



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee 21 May 2014

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on May 21, 2014 at 6:30pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Robert (Bob) Hetu presiding and Steven Natiello as recording secretary.

Board Members: Bob Hetu, Debbie Kulick, Carrie Wetherbee, Carl Wilgus. (note: there was one vacancy on the 5 members board at this time)

Subcommittee Members: Beverly Brown, Angel Santos.

Township Staff: Supervisor Annette Atkinson, Supervisor Mike Dwyer, Liaison Steven Natiello.

Liaison/recording secretary responsibility clarification

- There was a discussion regarding the responsibilities of the Committee Liaison, who acts as the official Recording Secretary (responsible for the minutes, agendas, and monthly reports to BOS), and the elected Secretary,
- The committee congratulated Joan Woisin, who will soon take over as EDC Liaison, on her recent graduation from ESU.

Previous Meeting Minutes.

- Carl Wilgus made a motion to approve minutes taken by Steven Natiello. The motion was seconded by Carrie Wetherbee and approved by the board 4-0.

Current Meeting Agenda.

- Bob Hetu made a motion to approve agenda. The motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick. The agenda was approved by the committee 4-0.

Board Vacancy.

- The committee acknowledged Tim O'Donnell's resignation from the EDC board, due to his new job.
- The committee wishes to express their appreciation of Tim's contributions.
- Bob Hetu requested letters of interest to fill the position on the board. This will go on the agenda for the next Board of Supervisor's meeting, which will be held on the 22nd of May 2014, and the request for letters of interest will be advertised on Facebook and the township website

Township Survey

- Steven Natiello sent the results for the township survey to Bob Hetu. He will review the results and report to the committee at a future meeting.

Newsletter Business Directory Insert

Steven Natiello reported on the status of the MST newsletter business directory insert. He presented a full-size print draft and explained the key elements. He also explained the distribution and format and announced a rough distribution date in July.

Marketing Brochure

- Steven Natiello and Carrie Wetherbee reported on the status of the respective business directory inserts for distribution. Steven Natiello, Carrie Wetherbee, and Tim O'Donnell had

met prior and the details events of that meeting were presented to the committee..

- Carrie Wetherbee will take point for planning the marketing brochure in Tim's absence.
- The goal to publish the Marketing Brochure for tourists is now July 4th.

Business Directory and Shop Local App.

- Bob Hetu drafted a local business smart phone app that can be published in the Android and iPhone app marketplaces for approximately \$60 per month and would allow unlimited downloads. Bob mentioned that an app is more dynamic than any print brochure and can be updated with offers and events constantly.
- Annette Atkinson mentioned that our own golf statistics show most activity comes from mobile users, which suggests a market for local app users.
- Steven Natiello requested that Bob keep him in the loop for marketing and demographic purposes, since he manages the township analytics.

Recent MST Press

- Bob Hetu wanted to address some of the inaccurate and negative articles that have been published in the Pocono Record's free newspaper (Pike and Monroe Life) recently by one reporter.
- Bob Hetu wants to reexamine the EDC's goals and actions to ensure that the group is facilitating discussion and communication amongst business owners, residents, and other pertinent groups.
- Bob Hetu responded to questions from Wayne Witowski in advance of the articles however those responses were not represented and quotations were inaccurately attributed to Bob in the publication. Bob also wrote a letter to the editor to address a previously published article quoting Lorrette Miller.
- Bob Hetu asked the group: "What do we do to ensure that we're helping foster a favorable atmosphere between businesses and people?"

Discussion of PEBA (Pocono Eastern Business Association)

Bob Hetu addressed the subject of the "Poconos Eastern Business Association" that has apparently been in operation since July 2013. While mentioned in the EDC annual report this organization recently came to light because a business owner confused it with the EDC. Debbie informed the group PEBA was founded with several other EDC members and local business owners in July 2013 and explained the purpose of PEBA. The committee discussed whether or not there could be an issue having a board member in a government committee who was also a board member of a related private organization.

- The committee discussed the purpose of PEBA and considered whether or not there was an overlap of effort.
- The committee agreed that the EDC should determine how its activities can be advanced in conjunction with PEBA's activity. The goal will be to utilize PEBA to support and enhance the efforts of the EDC where appropriate.

Bob suggested it was a lot to digest at one meeting, and the topic could be brought up again at future meetings.

New Business

Bob Hetu stated that he felt the EDC s may consider how it it could or should leverage PEBA for shop local so as to not add burden to business owners. Shop Local is about the care and feeding of existing business. This does more to attract new business than

anything else. Nothing attracts success like success, and the EDC's primary mission is to ensure the success of existing businesses.

- There was a discussion about contacting local realtors to identify and inventory empty and available properties. Simultaneously that the EDC could identify business categories that are currently underrepresented in the area and provide suggestions where applicable to realtors as they market properties. The first step is analysis of the businesses already here which will be easily completed with the active business directory in place.
- The committee agreed that the new business items on the agenda were good. Bob Hetu requested that the committee consider items to add to the agenda for the next meeting and Carrie Wetherbee requested that the Supervisors distribute suggestions for key issues to address. *[editors note: this will go on the July agenda]*

Next Meeting: Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission, 6/19 6:30pm

- The next regularly scheduled meeting of the EDC is scheduled for June 9th at 6:30p; however, it will be rescheduled to be a joint meeting with the MST PC, so that both the MST Planning Commission and the Economic Development Committee can be present for the Monroe County Planning Commission to present the Monroe 2030 Plan. The EDC will be rescheduled to the night of the Planning Commission meeting on 6/19; the EDC will meet at 6:30p, and then join the Planning Commission at 7pm.