

Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee

Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 4:30 pm
Middletown Town Hall, Town Council Chambers

Members Present:

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

Members absent:

Rocky Kempenaar

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Silva at 4:35pm

1. Aquidneck Ave. Intersection Improvements

At the request of Mr. Cirillo, the meeting began with a discussion of proposed intersection improvements in the Atlantic Beach District. Mr. Wolanski stated that RIDOT will appear at an upcoming Town Council meeting to discuss design alternatives. Construction is anticipated in the next year.

Mr. Cirillo discussed the need for pedestrian improvements in the area. Mr. Wolanski stated that a separate project for roadway and pedestrian improvements was submitted to the state in the town's TIP submission. Mr. Silva requested that Mr. Wolanski provide copies of the town's TIP application to committee members.

Discussion will continue during the next MEDAC meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes of the January 13, 2016 MEDAC meeting.

Motion by Mr. Cirillo, seconded Ms. Fenton, to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2016 meeting. **Vote:** 8-0-0.

3. Review of the town's economic development incentive ordinance.

Mr. Wolanski provided information from the Tax Assessor regarding companies currently participating in the town's tax incentive program. He noted that the salary levels reported for new employees by one company exceed \$35,000 in almost all cases. Only 10% of the new employees are required to exceed \$35,000 in order to receive the additional 3% bonus abatement. The Tax Assessor has suggested raising the level \$50,000.

Mr. Wolanski also reported that Middletown's program seems to be one of the few examples that specifically prescribes the benefits available to companies based on

investment in buildings and job creation. Other municipal programs in the state provide elected officials with the discretion to determine appropriate tax stabilization agreements on a case-by-case basis.

There was discussion of the types of businesses that are able to participate in the town's program. Retail and hospitality businesses are specifically excluded. Some expressed a desire to expand the town's program to allow additional commercial uses to participate.

By consensus the committee requested that Mr. Wolanski invite the Tax Assessor to its next meeting to discuss potential revisions to the program.

4. Update on Regional Economic Development

Ms. Donovan-Boyle stated that the Chamber Board of Directors has drafted an organizational structure for the regional economic development office. Additional revisions are currently under discussion. Erin will provide the final product once it is completed. She also noted that the van Buren Charitable Foundation has committed to fund \$100,000 toward the effort.

5. Continued discussion of potential establishment of a business improvement district in the Atlantic Beach District, and potential projects.

Mr. Silva stated that following the last MEDAC meeting, when discussion focused on organizing a public meeting to discuss the potential creation of a business improvement district, he discussed with Mr. Wolanski the need to first inform and get the blessing of the Town Council to proceed.

Following discussion it was decided that the Town Administrator would be asked to suggest a timeframe for presenting the concept to the Town Council.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner