

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, April 11, 2017

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee meeting, which was held on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Lawrence Township Municipal Building, Lower Level Conference Room.

Statement of Adequate 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 and the Trentonian.

Roll Call:

Present: Ryan Kennedy
Lovette Love-Stevens
Tushar Patel
John Conroy
Joan Brame
Maria Connolly
Teresita Bastides-Heron
John Odalen
Peter Ferrone

Absent: Danielle Delprato

Excused Absence: Charles Lavine
Christopher Bobbitt, Council Liaison

Also Present: Andrew Link, Liaison
Susan Snook, Secretary
Pam Mount

Welcome of New Member:

Mr. Link introduced the new member, Peter Ferrone, and stated he is also on the Affordable Housing Board. Mr. Ferrone stated he is on the Eagle Chase Homeowners Association and the Vice Chairperson of the Affordable Housing Board. The Growth & Redevelopment Committee members introduced themselves.

Election of Officers:

Maria Connolly nominated John Conroy for Chairperson and seconded by Teresita Bastides-Heron and Joan Brame closed nominations and approved per unanimous vote.

Joan Brame nominated Charles Lavine for Vice Chairperson and John Conroy nominated John Odalen for Vice Chairperson. The vote polled was one (1) vote for Charles Lavine and seven (7) votes for John Odalen.

Minutes:

The September 13, 2016 minutes were unanimously approved.

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Approval of 2017 Meeting Schedule:

The 2017 Meeting Schedule was approved per a unanimous vote.

Public Comment:

None

Committee Goals:

Ms. Brame asked about the discussion we had at a previous meeting on a listing of current businesses. Mr. Kennedy stated we had a sub-committee that included a Board of Education liaison and Mr. Ramos was on it and didn't think it went anywhere. A question was asked if Mr. Ramos was still the liaison from the Board of Education and Mr. Link was not sure and thinks he still is. Chairperson Conroy stated Mr. Ramos is no longer on the Board. Ms. Mount stated we should reach out to see if they are sending us someone new. Chairperson Conroy stated it has been a subject we have been discussing for decades.

Ms. Mount asked what we were going to do with the list. Chairperson Conroy it needs to stay current because every year it changes. Ms. Brame commented that we were going to use the Fire Marshal list because every year they require an annual fire inspection. Mr. Kennedy stated we have been receiving, especially when a new business opens, they have to register to get a Certificate of Occupancy but the problem was the contact on those notices had the building superintendent rather than the business owner.

Ms. Mount stated the one list is the Sustainable businesses that New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has. The program is called "Sustainable Business Registry" which is how a business explains how it works. Ms. Mount suggested the Gazette and would be our goal to have more businesses engage in sustainable. Ms. Brame wanted to know what the growth part of this committee means; is it defined by new businesses plus something else. Chairperson Conroy stated it is a combination of trying to bring in new businesses in the Town and to enhance businesses that are here in town so they can grow and prosper and stay here.

Ms. Bastides-Heron stated we should promote small businesses instead of big businesses because they will survive; buy local, dine local, give local and should be doing this Lawrence wide. Mr. Odalen that we should have a social media presence and spoke about having a Facebook Page. Ms. Mount stated we should invite the new manager to our next meeting and have a chat with what kinds of things he or she might be willing to help us promote.

Ms. Connolly stated we should start a buy local campaign. One of the areas was the Lawrence Shopping Center and how it needs help. Ms. Mount suggested having a sustainability public meeting here and ask Athena to come and speak about it.

Chairperson Conroy stated having large businesses get familiar with the small businesses and have the large businesses do business with the small businesses and that would be a way of getting the community together. It was suggested to invite the purchasing manager of BMS and ask him what his philosophy is and Rider as well as Educational Testing Service to find out what type of business section they would be interested in.

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Chairperson Conroy asked the members to come up for the next meeting a listing, if trying to get the businesses to work together, to start to compile a list of big businesses in the Township that could benefit from the small businesses and we could target them and invite them here. Ms. Brame commented we are establishing annual goals. Chairperson Conroy stated one of our goals is get businesses in Lawrence to do business with one another.

Ms. Mount stated Lawrence Gazette launched "Mercer Space" which is web based news. The Green Team will organize a community conversation probably in September or October on communication in Lawrence Township.

Other Business:

Chairperson Conroy put together a recap of 2016 and moving forward, copy attached. He stated that we had a meeting up to the awards ceremony and then we fell apart and one of the problems is that is our appointments from Council so we can have enough committee members. He continued with regard to the signage be researched, presented some changes, and the Committee should bring it up again in the fall once we have a new business manager.

Last year the Committee had representation from Council and is very helpful when a Council member shows up for the meetings to inform us on what is going on and we inform them. If the Council liaison cannot make it then they should have someone else attend. Our Council liaison is Christopher Bobbitt. Mr. Kennedy questioned the quorum and we have a few things that we vote on and where is the rule that we need to have a quorum.

The Board discussed about removing the members who have not been attending. Mr. Link stated there are two vacancies opened for this Committee and they are two at large and the Trails and Open Space has not made an appointment this to Committee. Ms. Mount stated they nominated Teresita Bastides-Heron as the liaison. Chairperson Conroy stated since Ms. Mount comes can she be a member at large. Mr. Link stated Ms. Mount is a committee member of the Environmental Committee and she could be the Environmental representative. They have to be a resident and they can be a resident and have a business.

Ms. Mount suggested getting a student from the business school from Rider. Ms. Brame stated she is on the Business Advisory at Mercer Community College and the chair of Rider business is on the Committee and he might be a contact. Mr. Ferrone spoke about communication and getting them on an internship to develop an app that we could use for the Township to promote it in Twitter, Yelp and Trip Advisor. Ms. Brame suggested our goals for this year to get an intern to do a Facebook Page and local media; however, it was suggested that we wait until we get our new manager. Chairperson Conroy stated it looks like one of our goals is to find an intern from Rider University the School of Business and to develop some goals that we could use for an internship after we have a new manager.

Ms. Brame spoke about the Lawrence Shopping Center. The new owner is out of Manhattan and they specialize in renovation of depressed shopping centers. They are the same company that has worked on the Independent Plaza on South Broad Street and bought in two anchors and they re-faced it. After all these years there is a new shop coming in and it is a pet store, coming in the summer and there are two other stores, but the new owner did not want to state who they are. A new façade is being done and are re-negotiating leases.

Chairperson Conroy stated we have to start working on the Awards Ceremony. Mr. Link stated we need to get a speaker as soon as possible. Chairperson Conroy suggested that the new manager speak and how he is going to be business friendly. It was also suggested to invite him to the June meeting.

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Ms. Bastides-Heron passed out flyers, copies attached.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: May 9, 2017