



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee 8 September 2014

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on September 8, 2014 at 6:33 pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Robert Hetu as President and Steven Natiello as recording Secretary.

Board Members: Bob Hetu, Debbie Kulick, Carrie Wetherbee, Gina Bertucci,

Subcommittee members: Julie Golin, Ed Regina

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

Guest: Chuck Leonard

Amendments to the Agenda

- Debbie Kulick added an "update of LERTA" to the agenda. Carrie Wetherbee made a motion to accept the addition. Debbie Kulick seconded the motion.
- Debbie made the motion to accept the agenda. Carrie seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Correspondence

- The committee welcomed Chuck Leonard.

Business Directory Update. Bob Hetu

- Bob Hetu asked the businesses to check their listing, which was based on their initial submissions.

Shop Local App. Bob Hetu

- Bob updated all on the app. We're now up over 200 downloads.
- WebApp is the most common. 1100 page views.
- Bob wants to encourage the business community to become more involved with the app by providing coupons and specials that can be pushed out.
- Bob gave details on the app functionality and stressed that it is important for the business owners and the locals to push this forward.
- More businesses have responded to the app and expressed interest in joining the directory as a result.

Printed Business Directory. Steven Natiello

- Steven Natiello updated on the status of the printed business directory, which was sent to the printer and will hit mailboxes in the next two weeks, with the MST newsletter.
- Steven Natiello distributed a draft proof so that the committee could have an idea of what to expect.

Know the Culture. Steven Natiello

- Laura Goss, Executive Director of the Pocono Arts Council was suggested as a contact.

Tourist Brochure. Carrie Wetherbee

- Carrie Wetherbee updated the committee on the status of the tourist brochure.
- Carrie thinks that a banner advertising the app and the app itself are ideal. How do we make the tourists aware of local businesses? Debbie suggested using a small brochure to advertise in the racks. It would be theoretically cheaper than a mailer or printed newspaper advertising. Others brought up that rack cards are distributed via a route system by specific companies; Carrie will contact them and find out pricing
- Bob asked the business owners in the committee on their thoughts.
 - Gina Bertucci thinks that we definitely need something print – she may be able to distribute in her vacation timeshares.
 - Carrie Wetherbee suggested a generic print document that doesn't necessarily include the business directory.
- Steven will send to Gina and Carrie the artwork for the Where MST app and Gina and Carrie will draft a mockup for the committee.

Inclusion of Local Emergency Services

- Bob asked the committee to have an official vote on the provision of local emergency services such as 911.
- The committee agreed that it was a good idea.
- Debbie made the motion to add the emergency section. Carrie seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Shop Local. Bob Hetu

- Bob wants to create a stronger shop local campaign.
- Julie Golin volunteered to step in as the Shop Local subcommittee leader.
- There was a discussion regarding the possibility of a shop local seminar.
- Debbie Kulick volunteered to write an article about any shop local efforts
- The committee agreed to a Shop Local subcommittee meeting on the 15th of September

Presentation by Chuck Leonard

- Chuck Leonard congratulated the committee on the recent measures to bring their business into the digital age. QR codes, downloadable forms, and an app that showcases available properties are all examples of new media that has become a powerful resource.
 - Mr. Leonard mentioned that he has found social media to be a necessity in today's business world.
- Mr. Leonard discussed the natural gas lines in the area and mentioned four presently ongoing projects and three projects currently undergoing a feasibility analysis, including two within the Middle Smithfield region.
- Mr. Leonard said that the Monroe County Transit Authority is looking into converting buses to natural gas. He discussed the various challenges posed by such a transition with particular reference to Middle Smithfield Township resources and businesses.

- The feasibility analysis will help them figure out where they can branch out.
- Mr. Leonard said that there is roughly \$19 million in state financing and that Monroe County has the lowest natural gas penetration rate in the state. 65% of all homes and businesses in PA, and MC has 16%. Natural gas service is a big driver of local business. “Do you have natural gas services?” is a FAQ
- Mr. Leonard said that 78% of our property is impacted by the special protections handbook.
- There was a discussion regarding Act 167 (the Stormwater Management Act) and its impact on economic development and local businesses.
- There was a discussion about the recent transportation legislation with regard to the state of Route 209,

Economic Development Class. Carrie Wetherbee

- Carrie Wetherbee briefed the committee on her recent economic development classes. And mentioned that infrastructure was a key point that had been discussed (development follows sewer, water, and roads). An example provided was a thought experiment: ‘Given a hypothetical office structure, would the demand of the area expand to fill it?’
- Carrie Wetherbee mentioned the adage that ‘more important than incentives is certainty of process.’

Announcements. Annette Atkinson

- Annette Atkinson announced that the new date for volunteer appreciation lunch is October 11th, and that it is being combined with the quarterly Committee Board Dinner the BOS have with eh Committee Board Members.

Debbie Kulick made a motion to adjourn. Carrie seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.