

**GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
May 10, 2016

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 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 and the Trentonian.

The roll was called as follows at 6:40 p.m.:

**Present:** Lovette Love-Stevens; Tushar Patel; Charles Lavine; John Conroy; Danielle Delprato; Andrew Bedryk; Joan Brame; Maria Connelly; Teresita Bastides-Heron; John Odalen; Jeffrey Lang

**Excused Absence:** Ryan Kennedy; John Schloesser

**Absent:** Boynton R. Weekes

**Also Present:** Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate, Christopher Bobbitt, Council Liaison; Pam Mount; Susan Snook, Recording Secretary

**Approval of Minutes:**

The April 12, 2016 minutes were unanimously approved with a change regarding the pricing of the office amounts.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Sign Ordinance:**

Ms. Connelly stated she spoke with James Parvesse on April 15, 2016 and he stated he came last year to meet with the members to give a presentation. The biggest complaint he gets from business owners is that there is not a provision in the ordinance for a temporary sign after a grand opening. The ordinance allows temporary signs for only grand openings or relocations. The other complaint is for unique sites where the size of the allowed free standing façade sign is not big enough. The sign allowed by the ordinance is not big enough for some specific sites, which is a rare complaint (like the property on Route 1 next to the AAA store). Free standing signs are not allowed and in that case the business owner needs to ask for a variance.

The biggest violation of the sign ordinance is temporary lawn signs. They are only allowed for grand openings for 30-days and real estate sales, yard sales. The ordinance does not say that it is only for grand openings, real estate signs or yard sales. It is listed as a separate item in the ordinance and it is not categorized and this may be a reason why they are violated and it should be revised. If a business is having a sale you are not permitted to have a lawn sign out.

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Mr. Parvesse stated the second biggest violation is the A-frame signs which are only allowed in the retail establishments located in the NC 1 & 2 Zone, Professional Office and the Historic District, which includes Eldridge Park and Main Street areas. Mercer Mall and Quakerbridge Road will put out A-frame signs which are not permitted there. It is not a source of complaints but a source of violation. The point of the A-frame sign is so that you can see it when you are driving and not necessary in places like Mercer Mall or the Lawrence Shopping Center. Mr. Parvesse had no strong feelings either way to make a suggestion to allow the A-frame sign in the shopping centers like Mercer Mall or the Lawrence Shopping Center provided they are not in the right-of-way. He does not think they should be allowed on Quakerbridge Road. The ordinance does not treat an A-frame sign as a temporary sign, which requires a permit. The Township treats them as a temporary sign.

Mr. Parvesse does not think that lawn signs should be allowed and should not be modified, only what is allowed now which is for grand openings, yard sales and real estate. However, Ms. Connelly stated the ordinance needs to be clarified because the ordinance does not say that. Mr. Parvesse also stated he would be up to allowing temporary banners signs that would be up for a certain period of time. In addition to grand openings, it would be allowed for up to for one (1) week banner displays per business per calendar year which can be consecutive and concurrent but cannot exceed four weeks per calendar year per banner or four weeks per one banner which is Ms. Connelly suggestion.

Ms. Brame asked who would go around and count how many weeks you have the banner. Ms. Connelly stated that is what is Mr. Parvesse's issue is because it would be difficult to manage and take a lot of man hours. Mr. Parvesse also stated about the type of banner that would be allowed and make it adequate for businesses because a lot of businesses want was is called a "whip banner". It would be an issue because everyone would want one out on Route 1 which would be a hazard. However, he would be okay with a banner attached to a building wall but this would not help businesses set back from the road, like Auto Lenders.

Ms. Connelly suggested to him about adding a brochure explaining temporary signs and that is okay with him because of the types of questions he gets from businesses are what kind of sign could I put up after my grand opening. A brochure about what is allowed would be okay.

Mr. Parvesse suggested if the Board wants to pose these to Council saying does the Township want to allow some type of temporary banners after a grand opening and if Council agrees then request our Planner to write something which would allow some type of temporary banner that businesses could use. If we just want to make a recommendation saying that the Board thinks there should be some type of banner allowed after a grand opening period and not sure of what type and not sure if the Board wants it as a temporary or have to ask for a permit or the duration is then the Council would hire Clarke Caton & Hintz to write something.

Ms. Connelly stated the other suggestion was to allow A-frame signs only in shopping centers in the HC zone which would help the Lawrence Shopping Center. Mr. Lavine stated that the planners from Clarke Caton & Hintz might not be in favor of that modification in the ordinance.

Chairperson Conroy stated the Committee should draft something up on A-frame signs and at the next meeting define the sizes. Chairperson Conroy feels that a business should be fined if not taken in at night because if it a temporary sign you should be able to move it; the banners are harder to manage. Mr. Lavine commented that it should come from Councilman Bobbitt because he is the Council Liaison to this committee. Chairperson Conroy stated that the Committee highly recommends sandwich boards and to look into banners so they understand where our priorities lie. There were two sizes for the A-frame signs: 3 x 4 and 4 x 8.

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Ms. Connelly stated she will look up the size of the signs in the ordinance, will draft up something on A-frames signs, what the change will be in the ordinance. Chairperson Conroy commented it will be the size and where they are placed like maybe 50' from your business. The Highway Commercial zone is not allowed an A-frame sign, so if in the highway commercial zone, if they are classified as a "shopping center" and make the change in the ordinance, the business will be allowed to put an A-frame sign out. The Board members agreed on having a brochure for temporary signage for after a grand opening.

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

Ms. Brame report that she tried to reach out to the owner's representative and this is so uncharacteristic for her and wishes she had something to report. She also sent her an e-mail and responded by saying she will try to get someone else to come.

Mr. Lavine commented that Mr. Weekes stated there was a merchant's council and had meetings, which have gone by the way side. He explained how Princeton Council works with the shopping center where they have meetings with the manager of their shopping center which has an on-going process where we have the complete opposite.

He stated that some action where we buy it and bond it for over a million dollars and own it and we take ownership and we have to do it; however, not sure what our Council can do to get some answers. He also heard that they want to attract chain restaurants. There is also a concern that Acme lease runs out in three years and want to acquire the old CVS store to make it larger; however, Acme management does not want to make that investment until they see something happening with the shopping center. Ms. Brame stated a lot of the stores are on a month to month basis.

Mr. Conroy suggested getting a tax map of the Shopping Center district and have a round table planning strategy discussion to see what we can generate amongst ourselves. Then we can take it to Council and try to be pro-active. Mr. Link will find out what the taxes are of the Lawrence Shopping Center. Ms. Brame stated they had two big hits that set them back, according to the manager, the roof was anticipated and the amount of damage to the parking lot was not anticipated.

Chairperson Conroy stated with the tax maps we can come up with ideas to look beyond the four walls on what is built, how to utilize that land correctly and how to include the shopping center into that. Ms. Mount suggested two groups to come and help us through this and they are called "Downtown Association", a non-profit that works with towns to revitalize their downtown and "Main Street Association", a non-profit that has a group of staff that helps. Ms. Connelly stated the shopping center is not a downtown or does not have a historical background.

If we can find a voice for Burlington Coat Factory and Acme, their two biggest anchors and make them to help with our voice and rumors that Acme is threatening to leave.

### **Awards Banquet:**

Chairperson Conroy stated that the Committee was going to replace the award with another one or to create a new award honoring Don Addison and we need to come to a resolution by the next meeting if we want to put something into place.

Ms. Mount stated he will be remembered for his support to small businesses and a real advocate, not construction, or what the building looked like, construction and maybe what that small business is doing in the community. Chairperson Conroy stated it would be for individual out there helping to promote small business in Town like Mr. Addison, so if there other people out there in Town that we could honor.

There is currently no date set for the awards ceremony; therefore, we need a date and a venue. Ms. Mount commented that we need to coordinate with the Chamber and is held in October.

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**Other Business:**

Ms. Mount discussed the Lawrence loyalty card and a pretty good buzz about it to use in stores. The main hang up was that it turned out that the gentleman helping was more interested in selling visa machines and you would swipe the card in the visa machine and take the 5% off. Some of the businesses did not want to give the five-percent; they would rather give out a coupon for something free like an ice cream. It did make the small businesses think about how they could get more customers and if they did something besides putting an ad in the paper. The Quaker Bridge Mall discourages the use of loyalty cards because there is a black market because some people were making their own and ripping places off.

Ms. Brame suggested doing a "Buy Local" on Spin Saver which is a free marketing design ad. It is \$60 membership for 25 (likegroupon) but locally based. Spin saver targets a municipality and it takes care of all of the financing, the marking, advertising and they get a cut. You pay for the spin saver, you get a coupon with code and redeem at a local business.

Ms. Mount discussed the food recycle program:

- 200 people signed up
- the price is down to \$12.00 a month
- there is still \$10,000 left to spend on it
- the goal was 300 and started before they reached their goal
- you can share with your neighbor

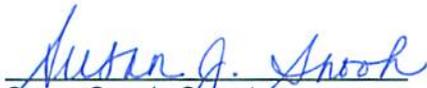
Everyone is going to have to do this eventually because there will be no landfills. Mercer County Improvement Authority is talking about putting in a digester at Duck Island which can make bio-gas and hopefully will be built within the next 5 or 6 years. MCIA also stated they will find money to hire someone for our program (not sure if the money will go to the Town or a non-profit). You will need someone to answer the calls and figure why the bill is not right.

There is a bike ride on Sunday, June 5, 2016 around south Lawrence through Rider and starts at the High School at 10:00 a.m. It will be thru neighborhoods (8 miles).

The Lawrence Nature Center is hosting "River-Friendly" on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, see attached.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.



Susan Snook, Secretary  
Growth & Redevelopment Committee