

GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM

December 8, 2009

The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee Meeting, which was held on December 8, 2009, 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 7:33 pm:

Present: Chairperson Christopher Bobbitt, John Conroy, James Cordingley, Ryan Kennedy, Kenneth Kiernan, Mayor Pamela Mount, Tushar Patel, and Karen Vincent-Lavanga

Excused Absence: Vice-Chairperson Lovette Love, Charles Lavine, and Michael Pratico

Absent: Cami Granahan

Also Present: Michael Powers, Council Liaison
Leon Kaplan, Board of Education Liaison,
Andrew Link, Principal Planner/Business Advocate,
Danielle Hickey, Secretary

Approval of the Minutes

The September 8, 2009 minutes were approved unanimously.

Approval of the 2010 Meeting Schedule

The 2010 Meeting Schedule was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Route 1 Redevelopment Committee Report

Mr. Conroy discussed the two design workshops that are being discussed for the Route 1 Redevelopment Area. The first of the two workshops will be for in-house staff and committee members. This will be more of a preliminary presentation, to gauge how to proceed with the project, see if there needs to be any changes, etc. The second workshop will be open to members of the community as well as in-house staff and committee members. This will be a larger presentation, and the interns should have more to present at this workshop. These workshops

will help the interns prepare for their formal presentation to Town Council at their March meeting.

The time frame for these workshops is January 25, 2010 for the first workshop, February 8, 2010 for the second workshop, and March for the Town Council Presentation. There was also discussion about having the interns possibly present to the Growth and Redevelopment Committee at the February 9, 2010 meeting.

The idea behind this project is to have the interns working with private owners in the area to give ideas of what they can do in conjunction with what the Township is able to do. The Township is also still working with the DOT regarding this area.

Route 1 Redevelopment Committee Report

There is a tentative date set between now and the middle of April to start design strategies for this zone. There will be another meeting in late January, after the budget is passed. In February, the Route 1 Redevelopment Committee would like to have the interns present to the Growth and Redevelopment Committee as a practice/informal presentation to see the progress and the direction of the project. The interns should be finishing in mid-late March with a presentation to the community. Mid-late April, there will be a presentation to Town Council.

Committee Page on Township Website

This Committee would like to put the committee member names and minutes on-line on the Committee page of the website. The Committee would also like to put pictures up from various events such as the Awards Ceremony and Community Day.

Awards Program Possible Date: October 13

The Chamber would like to have the Awards Program on October 13, 2010, and also to move the Awards Program from Green Acres to Rider University. The Committee has also discussed asking Mordechai Rozanski, the President of Rider to be the speaker for this event. Mayor Mount and Mr. Powers will ask Mr. Rozanski to be the speaker for the Awards Program.

Sustainable Jersey Certification

Lawrence Township is now Sustainable Jersey Certified. The deadline was September 15, 2009 and 250 towns registered. Only 32 towns were able to put together all of their information by the deadline. In order to become Certified; a town needed 100 points, and Lawrence obtained 190 points. There was a big event at the League of Municipalities, where the Certified townships received plaques. This certification allows to the Townships to use the "Sustainable Jersey" logo on their Township websites.

The "Green Team" met on Monday to figure out how to jazz up the website with the logo and additional information about sustainability. The Growth and Redevelopment Committee should also come up with a way to connect the logo with the businesses. The Committee could possibly draft a letter to send to the Township businesses informing them about the sustainable programs and finances to upgrade their facilities. Mayor Mount will draft something up. Or the Committee may prefer to invite the business community to a Growth and Redevelopment meeting where this type of information is discussed.

Mayor's Small Business Task Force

The Small Business Task Force is holding a buy-local campaign. There has been a suggestion of a form of visa/debit card for Lawrence for the holidays. It would be a “green card,” where the business owners would need to pay 15 cents for each transaction, but it is a way for local business owners to have a “gift card.” One card would be able to be used in any of the local businesses in Lawrence, and can be activated anywhere there is a visa machine. Ideally, the card will be able to be used in Doctors offices, Dentist offices, stores, restaurants, etc. All of the money would go into a pot in the bank, which does accrue interest.

This will help Lawrence get a baseline on where people shop, statistics about where residents are going. With this card, Lawrence can track where people are using the card. Mayor Mount is going to the mall this Thursday to find out more information about these gift cards and how they work. Within the next week, she will find out if they are a possibility for Lawrence. This information will help Lawrence find out what type of businesses they are promoting, small businesses or large businesses.

Lawrence Chapter of Mercer County Regional Chamber of Commerce Plans

Mayor Mount would like to use the Chamber of Commerce list of the businesses in Lawrence to help assist with the Small Business Task Force. The Township would also like to see if the Lawrence Chamber would like to get involved with the buy-local campaign. Members of the Committee discussed that any member of the Chamber of Commerce can access the business directory list and sort by township to print out the Lawrence list. Mayor Mount would like a list to see what businesses are on the list. The Lawrence Chapter of the Chamber of Commerce would also like to do some cross promotion between the Chamber and the Township for different projects.

2010 Goals

The Growth and Redevelopment Committee’s goals for 2010 include continuing outreach and involvement with the “Buy Local” campaign, continue with the Awards Program, collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to hold events and host speakers.

Meeting Speakers and Venues

Possible speakers discussed include Dr. Newman from the Rider University Marketing/Business program, representatives from PSE&G or Clean Energy to discuss possible energy saving options for small businesses, representatives from the local community college to discuss business development courses, what the course offer, employee training, etc, and people from the graduate business department at Rider, to discuss possible internship opportunities for their students. Additional speaker options include a representative to discuss BPU’s, a representative from GEPNA and/or Lawrence Main Street to keep us updated with the changes in those areas, a speaker on local financing options, and lastly a speaker to discuss solar energy and solar panel options for local businesses.

Other Business

There has been discussion with Mr. Randy Hanks from the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce to have a representative from the Chamber attend the Growth & Redevelopment meetings in 2010.

The Lawrenceville Inn has a new owner.

Wednesday, December 9, 2009, there will be an Art Gallery Opening at the Wiedel Building at the corner of Rt. 206 and Gordon Ave.

Lawrence is in the process of examining how it can assist businesses in town. Fifty-two businesses opened in town this year. There is a need for a possible Adult School, possibly a need for ESL classes. Lawrence is also trying to find ways to find funding for Clean Energy programs. The Senior Center is the next building that the town will be examining to make sustainable updates.

Discussion about having this meeting in conjunction with another township's growth and redevelopment committee was reviewed. Mr. Pratico was mentioned as someone that may be able to assist with coordinating a joint meeting with Hamilton's Growth & Redevelopment Committee. A Joint Project may be able to occur with the DOT and NJ Transit to study and figure out what the current bus routes are, potential upgrades with newer and more frequent running buses. Route 1 can be examined as a region, land use, development, and transportation issues.

The next meeting will be held on January 12, 2010.

There being no further business to come before the Growth & Redevelopment Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Danielle N. Hickey,
Growth & Redevelopment Committee Secretary