

Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 15, 2015, 4:30 pm

Middletown Town Hall, Town Council Chambers

Members Present:

John Bagwill
Joseph A. Cirillo
Nick Coogan
Liana Ferreira Fenton
Tom Kowalczyk
David Lepore
Robert M. Silva, Chairman
Barbara VonVillas, Town Council
Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

Members absent:

Rocky Kempenaar, Town Council
Jody Sullivan, Newport County Chamber

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Silva at 4:30pm

1. Discussion of state broadband studies with Middletown IT Director.

Mr. Silva introduced Mr. Wainwright, Middletown's IT director. Mr. Wainwright reviewed the discussion of the January 13, 2015 meeting hosted by MEDAC regarding broadband access. He reviewed the findings of the Broadband Rhode Island study "Aquidneck Island Broadband Analysis and Recommendations". Regarding the options for moving forward that are identified in the report, a public/private partnership may be the most viable.

The committee discussed options for moving forward and the role MEDAC might play. There was consensus that the effort should be regional in nature, possibly led by the Chamber of Commerce or the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission. The effort must engage the business community, as it has the most to gain. To be successful the state legislature must be involved.

There was discussion of a potential pilot project in Middletown, such as the Aquidneck Corporate Park. It was suggested that a survey of businesses is needed in order to confirm interest and need for improved high-speed internet access. Sources of funding must be identified. To provide MEDAC with a better understanding of the required process, Mr. Wainwright was asked to provide a draft business plan that outlines the steps necessary for implementing high-speed broadband.

To further discuss the potential options for a regional effort, representatives from the AIPC and the Chamber of Commerce will be invited to a special MEDAC meeting to be scheduled in early May.

2. Approval of the minutes of the March 11, 2015 MEDAC meeting.

Motion by Mr. Kowalczyk, seconded by Mr. Bagwill, to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2015 MEDAC meeting. **Vote:** 9-0-0.

3. Election of committee officers for 2015.

Motion by Mr. Bagwill, seconded by Mr. Coogan, to elect Mr. Silva to serve as Chairman, Mr. Cirillo to serve as Vice Chairman, and Mr. Wolanski to serve as Secretary. **Vote:** 9-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner