



## **Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee March 20, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on March 20, 2023 with Joe Memoli (Chairperson) presiding.

**Board Members:** Jared Acosta, Beverly Brown, Gina Bertucci, Ed Regina, and Deborah Emin in person.

**Absent:** Tom Marchesani and Annette Atkinson

**Township Staff:** James Brechbiel, ED Manager.

**Township Residents/Guests:** Vinny Bianchi

The meeting called to order at 5:32 pm with Joe Memoli presiding.

### **Minutes and Agenda**

- Joe Memoli made a motion to approve the February Minutes and March Agenda. For the minutes, Gina Bertucci seconded the motion, followed Deborah Emin. Motion passed 6-0. For the agenda, Gina Bertucci seconded the motion, followed by Deborah Emin. Motion passed 6-0.

### **Correspondence**

- No correspondence

### **New Business:**

#### **Business Updates:**

- James Brechbiel reviewed the following updates on new businesses in the area:
  - Mi Casa Es Tu Casa at 5017 Liberty Square, East Stroudsburg, PA had their soft opening on 3/16/23 and will be doing a ribbon cutting at the tail end of April / early May. Details coming. James Brechbiel has put the owner and Pocono Chamber of Commerce in contact.
  - Tractor Supply at 5133 Milford Rd., East Stroudsburg, PA is expecting to open mid to late April. James Brechbiel is awaiting a point of contact to review the grand opening.
- Gina Bertucci asked at what capacity the Apartments at Mt. Nebo are occupied. James Brechbiel noted that the first building is occupied and that plans for phase II have been submitted.

#### **Community Updates:**

- James Brechbiel directed the committee to review the listed events at the bottom of the page of their agendas and spoke briefly about the following upcoming events:
  - AARP Tax Help at the MST Community and Cultural Center (CCC) @ 9 am at C&CC every Tuesday in March through April 11, 2023.
  - Healthy Steps in Motion @10:30am at CCC every Thursday in March through April 20, 2023.
  - 1 Million Cups at Northampton Community College is every third Wednesday of the month and is a Resource for small business showcases. Deborah Emin briefly reviewed her attendance at the last event on 3/15/23, where Mosquiter, now at the East Stroudsburg University (ESU) Innovation Center, was showcased. They are a Ukrainian company that manufactures in Ukraine and India but has its marketing and science incubated at the ESU.
  - ESU Economic Outlook Summit is on May 19, 2023. EDM extended the invitation for EDC members to attend as a guest of the Township.
  - The Women's History Art Display featuring work by women artists in the Poconos is on display for the month of March at the CCC through March 28, 2023.
  - The first day of golf at the Country Club of the Poconos (CCP) will be on Friday, March 31, 2023.
  - Eggstravaganza will be on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at 12 pm.

## **Old Business:**

- **Revitalize 209:**
  - James Brechbiel noted that the resolution for the Revitalize 209 grant is on the agenda at the Board of Supervisors Meeting on Thursday, March 23, 2023. Once the resolution passes, members from the committees will be given to review. James Brechbiel also noted that members of EDC can canvass the businesses to make them aware of the program once it is released. Joe Memoli, Beverly Brown, and Ed Regina noted that going two by two is the best method.
  - Joe Memoli asked members of the committee to submit their names to him if they want to be considered for the Revitalize 209 Committee and he will submit those names to the Board of Supervisors from there. Deborah Emin, Ed Regina, and Jared Acosta submitted their names on behalf of the EDC. Joe Memoli noted that members from other committees and the public will be considered to sit on the Revitalize 209 Committee. Deborah Emin asked about the timeline for the committee, etc. and James Brechbiel noted that the program will list the workflow accordingly.
  - Ed Regina asked if signs were a part of the grant. James Brechbiel noted that, upon last review, it was not specified, but to wait for the details to be released. Gina Bertucci noted that sign ordinances would still have to be followed. Joe Memoli and Beverly Brown noted that all projects would have to align with the Township's ordinances.
  - Ed Regina and Gina Bertucci noted that the commitment from the businesses to do projects will most likely be linked to whether, or not, the Township is doing a 50:50 match.
  - James Brechbiel noted that programs such as Revitalize 209 will assist in attracting developers to the area, without changing the appeal of the Township's rural elements. Ed Regina, Beverly Brown, and Deborah Emin all agreed that the goal of development should never lead to urbanization with tall buildings, etc.
  
- **Restaurant Week:**
  - James Brechbiel noted that the PCC is doing a Taste of the Poconos Event from March 19 – April 2, 2023. There is no kick-off event and they are focusing on promotions mostly. James Brechbiel noted that he reached out to restaurants in Middle Smithfield to gauge interest. Many are interested in doing a promotion for the event but are not able to commit to the kick-off event. Of those canvassed, two noted they would be open to it. Staffing remains to be an issue.
  - Gina Bertucci noted that the kick-off event is a great feature to give the EDC a storefront and to connect with the public. Gina Bertucci asked what the Township's budget for the event is and to see if it could be considered to pay the restaurants, rather than splitting the cost, so they can afford employees to come. Gina Bertucci, Joe Memoli, and Beverly Brown noted that, perhaps, restaurants can bring the food and volunteers could serve. Jared Acosta and Ed Regina noted that the public could be charged a nominal fee for entrance. Deborah Emin asked that a vegan vendor be present.
  - James Brechbiel noted that perhaps considering a date in the fall, rather than the spring, would see more restaurants available for the kick-off. Another element would be to include coffee shops, bars, etc. There was a discussion that doing the kick-off at the CCC would be advantageous.

## **Announcements:**

- Ed Regina asked if the Township could look into the lights on Route 209 regarding timing. There was a discussion about how metrics are considered and if the Township could follow up with PennDOT to ease traffic flow.
- EDC requested to have a tour of ESU. James Brechbiel noted he would reach out.

## **Public Comments:**

- Vinny Bianchi asked about how NEPA worked. Ed Regina noted that it costs \$275 to be a member and that they provide help to businesses more on a global scale, but can help in applying for grants, etc.

**Next meeting date: 04/17/23 at 5:30pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.**