



Minutes: Economic Development Advisory Committee April 17, 2023

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Advisory Committee was held on April 17, 2023, with Joe Memoli (Chairperson) presiding.

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

Absent: None

Township Staff: Annette Atkinson, Board of Supervisors Chair, and James Brechbiel, ED Manager.

Township Residents/Guests: Vinny Bianchi

The meeting called to order at 5:34 pm with Joe Memoli presiding.

Minutes and Agenda

- Joe Memoli made a motion to approve the March Minutes and April Agenda. For the minutes, Deborah Emin seconded the motion, followed Ed Regina. Motion passed 7-0. For the agenda, Deborah Emin seconded the motion, followed by Beverly Brown. Motion passed 7-0.

Correspondence

- No correspondence

New Business:

Business Updates:

- James Brechbiel reviewed the following updates on new businesses in the area:
 - Mi Casa Es Tu Casa Grand Opening was Sat., 4/15/23.
 - Tractor Supply – Soft opening by the end of April (currently projected at 4/29) and expect to do the grand opening around the second week of May (details to come).
 - LVHN – Opening currently expected for July 2023.

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:
 - 1,000 Feet of Street will be on Sat., 4/22/23 from 8 am to 12 pm.
 - Sew Your Own Tote Bag Workshop at Community and Cultural Center (CCC) on Sat., 4/22/23 from 9:30 am – 2:30 pm – All funds donated to Mady's Angels.
 - Township Cleanup will be from 4/27/23 through 4/29/23 from 7 am to 2 pm (see James for passes). Gina Bertucci requested to get a date for the fall clean up and the Township will follow up once that is confirmed.
- Annette Atkinson noted that committee members will be getting a letter in the mail for golf passes/discounts for CCP and those who had already received it thanked the Township.
- Annette Atkinson noted the Flowers Everywhere Art Show Opening Reception on 5/4/23, from 5 pm to 7 pm.

Old Business:

- **Revitalize 209:**
 - **Public Awareness and Committee Formation:** James Brechbiel noted that the resolutions, press releases, Eblasts to businesses, contacts with elected officials, posts, etc. have all gone out regarding the grant/committee. He added that the committee applications need to be in to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for review. Annette Atkinson mentioned they are eyeing as early as the end of April to sit everyone, but could be later. Ed Regina asked how many would be sitting on the committee and Annette

Atkinson noted that there is no commitment to the number from each section, but the idea is to have up to two from Planning, EDC, and Historical, and up to four from the public.

- **Business/Public Interest:** Gina Bertucci asked if the Township was getting a sense from what the businesses felt about the grant program and wanted to make sure that the smaller businesses know that it was equitable. Annette Atkinson confirmed that the Township would match up to 50% of the project size and that there was no minimum. If a project cost \$1,000, the Township would match up to \$500, etc. The maximum project size is \$20,000 (with the Township matching up to \$10,000). Joe Memoli noted that the committee has to spell out the steps to these businesses simply. James Brechbiel added that speaking with landlords would also be beneficial as many tenants may not have the funds or jurisdiction to make decisions on repairs, etc. and may, with a group of other tenants, collectively have a project that benefits them all. Gina Bertucci noted that it is the committee's job to help businesses by giving them direction/suggestions. Joe Memoli and Tom Marchesani noted that doing a fact sheet, or asking these businesses how the EDC can help, would be beneficial in driving interest.
- **Economic Development Committee Initiative – Connecting with Small Local Businesses:**
 - Ed Regina and Gina Bertucci spoke about how to give smaller businesses guidance regarding things like marketing, building a website, social media, etc. and the group discussed possibly doing an open house where the committee would be present and available to the local businesses to answer questions, etc. Gina Bertucci noted that this could evolve to be a series of open houses (coffee and networking). Beverly Brown and Ed Regina added that the EDC had done a job fair in the past where a variety of vendors could come, network, and share services. Joe Memoli added that the target for an event like this should be younger workers. Beverly Brown noted that asking for Careerlink to speak, or be present at an event like this, would be of benefit.
- **Restaurant Week:**
 - Jared Acosta asked about restaurant week and James Brechbiel noted that it would be looked into for the fall as many of the restaurants struggled through the winter and were not staffed adequately, etc. for a spring/summer event. Beverly reiterated that the EDC would volunteer to serve should that be of assistance.
 - Deborah Emin noted that the event should also cater to the residents, as opposed to tourists. Deborah added that there should be a way to assist those who cannot go out to restaurants. Ed Regina and Annette Atkinson reviewed that Mady's Angels for the group's reference.
- **Property Maintenance Code:**
 - James Brechbiel noted that the continuation of the hearing would be on 5/11/23 and a copy of the proposed ordinance would be emailed to EDC members. Tom Marchesani asked who wrote the code and Annette Atkinson noted that Township used the Monroe County Ordinance, which 7 townships have adopted, as the model. There was a discussion as to what the advantage of the property maintenance code would be and if there would be fines associated. Annette Atkinson noted that it wouldn't be instantaneous and that it is a means to enforce the ordinances already on the books.

Announcements:

- Annette Atkinson spoke about the Veterans Memorial project at the Community and Cultural Center and use of the utility poles for the Hometown Heroes banners.
- Ed Regina noted he would try to arrange a tour of the Gin Yin Temple in the summer for the group.

Public Comments:

- Vinny Bianchi noted that Channel 13 has improved coverage/content and could be of use for the EDC initiatives.

Next meeting date: 05/15/23 at 5:30pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.