

**GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
June 9, 2015

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, June 9, 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, Tushar Patel, Charles Lavine, John Schloesser, Donald Addison, John Conroy

**Excused Absence:** Lovette Love-Stevens; Max Ramos; Boynton R. Weekes; Andrew Bedryk

**Absent:** Howard Nelson; Cathleen Lewis, Council Liaison; Jude Martin-Cianfano

**Also Present:** Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate, Teresita Bastides-Heron, representing the ERC Committee; Pamela Mount and Mike Pine and Susan Snook, Secretary

**Approval of Minutes:**

The April 14, 2015 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Sign Ordinance:**

Chairperson Bobbitt asked the members what we should do about the sign ordinance. Mr. Conroy stated to drop it until the sub-committee meets. Ms. Bastides-Heron stated it should be shortened to three pages. Chairperson Bobbitt gave a brief history of the sign ordinance and why it is so explicit.

Ms. Mount stated the ordinance is a problem for businesses and gave an example of a deli on Franklin Corner Road who put an "A" sign out in the morning and put it away at end of the day then it was taken. Ms. Mount suggested that Brian Slauch come and talk to us about the sign ordinance. Chairperson Bobbitt stated he spoke with the Township Manager about inviting Brian to attend a meeting. The problem is having a quorum.

Ms. Bastides-Heron commented that the Cheese Cake was only allowed a little 8 ½ size sign that no one could read and now she is out of business. Ms. Mount stated to put out a notice that a meeting will be held regarding a sign ordinance and recommended that we do not need a sub-committee. The Township will have to hire someone to right the law and that should be the planner.

Vice Chairperson Kennedy suggested the September meeting.

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### **Redevelopment of Lawrence Shopping Center:**

The Shopping Center is moving forward with the parking lot. Ms. Bastides-Heron stated that land is wetlands and decided to build and did not do the proper fill. Ms. Mount asked what the goal is. Chairperson Bobbitt stated that the roof was taken care of and wanted to fix the parking lot because they felt they could not lease it. Also they will be doing something with security because there have been a lot of break-ins.

Ms. Bastides-Heron commented that the parking lot is very dark, no lights on at all. Ms. Mount stated the old furniture store should be turned into a community center. Mr. Conroy stated no one from Collier wants to talk to you. Mr. Lavine also commented that we do not get the basic response from the owner and heard they want to bring in a lot of restaurant destinations.

Mr. Addison spoke about a piece of property in Hamilton on Whitehead Road and has taken possession of the entire warehouse and turned it into one of the lively and productive office spaces. There are people around doing some interesting things. Vice Chairperson Kennedy stated the type of land use at the Shopping Center is outdated and not a good use of land and try to patch it together and keep it going. Ms. Mount stated across the street is another mega auto dealership being built and how discouraging is that.

Vice Chairperson Kennedy asked if there is a redevelopment area. Mr. Conroy stated it is from Route 1 to Whitehead Road. Mr. Conroy stated the Lawrence Shopping Center was the place to go shopping, however; is not a regional destination and should be turned into a neighborhood destination. There are pieces of it that are undeveloped and could do other things with it make themselves money. Ms. Mount stated to open up that area behind the shopping center, where the seniors are, they would walk there.

Ms. Mount stated the old furniture store should be converted into affordable housing units or apartments. Chairperson Kennedy asked if Lawrence is filing for a declaratory action for the COAH stuff. Chairperson Bobbitt stated he spoke with Mr. Caton and not sure if going to file. Mr. Link stated yes we are going to file. Chairperson Kennedy stated the Supreme Court invalidated COAH because they could not meet the rules and the Court took it back over and for 30-days, if the Town has been filing with COAH, to get approval for their plans that they could file a law suit, a declaratory judgement action with the court, in the County, and the Courts would take over managing it for the Town for what COAH should have been doing. If the Town wants to participate in having the Courts approve their plan, and give them some immunity from builder's lawsuits. Then you have five months to tell the court your claim and have the court approve whether you have the right number of units you think you have established; whether it is a 1,000 units or 50 units you need to be built, then the Court decides are doing it properly. Ms. Mount stated there is no place to build.

Ms. Mount stated the bike group is trying to get a bike lane from the library down Darrah Lane across Route 1 under the underpass down the side street to the train station in Hamilton. It could cost a couple hundred thousand dollars but go nowhere.

### **Awards Program:**

Chairperson Bobbitt stated he has been talking with the Chamber and needs to get thoughts from the Committee members about Green Acres is back in place. The members suggested Chauncey Center, Boys & Girls Club (not available) and Fusion House. There are about 80 – 100 people attending. Chairperson Bobbitt will still reach out for the Ex-Chairman of Wawa; nominations will start soon.

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Mr. Link stated the request for nominations will be put on the Township web site; put out a press release and all the traditional methods. Mr. Conroy asked if we could invite the Chamber liaison because it has changed. He also stated we might have to step up some of the things the Chamber did. The liaison is Stephanie McFarlane.

Ms. Mount gave a speaker of Athena Farabee who will talk about sustainably and continues with small businesses and will speak at Bristol Myers Squibb. Ms. Mount suggested that the Sustainable Lawrence and the Green Team would partner with the Growth & Redevelopment Committee.

Mr. Addison would like to approach the Fusion House with Chairperson Bobbitt for the Awards Ceremony.

### **Other Business:**

Ms. Bastides-Heron was present to speak to the Board about GEPNA. Ms. Bastides-Heron spoke about the Lawrence Nature Center, flyers attached. Ms. Mount spoke about the 35 acres near Notre Dame, where the public works renovated the brick house. It could hold meetings; lots of gardens, there is a deck that was added on and has programs and lectures on plants.

Ms. Bastides-Heron spoke about GEPNA and how it was originally created because of the Pit Stop. There is still no resolution or what is going on there. GEPNA goes from Willis Green House to Notre Dame, which was owned by the Eldridge Brothers who had farms.

GEPNA has a newsletter, music in the park; buy local give local. The area is very simple and plain and has history. There is a struggle about window dressing for the holidays (Thanksgiving to January) and has not been successful. This year, GEPNA, started a sidewalk sale; however, it was not approved.

This year, GEPNA, partnered with the Fire House for the cancer foundation. But the problem is how to make the business people get out of the rut to be more creative in their business and more enthusiastic. The event is October 18, 2015 (Saturday).

Vice Chairperson Kennedy stated Capital Health is working with the Pennsylvania Professional Business Association and advertises "Bags of Hope" to have people shop local. They are not part of the Chamber because they do not have any money. Mr. Addison suggested getting some help from outside of the community by marketing, which requires an investment, through one of the Chambers.

Ms. Bastides-Heron stated Willis Greenhouse is for sale and Rutgers did a study. Ms. Mount stated remember GEPNA when talking redevelopment and might be some opportunity to have an awards ceremony at the Fire House. Chairperson Bobbitt commented that Main Street is suffering the same thing, lack of enthusiastic. Every time when GEPNA wants to do something, the Township says no and wants to keep the old lights. Ms. Mount stated if you want to put a chair and table in front of your restaurant, you can't do it. GEPNA is trying to get the neighborhood people to walk down the street and not get in their cars. There is a picnic which is now called "Neighborhood Picnic".

GEPNA businesses include: Bossio's; McGrath; Varsity Pizza, Fedelo's; Plumb Chiropractic; Candela's; Notre Dame; Dunkin Donuts; Nature Center; Tasty Subs; Mexican Mini Market; Willis; a tailor shop; Pit Stop, Presbyterian Church; Poulson & Van Hise; Nerwinski Dember & Fox.

Ms. Mount invited the members to the Mercer County Sustainable Coalition Alliance on July 23 at Terhune Orchards, see attached flyer.

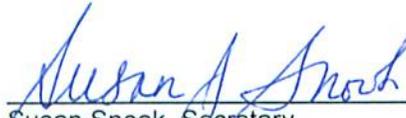
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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

  
Susan Snook, Secretary  
Growth & Redevelopment Committee

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