

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 8, 2011

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, March 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 7:50 p.m.:

Present: Chairperson Christopher Bobbitt, Vice Chairperson Ryan Kennedy, Cami Granahan, Lovette Love-Stevens, Michael Marion, Jags Vazirani, Karen Vincent-Lavanga, David Maffei, Planning Board Representative, Charles Lavine, Zoning Board of Adjustment Representative

Excused Absence: Tushar Patel

Absent: Michael Powers

Also Present: Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate; Councilwoman Pamela Mount, Donald Little, Dennis Norton, and David Mizenko and Susan Snook, Secretary

Approval of the Minutes:

The February 8, 2011 minutes were unanimously approved.

The Route 1 Redevelopment Committee has been merged with the Growth & Redevelopment Committee. There was an introduction of members of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee and members from Liaison, Greenway Committee; Donald Little, Liaison of Route 1 Development Committee and Dennis Norton, Route 1 South Committee.

Route 1 Redevelopment Committee Positions:

Pam Mount gave a brief summary of the Route 1 Development. Councilwoman Mount stated that the development has been struggling with New Jersey Department of Transportation and is finally in the Engineer's which means they are drawing up the plans. Construction might start end of this year or later in 2012.

There were also meetings with New Jersey Transit discussing on making bus stops better and adding more bus stops. The 600 Bus route now goes to the new hospital which it never did before.

Bike Committee is trying to make sure the sidewalks and the cross streets will be set up so they are friendly for people who would want to bike or walk.

The Whitehead Road light will be removed and there will be a round about. The purpose is to slow people down to 35 mph instead of 45 mph. The median in the middle will be a strip for flowers.

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There was a brief discussion about Route 1 will not be changed, but the jug handle will go. The residents of Graf Avenue will be shut off from Route 1, because that is where the round about will be; which they are not happy about.

When the Engineering is complete, there will be more meetings. The Federal funding comes thru the DVRAC, which is thru the County. In order to obtain these monies, you must be in TIP (transportation improvement program), which is critical to be on.

Once the changes are complete, the Township will be taking jurisdiction over the section that was approved on Route 1.

Creation of Student Member Position:

Mr. Donahue had to leave the meeting; therefore there was no discussion.

Follow-up with Chamber (Bus Route Extension):

There was a brief discussion on the extending the bus route from the Quaker Bridge Mall; it is already going to the new hospital and on to the Carnegie Center.

Chairperson Bobbitt asked about the bus routes on Princeton Pike. Chairperson Bobbitt stated that a survey was handed out to all the businesses and the survey showed the issue was transportation, especially Lenox Drive.

Councilwoman Mount stated that Rider has a bus that goes from Rider to the Westminster Choir College and back; so there is a thought about everyone coordinating with all the shuttles and including the School Board, to get a comprehensive idea how to attach these together.

MCTA, non-profit encourages ride shares and commuting; they have a new director, maybe she can attend a meeting to discuss this idea.

Brandywine should also be invited to this meeting.

New Business Welcome Effort:

Brief discussion about looking at new business and welcoming them and reach out to them to see if there is anything we can do for them. Mr. Lavine stated a lot of businesses have moved or went out of business.

Mr. Lavine asked Mr. Link, does a business require a license from the Fire Marshall's office? Mr. Link stated that a business must register with the Township at the Fire Marshall's Office.

Councilwoman Mount stated that there were only 2 ribbon cuttings in the last month and no one showed up; because mainly, no one new; however, the information needs to get out earlier. The businesses invite the Township Council; however, businesses need to step up and send out the word.

There was a comment made that one of the Growth & Redevelopment members should keep in touch with the Fire Marshall. So a member can call new businesses and say welcome and thank you.

There was a brief discussion regarding the strip mall on Route 1, next to Carriage Park, there are a lot of Business changes; a lot of businesses that are gone.

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Lawrence chamber has a list of businesses; we should obtain a copy and merge with our list. We should ask them to send out a package to the new businesses on our behalf. However, being a member of the Chamber costs money and many of the smaller businesses may not want to joint.

Mr. Vazirani asked why we are targeting retail and not professional offices. We are not only targeting retail. Based on the business list, there are small offices also.

Awards Program:

Chairperson Bobbitt stated about the Green Team meeting and Sustainability New Jersey. We are a sustainable certified Township and the Growth & Redevelopment Committee wants to increase our sustainability and we already give out a green award; we need to find out how to meet the criteria for what we need to do and how we do it. Mr. Vazirani volunteered to get this information.

The Chamber has a conflict with our Award Program; therefore we need to change the Program for sometime in October.

The Green Team and the N.J. Sustainability are having a Home Energy Exp on April 10, 2011 at Lawrence High School, from 10:00 to 3:00. Have some one, like a home owner, not a sales person, who did solar panels, etc., to come out and talk about this improvement.

There may be another expo in the fall or summer, for businesses to show them easy ways to save money, focus on things that do not cost a lot of money.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Growth & Redevelopment Committee getting their own face book account to reach out to people to let them know what we do.

The Growth & Redevelopment is on the web site and the only thing on there are the minutes. Trey Keymore will put on the web site anything we want; it must be provided to him through Mr. Link.

Loyalty Card Project:

The loyalty card program is struggling along. There are 30 businesses currently in the program. The main street group is promoting this program. The program works thru the visa machine. You sign up on the web site so we know who you are. You go to any of the 30 businesses, present the card, and you get points and once you reach certain points, you earn coupons, get a discount, or an item free.

We have 800 businesses and we were hoping for 200 businesses by this time. Call the Main street office to enroll in the loyalty card program.

The project is not on our web site because the Township has disavowed any connection with it, except for the Growth & Redevelopment Committee.

Rider is using a money card and award card; they have printed over 600 for Rider Students.

Meeting Speakers and Venues:

Chairperson Bobbitt stated we are still thing about places that we might go, such as the Quaker Bridge Mall, the Special Olympics on Princess Avenue, which is holding the Special Olympics in 2014.

It was suggested that we go in the summer time, May or June. Councilperson Mount is going to call and see if we can meet there, possibly on the field.

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Chairperson Bobbitt also suggested Brandywine to see what they are up to and if we can use their facility to meet there.

There was also a brief discussion about inviting the mall owners to our meetings; however, some are not interested.

On March 16, 2011 at the Mercer County Community College, this is an Economic Summit, which has vendors and speakers.

Chairperson Bobbitt asked if the Growth & Redevelopment Committee would like to meet with the Greater Eldridge Park Neighborhood Association in Eldridge Park to try to get some businesses together there. Councilwoman Mount stated they are trying to set up to meet sometime within the next week or two; so if interested, we will go and support them.

Route 1 only designated area as redevelopment; from Whitehead Road to the Circle. There was a lot of work performed on Spruce Street, by the Farmers Market, and Princeton Avenue, and it is called the redevelopment area; but is not official.

There was a brief discussion on redevelopment areas such as the Quaker Bridge Mall; Eldridge Park, focus on a little center to rebuild; Johnson Avenue, working with the greenway and parks to focus on being more effective and making it beautiful.

Other Business:

None

The next meeting will be held on April 12, 2011.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



Susan Snook, Secretary
Growth & Redevelopment Committee

Attachment

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