



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) October 20, 2025

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on October 20, 2025, with Ed Regina (Chairperson) presiding.

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

Absent: Beverly Brown

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

Township Residents/Guests: Michael Putney.

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm with Ed Regina presiding.

Minutes and Agenda

- Gina Bertucci made a motion to approve the September Minutes, seconded by Deborah Emin. Motion passed 5-0.
- Gina Bertucci made a motion to approve the October agenda. Deborah Emin seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. (Charlie Stecker was not present for approval of the minutes, or agenda).

Correspondence

- None.

New Business:

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

- James Brechbiel thanked the EDC members who came to the 209 Blazing Grill Ribbon Cutting on 9/19/25, and the I Cue Cigar Lounge Anniversary event on 10/17/25.
- Savory Eats Restaurant is projected to open in Liberty Plaza. The owners currently have a food truck business and will now include the storefront. The establishment serves comfort food, burgers, fries, and traditional American cuisine.
- East Coast Barbers is moving from Retro Plaza to Liberty Plaza and is expected to reopen before the new year.
- The Big A has been sold to the Farmhouse and will be rebranded as "Farmhouse on the Lake." Renovations are expected throughout the winter and a reopening in the Spring of 2026. The Big A will continue to operate as normal.
- Shrimad Rajchandra Spiritual Center (SRSC) USA's Health and Wellness Festival was a success with a large turnout of the public. Ed Regina noted that the Township should approach SRSC about making the event more than once a year, and James Brechbiel confirmed that SRSC USA had noted they were considering doing it twice a year. James B. furthered that SRSC – USA supplied the public with renderings of the renovations taking place and shared copies with the Committee. Deborah Emin noted that SRSC has donated many pieces of the former Pocono Palace's furniture and had members fill thousands of bags with food donations to local pantries.
- Big Ridge Self Storage started construction and is anticipating a 2026 opening date. A rendering of the building was shared with the Committee. Ed Regina asked if the developer had any plans to provide landscaping in the back of the facility, and Annette Atkinson noted landscaping and approved buffer plantings for the facility are part of the plan.

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

- The Township applied for the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Local Share Account (LSA) for the Downtown Development District Plan in the amount of \$50,000, as well as another application on behalf of the Bushkill Volunteer Fire Dept. for needed renovations on its building in an amount up to \$300,000.
- The Township's last weekly cleanup for 2025 is Friday, 10/24/25, and Saturday, 10/25/25.
- The Township will display additional Hometown Hero Banners at the Community and Cultural Center (CCC) in the beginning of November.
- Person of the Year Nominations are open through 11/14/25, and members were encouraged to contact Holly Dennis for more information.
- The Township's Holiday Market and Tree Lighting is Saturday, 11/29/25, and members of the EDC will be present to help residents and attendees of the event activate their 2025 Shop Local Deal Card. Deborah Emin and Charlie Stecker noted they were able to attend and help with sign ups.

Goals, Reorganization, and Confirm Meeting Days/Times for 2026:

- The committee discussed meeting days and times for 2026 and confirmed that the third Monday of every month at 5:30 pm would continue to be followed.
- James Brechbiel asked the committee to consider alternative dates for January and February of 2026, as they always fall on holidays. The committee noted they would confirm dates by the time of the November EDC meeting.
- The committee discussed that members would start considering goals for 2026 and have ideas by the next meeting. Gina Bertucci asked James Brechbiel to send a list of what the goals were for 2025, and James noted he would do so.

- The committee discussed the EDC line-up (chair, vice-chair, etc.) for 2026. Ashley Takacs made a motion to keep the slate the same, and Joe Memoli seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Gina Bertucci asked where the committee landed on expansion and if the EDC was at maximum membership allowance. Annette Atkinson noted the EDC was at capacity, but that the Board of Supervisors could consider changing the ordinance if it was requested.
- The Committee discussed that, with current member participation, there is no immediate need to add new members. Deborah Emin clarified that interest in expanding the Committee was based on the desire to increase the Committee's capacity to accomplish more. Gina Bertucci noted that adding members could also create additional management responsibilities for the liaison. The Committee agreed to table the discussion.

Old Business:

Homeowner and First Time Home Buyer Program with NeighborWorks:

- James Brechbiel noted that NeighborWorks confirmed 17 out of the 25 spots had been reserved.
- James Brechbiel reported that NeighborWorks rebooked the lender speaker, as the previous one had a conflict.
- Charlie Stecker confirmed he would be attending and would contact relators with flyers, etc. James Brechbiel noted that Beverly Brown confirmed she would be attending and that she took posters and flyers to distribute. Ed Regina and Joe Memoli noted they would attend, but not for the full day.

Shop Local Holiday Campaign Status:

- James Brechbiel noted that canvassing the businesses was complete, and a new record of 60 deals were submitted for the holiday campaign. A few more deals were expected to be confirmed before the deal card goes to the printers, which are expected to hit mailboxes before Monday, 11/24/25, when the Shop Local Holiday Campaign begins
- Commercials were scheduled to book the first two weeks in November.
- James Brechbiel noted there is consideration of increasing the footprint of Shop Local to include residents of neighboring Townships in the future. Determinations have not been confirmed, however.

Business Directory – 2026 Status:

- James Brechbiel noted that the first round of edits went to the graphic designer and asked the committee for ideas about the cover. Annette Atkinson asked if there were different drone shots that could be considered. Ashley Takacs suggested to have a collage mural of logos considered. James Brechbiel noted he would review all.
- Joe Memoli noted the back cover of the business directory should have QR Codes to bring the reader to the EDC page, and James Brechbiel noted the adjustment would be incorporated.

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

- **Jinyin Temple** has started work on its repair/paint project.
- **Lakeside Investment Corp.** completed its project and submitted reimbursement documents for the Board of Supervisors' regular meeting on 10/23/25.
- **The Green Rental at 5047 Milford Rd.-** The owner is working on an application for re-siding the structure and hoped to submit all by the Revitalize 209 Committee Meeting on 10/28/25.

Announcements:

- Deborah Emin noted that the Township did an excellent job on the Fall Newsletter and that great information regarding the committees, Revitalize 209 Grant, and more are available for all to review. Ed Regina noted that the issues have become more comprehensive and that the Township's efforts have been impactful and informative.

Public Comments:

- None

Meeting adjournment: Ashley Takacs made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m., seconded by Joe Memoli. The motion passed 6-0.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Township Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,
James Brechbiel, Middle Smithfield Township