

**GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
February 8, 2011

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2011, at 7:30 p.m., in the Lawrence Township Municipal Building, Lower Level Conference Room.

**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 7:45 p.m.:

Present: Chairperson Christopher Bobbitt, Vice Chairperson Ryan Kennedy, Cami Granahan, Lovette Love-Stevens, Michael Marion, Tushar Patel; David Maffei, Planning Board Representative and Charles Lavine, Zoning Board of Adjustment Representative

Excused Absence: Karen Vincent-Lavanga

Absent: Jags Vazirani

Also Present: Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate; Michael Powers, Council Liaison; Councilwoman Pamela Mount, Donald Little and Susan Snook, Secretary

**Elections of Officers**

Nominations were opened to the floor for Chairperson. Ryan Kennedy nominated Christopher Bobbitt for Chairperson; seconded by Charles Lavine. Chairperson Bobbitt accepted the position and it was a unanimous vote.

Chairperson Bobbitt opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Lovette Love-Stevens nominated Ryan Kennedy and seconded by Michael Marion. It was a unanimous vote.

**Approval of the Minutes**

The December 14, 2011 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Creation of Student Member Position**

There was a discussion about creating a student member position and Mr. Donahue was waiting for information from Mr. Meara regarding more details how they see the liaison, working thru the school year, etc. Councilman Powers suggested picking a junior because a senior will be graduating and leaving for college; maybe the Guidance Office could recommend a student thru the volunteer youth group.

**Award Program – Re-designation of Environmental Award**

There was a brief discussion regarding re-naming the Environmental Award to recognize Ralph Copleman. A motion was made by Lovette Love-Stevens and second by Councilman Powers with a unanimous vote and it is a well deserved change.

Councilperson Mount made a motion to name the award "Ralph Copleman Environmental Award". It was a unanimous vote to change the award name.

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**Route 1 Redevelopment Committee Report**

Councilman Powers stated we are in the process of merging because of lack of meetings and it would be more productive to have the Growth and Redevelopment Committees and the Route 1 Development committee together.

**Loyalty Card Project**

Councilwoman Pamela Mount reported that we were trying to get more business to sign up. Rider is printing cards for all of their students (which will be about 1,000 cards) and will be a big incentive for many more businesses to participate.

There is information on the web-site if any business is interested in participating.

**Goals and Objectives**

The business survey was conducted at the Awards Ceremony and it seemed like a lot of the issues were accessibility issue and traffic issues. Chairperson Bobbitt suggested a sub-committee to work on the business survey.

Councilwoman Mount stated that the Green Team will be hosting a meeting on Thursday, February 17, 2011 in the Police Building which is opened to everyone for promoting Sustainability to businesses.

There is web-site Sustainabilitynj.com.

**Guest Speaker:**

Councilperson Powers introduced County Executive Robert Prunetti of the Mercer County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

He introduced himself and stated that the Chamber will be focusing on getting active in State legislation; looking at Bills at the Federal and local levels. The Chamber would take a position if it was to the best interest to the members. The Chamber would be more vocal and active.

The Chamber looking at opportunities to adjust or make changes development policy statements for business; looking at advocacy: projects or proposals on economic development within the Townships; build relationships with members and other business outside the Chamber to development a relationship for economic growth (any business that would need help could go to the Chamber and get support).

The Chamber would also like to get have relationships with other businesses and organizations outside the Chamber.

He spoke about an example how the Chamber could help businesses get the support needed that do not have any relations with any officials and thereby setting up meetings between the business owner and the political figures in that Township.

The Chamber is starting to grow again, about 1,000 members.

A third goal is the chamber is economic development, where they can raise private monies to advance good projects for infrastructure, such as the County Airport. He discussed a situation in Hamilton Township, on Route 130, where the businesses were complaining about the traffic pattern. The public has to go a mile out of the way and circle back.

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The government is not in the same place a decade ago. With this economy, and a number of other changes, the environment, He does not believe the government can't be the cartelistic for growth; therefore, looking for private sector to lead the way and still working with the Townships. The Chamber still wants to be partners with the Townships.

The Growth and Redevelopment Committee introduced themselves to Mr. Prunetti.

Mr. Lavine brought up the expansion of the Quaker Bridge Mall and how it is not moving forward. How the Quaker Bridge Mall is a very important project, where it is not positioned for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it lacks several high end stores; it is not big enough and has same footprint as it had when it was built in the 1970's. People go out of the Township to shop at other Malls because the Quaker Bridge Mall is not up to speed.

There was a brief discussion regarding it might be the economy that is slowing this project down. Mr. Prunetti stated that maybe it is the economics and the Chamber will get involved to help.

Councilman Mount stated that Lawrence Township is certified as New Jersey Sustainable town. There are 67 towns that are certified. To be sustainable, everyone has to be involved on getting stuff accomplished. The Chamber can help promote by putting this information on their web-site.

Starting a Re-ward Card System spearheaded by the Main Street business. It is like a visa card where you can go to a business and get points for discounts. Hopefully this will help to buy local; there are about 800 businesses in the Township.

The Township is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and we should be getting a magazine named E-connect that is issued once a week.

Councilman Mount stated that traffic is a large issue; especially truck traffic is really an issue on Route 206 and has been working with DOT. The Route 1 Corridor work on infrastructure issues because we see them as a total detriment on our Town; parking and traffic.

Mr. Prunetti stated that the Chamber can help with traffic issues.

There is also redevelopment on Route 1 for a re-design with a round-about at Whitehead Road. It will be so everyone can cross the street and use the businesses on the other side of Route 1. And hopefully more businesses will come into that area.

There have been talks with N.J. Transit for upgrades on the bus routes; having more bus stops, and making some of the bus routes going further especially on the 600 route.

Mr. Prunetti agreed that bus routes need to be expanded to go further on the routes and the Chamber would be happy to help us with this issue.

Mr. Prunetti to see the Chamber as your advocate. There will be a membership drive so information can get out and target businesses and industries to join and to explain the advantages of being a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

True New Jersey is to help keep businesses in New Jersey and to bring in new businesses.

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**Meeting Speakers & Venues**

It was brought up about holding meetings else where within the Township. Mr. Lavine stated venue was more important than location. A meeting was held at Heritage Village and was able to see it first hand instead of driving by.

There was a brief discussion regarding where to have meetings. Councilwoman Mount suggested going to GEPNA in Eldridge Park and also at Rider in the Business Department to find out what they do.

**Other Business**

Councilwoman Mount is working with the school for English as a second language for parents and the community, in which it helps both students and parents. Councilwoman Mount is trying to find funding; the average cost is around \$5,000 a year.

Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church also has a program which has been around for a couple of years, which has an incredible turnout. Lawrence High has no adult classes. Trying to get a program in the Slackwood School and Eldridge Park School for next year.

Ryan Kennedy suggested that when a new business comes into Lawrence, that we should send a letter welcoming them; we did do that in the past. Attached is a list of new businesses from the Fire Marshal's Office for the 2010 - 2011.

The Growth & Redevelopment Committee created a welcoming package for all new business and homeowners which supplied information on Township events; what offices were in the Township; how to go to the Planning Board and Zoning Board; how to apply for a building permit; etc.

Councilman Mount stated that there is nothing on the web-site about Lawrence Township being a sustainable community. Councilwoman stated that we have 200 points as it is our second year of being certified and have accomplished a lot.

Chairperson Bobbitt suggested having various events throughout the year and they could include having someone from the construction office to discuss solar panels and on energy and insulation. Others could be family oriented and even business oriented.

Discussion about having a bike ride for Ralph Copleman to make the Township a little bike friendly. Talking to the Recreation Community Day to collaborate with the Green Team.

Councilwoman Mount thought if anyone is interested, there is a Historical Meeting at the High School on February 27, at 2:00 regarding the two trolley line tracks, presented by Denis Waters, Township Historian.

The next meeting will be held on March 8, 2011.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

  
Susan Snook, Secretary  
Growth & Redevelopment Committee

Attachment