at a previous meeting.
  - George Kuchek made a motion to recommend the project to the BOS with the metric given, seconded by Deborah Emin. Motion passed unanimously.
  - Deborah Emin noted that the work being done on the property to date has already improved it and requested that updated pictures for the application be included. James Brechbiel noted he would have pictures of the property in its recent condition submitted with the application.
- **Application - Pocono U-Haul:** The application is still missing quotes, and there is no status update.
- **Preliminarily Approved – Jinyin Temple:** The applicant noted the contractor took another project over the summer and is trying to schedule the project for fall, if not early spring. They will follow up once a date is firm.
- **Preliminarily Approved – Richards Tree Farm:** The BOS took action on the application at its 7/24/25 meeting, and it was preliminarily approved. The project is expected to be scheduled for the fall.

## **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:
  - Developers for the Big Ridge Self Storage have begun clearing at the location (corner of Milford and Big Ridge Drive). Construction is expected to begin fall / early spring. George Kuchek asked for the Township to review plans related to the loading dock. Michael Coffey asked if Zoning prohibits self-storage in the Township, and Nick Theofilos noted that Zoning must allow all uses in the Township, but can restrict them to certain zones, etc. Self-storage is currently a conditional use in the Township's C-1 and C-2 Commercial Zones, and permitted in the Industrial Zone.
  - 209 Blazing Grill in the Marshalls Square Complex (by Price Chopper) received a certificate of occupancy (CO). The soft opening for the restaurant is at the end of August 2025, and the grand opening is on Friday, 9/19/25, at 12 pm.
  - Raj Investment (former Pocono Palace) revealed its new name –SRSC (Shrimad Rajchandra Spiritual Center) and they have partnered with St. Luke's for a Poconos Wellness Fest on 9/27/25 at 12:30-3:30 p.
  - LERTA Update— Monroe County passed its 10-year extension of the program on 8/6/25. The Township's program is officially reinstated through 2035 for the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD) and Monroe County. Middle Smithfield Township's program does not expire.
  - The Township attended the Pocono Mountain Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC's) Luncheon, where PPL (Pennsylvania Power & Light) presented Energy Resource Adequacy Crisis updates. James B. noted for the committee to look into House Bill (HB) 1272 / Senate Bill (SB) 897: Generation Investment Flexibility for Electronic Distribution Companies (EDCs), allowing options for generation development companies to invest in generation development, which possibly includes ownership, for addressing anticipated shortfalls (40GW–70GW+ by year 2030) and reducing price volatility. (Short – if there is a shortfall, PPL can petition the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PA PUC) to either create directly, or contract a third party to do so).
  - The Township is applying for the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Main Street Matters Grant to establish a “downtown development district.” Said project will include geofencing software for data/research and business prospecting, an official Township map, and a sketch plan of the district. Thanks to all who submitted a letter of support for the Township.
  - The Township attended the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce (GLVCC) Award Ceremony on Wednesday, 8/20/25, for its Marshalls Creek Explosion Site project that will receive \$1,979.80 from the chamber. Funds will be used for additional banners on 8 utility poles aligning Route 209 at the site, landscaping around the Historical Marker, and markers in honor of the victims who lost their lives.
  - The Middle Smithfield Township 1,000 Feet of Street Litter Clean-up is Saturday, 9/20/25, at 8 am. Members present were instructed to contact Chris Rain, Parks and Recreation Manager, for more information or to volunteer.

## **Public Comments: None**

## **Meeting adjournment:**

- George Kuchek made a motion to adjourn at 6:30 pm, seconded by Ralph Dinkle. Motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on September 23, 2025, at 5:30 pm at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township