

MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

April 8, 2013

Meeting Called to order AT 6:35 P.M.

Present: Beverly Brown, Bob Hetu, Carrie Wetherbee, Debbie Kulick (Chair), Ed Regina, Parin Shah, Steve Feuer, Steve Van Why – Ad Hoc: Angel Santos

Supervisors: Annette Atkinson, Mike Dwyer

Excused: Carl Wilgus, Noreen Lowris, Tim O'Donnell

Guest Presenters: CARE- Michael Baxter, Michael Beckenbach and DCED- Gary Baker

Approval of Minutes: March 11, 2013, Minutes approved as submitted.

Hand Outs: Newspaper announcement of "Eleventh Annual Career Quest" given by Career Link and Pocono Mountains Media Group. Pocono Record article on "Small Business get pointers from local marketing experts".

Presentation by: Michael Baxter and Michael Beckenbach "Improving Our Economic Environment through Job Creation".

MST EDC was the first to have this presentation made by CARE. The presentation cover the pitfalls and pluses for improving our economic development to make the Monroe County Area more attractive for business development and Job Creation. A model that is hoped will be implemented by all Townships. MST EDC is the first such program with active volunteers working of the behalf of growth in their township.

Many areas were covered during the presentation but some main points were noted:

Contradiction within Agencies:

- Agency standards conflicts
- Conflicts can take years to achieve a solution
- Cost spiral making Monroe County unfeasible for development
- Shortest of usable acreages
- Chapter 102 requiring set back of 150' from exceptional value (EV) waterways
- Some projects were accepted for KOZ Tax deferred, but failed
- Infrastructure
- TIF Tax Districts

Definition of Wetlands – any body of water that grows plants for a period of three days or more.

Suggestions for MST:

- Submit Zoning Map of land that can be developed to Chuck Leonard or Michael Baxter.

- Get Footprint approval of land to be developed.

Speaker – Gary Baker – DCED (Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development)

Mr. Baker sat with the members of MST EDC and proved useful information on the Mission of DCED. He explained that one part of DCED is Economic Development, which is broken down into three divisions:

- Business Assistance (the largest department).
- Community Development (the second largest department)
- International Trade (a small portion)
- There are 52 program areas in the three divisions.

Suggestion: MST must present a project, ideas and put the package together in order to determine what is available.

Does MST EDC understand the term Local Share? It is the funds from gaming money which is housed within this Commonwealth Agency. Local Share Account- Monroe contact is Mandy Book. Act 71 the Gaming Act has developed guidelines for Monroe County.

LSA funds may be used for economic development, community development and public interest projects in Monroe County, Carbon, Lackawanna, Northampton, Pike and Wayne Counties. (Download guidelines (/sites/default/files/uploads/LSA-Monroe County Guideleines.pdf) Learn what is Monroe County points.

DCED can in most cases match most programs. Mr. Baker also suggested that MST EDC develop footprint when considering a selected property. Eleven new KOZ properties have been added to Monroe County. Our EDC committee must understand how many jobs will be created, and what will be the input to MST economy.

Both presentations from our invited guest were well received and extremely informative. We thank EDC Chair Debbie Kulick for arranging the program for April 8th.

With less than twenty minutes the Agenda for the night was quickly reviewed:

Committee Reports:

- a. Advertising Seminar was mentioned in the Pocono Record and received great reviews. Article was part of our handout for the evening. Bob Hetu, submitted is graph on the Seminar Feedback. Copy attached.
- b. Demographics with be handled over the next few months, by Tim O'Donnell and Bob Hetu at date to be set.
- c. Survey Project date to be set
- d. Business inventory/directory still needs work. Steve Van Way printed out the current file which will need to be adjusted for our purpose.

- e. Bulk email list, maintained by Bob Hetu.

Old Business:

- Vision/Mission Statement, it currently being handled by Bob Hetu.
- School Board presentation review in March was attended by Debbie Kulick, and Parin Shah. The meeting in April will be on the School Budget. With the new school Board election, we cannot be sure at this time of what or their interest will take effect.
- Chamber Expo: Attended by those that volunteered to be present. The Expo was not as successful or well attended as last years' Expo nor as larger. It may not be on MST EDC agenda for next year.
- Grant application, Annette Attkinson is still waiting for suggestions for grants that will be disturbed through "Local Share Account" (LSA).
- Social Networking Seminar: received warm reception and an article in the Pocono Record.

- Future seminars/workshop:
- Home base businesses will be combined with Business workshop or seminars. Many home based business may feel that they are being targeted, as it a great possibility that many may not be legally registered. If there is interest, it was felt that these people will attend Business seminars or workshops.
- John Donahue visit to be determined so time in late spring (May).
- Promote Shopping locally to be worked on and an outline created by Debbie and Parin.
- Book Warehouse, has some problems with traffic at Liberty Shopping Strip. No new feedback at this time.
- Carl Wigus sent a report that the local school opening date will take place after Labor Day this year for all four districts.

New Business:

Wayne MST Zoning Office will compile contact book of vacant spaces in MST.

Monroe County Planning Commission will attend our May meeting with the 20/20 update. Also to be scheduled would be a program to present the updated plan to residents, potential date in July.

Dine Around Town will be at THE Big A, is April 15, at 6 p.m. Please let Debbie know if you plan to attend.

The Town Supervisors would like issues that are political in nature or not supported by Township, not be part of EDC agenda. EDC must remain non political as we are representative of our townships.

Committee members were given information with respect to HB 76, the Property tax elimination bill for their information..

Fernwood Job Fair is scheduled for April 16th, given by Career Link. Steve Feuer will try to attend and take a look at the vendors for use as the EDC puts the Job Fair together in fall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Carrie Wetherbee

Advertising Seminar Feedback

