



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) September 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on September 15, 2025, with Ed Regina (Chairperson) presiding.

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

Absent: Gina Bertucci

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

Township Residents/Guests: Fernanda Proano attended via Zoom.

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

Minutes and Agenda

- Joe Memoli made a motion to approve the August Minutes, seconded by Charlie Stecker. Motion passed 6-0.
- Deborah Emin made a motion to amend the agenda and have Fernanda Proano/NeighborWorks at the top of the September agenda. Charlie Stecker seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Correspondence

- None.

New Business:

NeighborWorks Homeowners and First-Time Home Buyers Workshop:

- Fernanda Proano of NeighborWorks reviewed the upcoming partnership with the EDC and the Homeowners and First Time Home Buyers Workshop on Saturday, 11/1/25. Fernanda noted that the workshop provides lunch from a local township business, runs from 10 am to 4 pm, and that she would be arriving between 9:15 / 9:30 am to set up.
- The Committee discussed attendance requirements for the event, and Beverly Brown noted that Saturdays are better for getting the public. Fernanda P. noted that a requirement of 7 to 10 households attending is needed to run the workshop. Charlie Stecker noted he would reach out to realtors with the flyer and information. Fernanda P. noted that NeighborWorks would reach out to the Pocono Mountain Relators Association (PMRA) so it can post the event on its website as well. Ed Regina noted that a copy of the press release should be given to the Committee to share.
- The Committee discussed ways to expand the base of those who can attend and noted that the workshop should be called the Homeowners and First-Time Buyers Workshop to attract more attendees. Fernanda P. noted she would review all with marketing as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has specific guidelines.
- Beverly Brown and Charlie Stecker noted that 3 years, or more of not owning a home qualifies as a first-time buyer, and Fernanda Proano noted that if someone recently got divorced, it also qualifies them as a first-time buyer.
- Charlie Stecker added that those who own a mobile home and are buying a new home (non-mobile) also qualify.
- Joe Memoli asked if there could be a community speaker, and Fernanda P. noted that they had invited Habitat for Humanity to other workshops and would consider a community speaker for the 11/1/25 event as well.
- The Committee discussed other features of the workshop, including it being an abbreviated program for foreclosure avoidance. Fernanda P. noted that 70% of those who attend the workshop do not see foreclosure.
- The Committee reviewed the agenda, and James Brechbiel asked if NeighborWorks could confirm that all the subjects on the agenda had a speaker. Fernanda P. confirmed that there would be a speaker for each subject, but noted they were still looking for a home inspector. Beverly Brown noted she would reach out to her contacts.
- James B. noted he would send an introductory email between the EDC and NeighborWorks following the meeting.
- Beverly Brown and Charlie Stecker noted they would be attending the event, and other members of the Committee noted they would follow up to confirm their attendance.

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

- Big Ridge Self Storage project was approved for its Local Economic Revitalization Tax Abatement (LERTA) application with Monroe County on 9/3/25.
- The Budding Seed Early Development Center is expected to open fall, 2025. The daycare works with children who have behavioral needs and offers therapeutic services.

- Platoon Army Supply listed its business for sale. They are looking for a new owner to keep the name and take over the lease. The owner cited personal reasons for the decision.
- The Blazing Grill Ribbon Cutting is Friday, 9/19/25, at 12 pm. Ashley Takacs, Joe Memoli, Ed Regina, and Charlie Stecker noted that they planned to attend.
- The SRSC (Shrimad Rajchandra Spiritual Center) and St. Luke's Wellness Fest is 9/27/25 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

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

- Middle Smithfield Township submitted its application to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Main Street Matters Grant Program for its downtown development district plan on 8/29/25.
- The Litter and Beautification 1,000 Feet of Street 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.
- The Middle Smithfield Trunk or Treat is Saturday, 10/18/25, from 12 pm to 2 pm at Rescia Park. Members present were instructed to contact Chris Rain, Parks and Recreation Manager, for more information or to volunteer.

Shop Local Holiday Campaign Workflow:

- James Brechbiel noted that a letter was mailed to the businesses for their promotions and asked which committee members were volunteering to help with deal card activations at the tree lighting on Saturday, 11/29/25. Charlie Stecker and Deborah Emin confirmed they would help with activations, and Ashley Takacs noted she was tentative.
- James B. noted he would be canvassing for Shop Local Deals the week of 9/21/25 and for those on the Committee who were available to confirm who could join.

Business Directory:

- James Brechbiel requested the EDC members take sections of the directory and verify updates for the 2026 edition. Ashley Takacs noted she would take a section, and Joe Memoli noted he could help as well. James B. noted he would send links of the current directory or have a copy available to be picked up by members who could assist.
- James B. asked the Committee to come to the next meeting with ideas for changes/updates to the cover.

Old Business:

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

- **Richards Tree Farm's** project is expected to start in the fall, 2025.
- **Middle Smithfield Presbyterian** submitted its complete application to repair/resurface the parking lot. The Revitalize 209 Committee gave the project a metric of 4.08 out of 5 and recommended it to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The project had been disqualified as the applicant had done the work before action on the preliminary approval was given.
- **Rental House at 5027 Milford Rd.** submitted its complete application for siding the entire house. The committee gave the project a 4.06 out of 5 and recommended it to the BOS. The BOS gave preliminary approval of the project at its regular meeting on 9/11/25.

EDC Membership Expansion/Activity & Upcoming Events:

- The Committee discussed membership expansion briefly and agreed to table the subject until reorganization.

Announcements:

- Joe Memoli asked if the BOS made any changes to the ordinance concerning data centers, and Annette Atkinson noted that the township updated it based on Penn Future's model ordinance and plans to restrict it to only be allowed in the Township's Industrial Zone.

Public Comments:

- None

Meeting adjournment: Joe Memoli made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m., seconded by Deborah Emin. The motion passed 6-0.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted, James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township