

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 14, 2015

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, at 6:30 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 6:37 p.m.:

Present: Christopher Bobbitt, Ryan Kennedy, Lovette Love-Stevens, Tushar Patel, Charles Lavine, John Schloesser, Max Ramos, Donald Addison, Boynton R. Weekes

Excused Absence: John Conroy, Danielle Delprato, Andrew Bedryk, Cathleen Lewis, Council Liaison

Absent: Howard Nelson

Also Present: Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate, Jude Martin-Cianfano, Susan Snook, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

The February 10, 2015 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comment:

None

Sign Ordinance:

Chairperson Bobbitt stated we were focusing on signage and how we can make changes; go through what the issues might be and then forward to amend the Lawrence Township Land Use Ordinance. Chairperson Bobbitt has a meeting with Mr. Krawczun and has offered to have Clarke Caton & Hintz, Planning Consultant, either Brian Slauch or Phil Caton to talk to us about the reasoning behind the signage ordinance especially in light in what happened when the big "rat" came to town and the Township told the Union to take the "rat" down and sued the Township and it was part of the free speech rights and the Township had to re-amend it to survive the constitutional challenge for free speech. If the Board members are aboard, we can ask Clarke Caton & Hintz to come to the next meeting, May, if we have a quorum to start the process and get the background and from there start to look at what pieces have come up in the past to get an idea of what people have complained about and start to look at ways we can put an idea forward.

Mr. Addison stated on March 11, 2015 in the Times, Princeton is also having an issue with signs; this is something we might want to look at, copy attached. They are also having serious issues with signs. Chairperson Bobbitt asked what the gist of the article portable signs was. Mr. Addison stated all of the signs are an issue and continued with stating that temporary signs can be up for 14 days; so take the sign down for a day and put it up again to let the cycle run for 14 days and the same issues affecting us.

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Chairperson Bobbitt stated the signage, in our current Ordinance, we do not have room for is for an annual spring sale and there is nothing in the ordinance that allows that. There are temporary signs for grand opening or going out of business. Mr. Addison suggested that we reach out to Princeton and see what problems they are having and what their solutions might be. Mr. Link suggested e-mailing the article to the members of the Board. The Board members were discussing the channels on the recommendations to the ordinance will be done.

Vice Chairperson Kennedy stated that Princeton could help Lawrence because they recently combined the rural area with the down town area, where there are parts of downtown area and parts that are very different with signage and zoning rules. Mr. Patel stated the small businesses have to find a way to promote their business because of the size of the sign. Chairperson Bobbitt commented that the big business usually don't have a problem because they have a big enough lot or have enough money to go before the Boards to get a variance and it is the little guy that has the problem, like AAA, the building next door, it does not have the frontage for a big enough sign to advertise. The Board members discussed the big billboards and using the LED signage.

Vice Chairperson Kennedy asked if the small business owner had the time and money to come before the Board to get a variance that they would or is it the rules. Chairperson Bobbitt answered that the big businesses do not always get what they want. Mr. Lavine stated it depends on the square footage of the building.

Redevelopment of Lawrence Shopping Center:

Mr. Weekes stated he roof is 99% complete and the parking lot does not have a start time. On behalf of the business owners there is a lot of frustration due to the fact not a lot has happened. The shopping center has lost six (6) tenants in the past 12 – 18 months. Once the parking lot is completed, the shopping center will possibly start to fill up with tenants. Mr. Lavine commented that the tenants are putting the pressure on the owner, but not being responsive and thinks the money and the drainage are the issues.

Mr. Weekes stated the business owners were told there will be a merchant meeting in May and will have more information to provide and will be happy to share it with the Board members.

Awards Program:

Chairperson Bobbitt asked who is the contact person at Mid Jersey Chamber for the awards ceremony and commented there is no movement on the program and one a time can be nailed down and place that works with the Chamber and once he finds out he will mention it the Board.

The date is after Columbus Day. The venue will be Chauncey Center or the Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Addison suggested the Asian restaurant at the Lawrence Shopping Center and they are chamber members.

Mr. Link mentioned to Chairperson Bobbitt to let the Chamber know the date and location of the awards ceremony and ask them the number of people in attendance.

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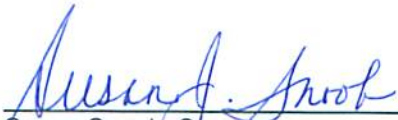
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Other Business:

Mr. Addison stated Mrs. G is having an event logo on Saturday, April 15th and a hard hat event on Sunday to see the show room.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.



Susan Snook, Secretary
Growth & Redevelopment Committee