

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 22, 2013

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2013, at 6:42 p.m., in the Lawrence Township Municipal Building, Lower Level Conference Room.

**I. Statement of Proper Notice**

Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the Lawrence Township Growth & Redevelopment Committee has been provided by filing an annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk, and by filing the agenda with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building, and mailing to the Trenton Times, the Trentonian and the Lawrence Ledger.

The roll was called as follows at 6:42 p.m.:

Present: Christopher Bobbitt, Ryan Kennedy, Lovette Love-Stevens, Charles Lavine, John Conroy, John Schloesser, Max Ramos, Howard Nelson

Excused Absence: Tushar Patel, Donald Little, Reza Asgari, Melissa Saunders

Absent: Jags Vazirani, Karen Vincent-Lavanga, Michel Franc, Danielle Delprato

Also Present: Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate, Cathleen Lewis, Council Liaison, Donald Addison, Kurt Koevenig, Jude Martin-Cianfano, Mid Jersey Chamber of Commerce, Ursula Edwards, Mid Jersey Chamber of Commerce and Susan Snook, Secretary

**II. Approval of March & April Minutes:**

The March 12, 2013 and April 9, 2012 minutes were unanimously approved

**III. Awards Program with Chamber:**

Chairperson Bobbitt stated the date for the Awards Program is October 9<sup>th</sup> and the location is still to be determined. Chairperson Bobbitt and Vice Chairperson Kennedy met with Robert Prunetti, Jude Martin-Cianfano and Ursula Andrews from the Chamber. The conversation was with regard to the Special Olympics and how the Chamber is partnering with Special Olympics and as well as what the Committee could do. Mr. Prunetti stated Lawrence is the first town to reach out to the Chamber to partner up and do something. The awards ceremony is still in the process of possibly being at Special Olympics and how we can get Lawrence Township businesses on line with some way to help ride the coat tails with what the Chamber has been doing.

Ursula Andrews is the Marketing Manager for the Mid Jersey Chamber of Commerce and explained why the name has been changed and it is because the last 2 ½ years they have been focusing on where their membership was, where the expansion areas were and realized that 30% of the membership are outside Mercer County. The Mid Jersey Chamber of Commerce represents not only Mercer County but the whole region.

Ms. Andrews stated the unique position that Lawrence Township is in is they are going to be the host Town with one of the biggest events in Town with national exposure. Special Olympics has requested to come to New Jersey for their National Event; it is not a Jersey event. New Jersey does not have the normal tourism tax that most states have, they in other States get revenue from every hotel room that is booked in that State; New Jersey works off of a grant system. So those designation marketing company/organization as well as visitor bureaus they work solely off of grants that are issued through the Department of Tourism; so we are a designation state. 40 billion dollars goes into tourism in this State.

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 22, 2013  
Page 2

The 2014 Special Olympics games we will have more visitors, more athletes and more volunteers than at any other Special Olympics National Games. The reason is because this location is accessible by that many more people. We are in driving distance to a lot of locations so we are expecting 70,000 people for the week. The athletes are always busy every day; however, there are many times where the athlete is not competing all the time so they will have down time. The Chamber started 2 years ago with Mark to bring the Special Olympics here and the Chamber committed to be an official partner with Special Olympics, 2014. The Chamber can allow the Township and businesses to come under the name of "Team Chamber" which means it gives the Towns or smaller businesses the opportunity to get directly involved or contribute or volunteer with Special Olympics. The money part and the donations is the Chamber's job. However, an e-mail cannot be put out without their approval and is very protective over the logo. Team Chamber was allowed to create a point logo which the Chamber will be highlighting on the web site and all communications. Businesses who donate \$20,014 receive a whole sponsorship packet directly through Special Olympics and if a business contributes \$2,014 they get to use the logo through the year.

Ms. Andrews passed around pamphlets from Special Olympics, see attached, which is about 40 million for one week. The Chamber cannot solicit any official partner on their behalf; however, some members feel very strongly about supporting this initiative and civic responsibility, like NJM, who donated 1 mil and use the logo alone. How a Township can capitalize on some involvement. A discussion was about the free time for families so if an athlete comes in for an entire week, the family will take a weeks vacation, so we are encouraging people to come early and stay late. So the Chamber will be encouraging them to visit the shores, Philadelphia, Great Adventure or Sesame Place because we are centrally located which will hopefully keep people in this region. Special Olympics provides housing for all the athletes and all of their needs are handled. The families will be staying in hotels and will coordinate through the Special Olympics (blocking 20,000 rooms). However, for the Township this is an opportunity to put in the papers or the web site that we are the "hosting" Town come visit us get to know us. We have historical history and cultural and diversity which is a great opportunity.

Councilwoman Lewis tried to reach out to Mark last January and after six months he returned the phone call and find a way to get a list of the businesses and the families to try to reach out to them to tell them where they can eat and visit; however, we were told don't call us we will call you. It seems like they don't want to interact with the businesses or the Township, we don't want to step on their toes; so how can we do it? Ms. Andrews stated the Chamber feels the same way and don't take it personally and be thankful for it and do whatever to represent Lawrence.

Councilwoman Lewis stated we need to communicate with our residents and make sure the residents are excited about this and don't get frustrated about the traffic on Route 206. We are here to help and to encourage businesses to get the families into those restaurants and using those services. It is frustrating. Ms. Andrews stated the Chamber is here to help and is what we are suggesting to get residents excited and suggested to reach out to the Special Olympics organizing crew to let them know we are on board. Chairperson Bobbitt stated we might not be able to catch all the families and visitors; however, there are going to be a lot of volunteers and those are the people that will still be here after the event as well.

Ms. Andrews gave a tactic that we have a privilege to offer all visitors the resources, so this is where the businesses will come in handy. We are allowed to create public pages on the web site called "Visitor Resources" which provides every visitor with the best of New Jersey guide which is out every year which was called Best of Central New Jersey. Also a mobile link will be provided for Special Olympics and the Township can post what you can visit in the Township, possibly publish the schedule, capture the people who come in before and the people who volunteer and think creatively to do something for the businesses. It was also suggested that a pre party on Main Street stating get ready they are coming and then have a post party for all of the volunteers.

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 22, 2013  
Page 3

It was also mentioned to have flags along Main Street and Route 206 so visitors can see them and say lets stop in.

There were discussions regarding the Township being a sponsor, finding a sponsor to purchase the flags or a printer in the area to volunteer to do the flags. The \$2,014 does not guarantee you a volunteer position; it guarantees you now to can use this logo. The check in the amount of \$2,014 will have to go to Special Olympics. Mr. Conroy stated what does Lawrence have to offer and it is history and we should create a historical event and get volunteers to explain about the historical events.

Councilwoman Lewis asked does the \$2,014 get us unlimited use of the logo; would we be able to make as many flags as we wanted and put them up around town; however, we would have to raise the money. Ms. Andrews stated the flag has to say Team Log on it and they would have to get final approval from Special Olympics so put it into a proposal form to say the Chamber is thinking of printing these flags with the Team Chamber Logo so that when people are driving through the Town they can see who is participating. Councilman Lewis wondered if putting up 100 flags along Main Street, would that be acceptable and Ms. Andrews stated the Chamber will draft a proposal.

Councilman Lewis suggested a great thing to do would be the trails and the Nature Center; also the Mall. Families will need something to do either before their child participates or after they participate. It was also suggested maybe a package could be put together to give to the families to give them some ideas on where to eat or what other activities Lawrence has. Ms. Andrews stated you would need at least 20,000 copies; so it should be digital guides. The Special Olympic web site has a link called Resources, and then it will go to the Team Chamber site and that is where the Township will come in.

A question was asked about the difference between the \$2,014 and the \$20,014. Ms. Andrews stated for \$20,014 you get 4 tickets to opening ceremony and some t-shirts. Councilman Lewis gets the businesses to give the \$2,014 so they would get to use the logo and why we could not try to raise money and encourage businesses to be a member. Ms. Andrews strongly encourages us to think about the post event to say thank you for giving your service to Special Olympics and come to Lawrence Township and enjoy whatever. Ms. Andrews stated get ideas together and submit them to her and on our behalf submit to Special Olympics for approval.

The Chamber is hosting unified games at the Mercer County Park and it will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Vice Chairperson Kennedy stated we still have time to plan something to do on our own, we should continue doing something that will support our businesses and Township. We should ask the Chamber to continue to support our October event as a kick off and figure out what to do afterwards and have a press conference for Awards winners. Mr. Conroy suggested raising funds for the flags at the awards ceremony because we get 75 -100 business people all together. Ms. Andrews stated we have the Chambers commitment in whatever we do and will be on the web site. Getting the businesses to know that we are doing this for them is the most important thing so instead of asking them for money, first tell them we are doing this for them.

Ursula suggested a phrase "Visit Lawrence for a Hometown Welcome". If the awards cannot be held at Special Olympics, then move to Plan B which would be the Quaker Bridge Mall.

Chairperson Bobbitt stated we should plan on Plan B (Quaker Bridge Mall). The problem is having Mark Edenzon on line with having the awards ceremony at Special Olympics. The key note speaker is the next person we should think about. Chairperson Kennedy stated when he met with Mr. Prunetti and had a lot of ideas and how to make it really exciting and we may come up with our own solution.

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 22, 2013  
Page 4

The board members discussed different ideas about what will this do for the Township. Mr. Nelson of Main Street stated there are 150 seats for the businesses with 60 parking spaces and nothing new can happen between now and 2014 because is it not worthwhile for a business to offer a coupon, probably. Is there a reason for a business to pay the \$2,014 for marketing, probably not and it is not that they do not want to support the Town or participate in this but the \$2,014 will go for the National Campaign. So how does it help the business or Main Street or Eldridge Park in the long run if all the benefits accrued when the event is over? Mr. Nelson gave facts about the Jubilee that was just held and the parking issues.

Mr. Koevenig asked what can we do to get something out of the games for our local businesses? Mr. Nelson stated make the Township sticky, which is to get the people to stay. Mr. Lavine stated that our local businesses in all the sport events that we host over the weekends or holidays, that the restaurants along Route 1 are mobbed. The Route 1 businesses will do well but the 4 or 5 restaurants on Main Street picking up any great chunk of business out of this, they will get some. We should capitalize on the trails and the Mall.

Mr. Nelson suggested setting up a food court in several district in Lawrence where there is an attraction where people can eat and do that attraction and can't use buses because there is no place to park them. What should the businesses shoot towards? The Board members should work with the Chamber and have a better plan to keep the people in the area and to keep them in the area. Mr. Lavine stated one way for the Town to get involved is the volunteers. Chairperson Bobbitt stated one of the items they discussed with the Chamber was the volunteers and they will be coming back.

Mr. Nelson stated we should use our leverage and work with the Chamber and use our leverage against the Towns to say we are here and look at what we have compared to other places. Mr. Addison stated met with Lorraine Allen concerning the housing at the College of New Jersey to ask what impact Sandy had on their businesses and give some information on disaster imperativeness and flood is the worst disaster. Ms. Allen would like to meeting with this Community to give a description on what to do for this community and how to prepare for a disaster, especially for a business. It was suggested to get a sub-committee to meet with her with a time frame. Mr. Allen would like to start at the businesses on Main Street and focus on them first. Mr. Nelson stated Main Street has 36 businesses, some are restaurant and some are lawyers.

The Asian Bistro at the Lawrence Shopping Center is closed. Wildflour's Bakery has opened on Main Street that is gluten free pastries and goodies.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on June 11, 2013.

---

Susan Snook, Secretary  
Growth & Redevelopment Committee