



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee 14 September 2015

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on September 14, 2015 at 6:30 pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Robert Hetu as Chairman presiding.

Board Members: Robert Hetu, Carrie Wetherbee, Carl Wilgus, Beverly Brown

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

Subcommittee Member: Debbie Kulick

Meeting started at 6:36pm with Robert Hetu as Chairman.

Minutes and Agenda

- Motion to accept & approve the minutes from the August 18, 2015 meeting was made by Carl Wilgus. Carrie Wetherbee seconded the motion. All members were in favor.
- A change was made to the draft agenda to update the date of our next meeting. Motion to accept & approve the Agenda for September 14, 2015 was made by Carl Wilgus. Carrie Wetherbee seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Old Business.

LERTA Update - Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson

- Update from Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson
- Now that the County has finalized the process applicants should follow, it is memorialized in Resolution 10-2015-1, which is proposed to be accepted at the October 8th BOS meeting.
- A letter will be sent to all commercial & industrial property owners in the LERTA zones to provide updated information on the LERTA program and the application process.

Marketing Package for Realtors etc. update - subcommittee

- The subcommittee met earlier today to discuss the components of the realtor package. An initial format has been decided on with the idea that the folder and inserts will change over time.
- Some members of the EDC will meet with local realtor offices along with our Zoning Officer Shawn McGlynn to introduce the services of the zoning office and answer any questions they may have as it pertains to permitted uses and the newly adopted LERTA program. Our first meeting will be scheduled in October with Better Homes and Gardens,

Wilkins & Associates. The committee member will be informed once this is scheduled so they can attend.

- Individual property owners will obtain similar information as the realtors through LERTA mailings.
- We are looking to share our township information with PMEDC and NEPA as well as possibly Representatives Scavello & Brown. There is a possibility as well to be included in their Legislative reports in the future.

National Park Service/Geo-tourism Update - Carl Wilgus

- The geo-tourism map and website development is moving forward with the grant from the William Penn Foundation.
- Carl Wilgus continues to be active in this matter, as well as Gina Bertucci, and will continue to update the committee on the progress.
- They hope to have the project completed by spring of 2016 in time for summer tourism.

Fall Event update – Robert Hetu

- The committee decided at the August meeting to cancel the proposed fall event and push it possibly to the spring.
- The Fossil Day event has moved to Historical Committee and Carrie Wetherbee is working with Rosemary Brown's office with regard to the placement of the historical marker for the Mastadon.
- Perhaps an event can be held to commemorate even though the sign may not be placed.
- Carrie Wetherbee will update us on the progress

New Business.

Property Reassessment

- Mike Dwyer attended a recent Finance Meeting at ESASD board meeting.
- ESASD school district is calling to have specific properties reassessed within the LERTA zones without the property owners knowledge or approval.
- When this happened in Mt. Pocono there were properties reassessed to be lower but a number that were much higher, by about 1/3, that was negotiated instead of going through the process
- This item was placed on the agenda to make the committee aware of this situation.
- Beverly Brown offered that she fought her property reassessment in the past and can give some advice on how a property owner can fight against this
- Dates are scheduled and businesses should be prepared for reassessment.

Economic Outlook Summit

- The EDC board members attended the Third Annual Economic Outlook Summit hosted by ESU on September 11, 2015.
- This year's Monroe County Economic Scorecard was presented and reported on the county's performance in six economic indicators: Employment, Earnings, Education,

Healthcare, Housing and Business Climate. The report also compares Monroe County to the seven neighboring counties: Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Northampton, Pike and Wayne.

- Keynote speakers and a panel discussion encouraged attendees to “Think Outside the Box” and lead our communities into the future for economic growth, and encouraged our state to restore the budget to create a tourism campaign, such as I Love NY, Virginia is for Lovers, and, the case study they used, “Pure Michigan”. As Crain’s reported, for every \$1 Michigan spent on their campaign, their return on investment was \$6.70 in increased tourism.
- Bob Hetu would like us to tackle the GIS; research what we can add or update and how we can do that. Judy Acosta will look into this further with perhaps the county planning commission.

Commercial Truck Ban – Route 209

- A discussion on an article in the Pocono Record was introduced by Carl Wilgus. The article was announcing a ban on large commercial trucks by the Delaware Water Gap National Park. This would prohibit large trucks to travel down Route 209 from Bushkill Falls Road to Milford, PA.
- There was discussion of a possible transfer station in Middle Smithfield Township where the larger trucks can transfer their cargo to smaller permitted trucks to make the run to Milford.

Shop Local 2015

- The committee agrees that since this is such a large topic to discuss we should perhaps have a separate meeting to specifically discuss Shop Local Holiday Event 2015.

Realtor Education Meeting

- Beverly Brown has reached out to Better Homes and Gardens, Wilkins & Associates to schedule our first of many realtor education meetings in October. She also provided contact information to Judy Acosta who will follow up directly and advise the committee of any upcoming meetings as they are scheduled.

Announcements

- The Sign Ordinance is being presented at a Public Hearing on September 24, 2015 at 7:00 pm. The Board of Supervisors invite the committee to attend and provide comment in support of the proposed ordinance if they feel inclined to do so. During the public hearing, comments from those in attendance will be taken and considered for revision.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2015. Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm