



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee November 9, 2015

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on November 9, 2015 at 6:30 pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Robert Hetu as Chairman presiding.

Board Members: Robert Hetu, Carrie Wetherbee, Carl Wilgus, Gina Bertucci

Township Staff: Supervisor Annette Atkinson, Supervisor Michael Dwyer, and Judith Acosta as Liaison and Recording Secretary

Residents: Ed Regina

Meeting started at 6:35 pm with Robert Hetu as Chairman.

Minutes and Agenda

- Motion to accept & approve the minutes from the September 14, 2015 meeting was made by Robert Hetu. Carl Wilgus seconded the motion. All members were in favor.
- Motion to accept & approve the Agenda for November 9, 2015 was made by Carrie Wetherbee. Gina Bertucci seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Correspondence

- No correspondence

Guest Speakers:

Nate Staruch & Eric Koopman from Monroe County Planning Commission

- The Economic Development Committee welcomed our guest speakers from the Monroe County Planning Commission.
- Nate Staruch & Eric Koopman both expressed interest in attending our EDC Meeting to learn more from the committee on the township's plan for growth and development.
- A Financial Assistance Program for Local Municipalities is available.
 - The Board of County Commissioners and the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) have established the Financial Assistance Program (FAP) to provide monetary assistance to the municipalities of Monroe County in order to promote the development and adoption of resource protection ordinances and plans. Land use decisions are made at the local level and have impacts that extend beyond municipal boundaries. It is important that efforts to promote soundly planned growth be done with a coordinated strategy. FAP funds will be available on a first-come first-serve basis until all funds have been awarded. Municipalities are encouraged to apply in a timely manner. If additional funds become available, the Monroe County Planning Commission (MCPC) will provide written notice to the municipalities.

<http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/Planning/Pages/FinancialProgram.aspx>

- An example of this program – the West End was given money to develop an official map.
- Article 4 of the MPC says you can set aside property that you want to purchase eventually or reserve property for site lines, parking, and future community goals.
- Discussion surrounded possible uses for Middle Smithfield Township. It was clarified that funds would be available from the county for developing a map, research and legal work but not for actual improvements. Mike Dwyer mentioned how this would be helpful to identify grants that should be applied for toward future improvements.
- The BOS has met with the MCPC to review various improvements for the township such as bituminous sidewalks on Route 209. PennDOT is also preparing for improvements such as curbing and signs and will be paving Route 209 from the bypass to the national park.
- A traffic count was done and shows the busiest area in Monroe County exists in Middle Smithfield Township at the intersection of Route 209 and River Road/Winona Falls Rd.
- County GIS is expanding. Pictometry is now available online for subscribers. It was recently updated in 2015 and should be updated every two years moving forward.
- Robert Hetu was wondering if the County GIS system could be used more effectively from an Economic Development standpoint in providing property information such as acreage, frontage, sewer, etc. An app is being developed at this time with this information. It is in the early stages of development but efforts are being focused here. A voter registration app is the newest app that is up and running. It had been in development for some time.
- Ed Regina wondered if Realtors are able to access this information. At this time, no.
- The Economic Development Committee thanks Nate Staruch & Eric Koopman for coming. Nate Staruch & Eric Koopman thanked the committee for having them and looked forward to coming again in the future.

Old Business.

LERTA Update - Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson

- There is no real update for LERTA at this time but a recap of information was provided for the sake of our visitors.
- The township has been working with the County Assessment office on a final application.
- There are a few possible LERTA applicants within the township such as Werry's and Four Seasons. Many commercial property owners have expressed excitement over the potential improvements and/or sales in the future with the LERTA program now adopted.
- the ESASD School Board is trying to spot re-assess commercial properties in their district, which is counterproductive to the effort to expand the tax base by attracting business owners. These efforts have been unsuccessful so far. There is a resolution

bantering around the state government that would not allow for spot re-assessments. The BOS will keep a watch on this.

Marketing Package for Realtors etc. update – Judy Acosta, Annette Atkinson

- A sample of the most recent Realtor Package was available for the EDC to view.
- The MST Zoning Officer Shawn McGlynn, Zoning Administrator and EDC Liaison Judy Acosta and Supervisor Annette Atkinson met with Wilkins Realty Better Homes & Gardens on November 19, 2015 at their monthly sales meeting at their offices.
- Realtor Packets were given to all realtors there and several were left for those who were not able to attend. Approximately 25-30 realtors were in attendance.
- Shawn McGlynn spoke on how the zoning office can assist realtors in understanding what uses are available for commercial properties and offered a sample zoning opinion letter that can be requested for a fee for any property in question.
- Realtors were made aware of the many programs offered by the township and their EDC for the support and development of businesses as well as the residents. The LERTA program and how it increases the value of the commercial properties was also explained.
- A time of questions was allowed as well. The time was well received by all in attendance.
- More informative presentations will be planned in the future.

National Park Service/Geo-tourism Update - Carl Wilgus

- A handout from National Geographic on the Scenic, Wild Delaware River Geotourism Program was provided.
- This program and map continues to be developed and is expected to be completed by Spring 2016.
- There is a nomination process where residents can nominate sites to be included in the map. Nominations should be of a site that is unique and authentic to the Scenic, Wild Delaware River. Think of where you like to eat, where you like to sit, etc. Nominations should be submitted by the end of January. To nominate, visit delawareriver.natgeotourism.com.
- There is a Geotourism Council, on which Gina Bertucci sits, that will make sure nominations submitted are appropriate. National Geographic will populate the website and offer quality control.
- There are 22 Geotourism maps around the world that have been created, 15 are still active.

Shop Local 2015 – Judy Acosta, Annette Atkinson

- There are a number of stores participating this year, more than last year which was 36, and our goal is 50 participating businesses. More businesses are being added every day.
- Judy Acosta went store to store promoting the Shop Local program as well as Basic Power for commercial businesses and the LERTA program.

- The Shop Local Discount Card for 2015 has been mailed to all MST residents and should hit mailboxes by Saturday, November 21st. Discounts start on Monday, November 23rd.
- The stores with their discounts were not listed on this year's mailer. As a way of reminding residents of the discounts and providing a full list, they have been included in a newsletter that is expected to be in the mailboxes the first week of December.
- The Shop Local website, www.mstshoplocal.com and township app, WhereMST, will also be updated with all discounts. In addition, all participating businesses will be advertised on Facebook. We have banners hanging in the township and flyers at the HOA boards to encourage residents to activate their cards and shop local.
- There are two local businesses offering a raffle prize at our upcoming Township Tree Lighting for activated card holders.
- The zoning office is working with the BOS to develop a "move-in, move-out" ordinance initially in the commercial corridor which will allow better records of which businesses are in the township, as well as assist the Sewer Department in keeping their records accurate (EDUs per use) and assist Zoning in catching things like changes of use, short term rentals, etc. and zoning violations.

New Business

- There is no new business on the agenda for this meeting.
- Robert Hetu asked the committee to remember that reorganization will take place in January and encouraged all committee members to submit their letters of intent as soon as possible.
- Ed Regina asked if any update has been given on trucks traveling on Route 209 through the National Park. Mike Dwyer stated he would look into the status and update Ed Regina when possible.

Announcements

- The Historical Commission is holding a luncheon on December 3rd. The historic marker for the mastodon will be presented at the luncheon.
- The 3rd Annual Tree Lighting will take place on Saturday, November 28th at 5:30pm at Echo Lake Park.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2015. Meeting adjourned at 7:48pm