

Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee

Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 4:30 pm

Middletown Town Hall, Town Council Chambers

Members Present:

John Bagwill
Nick Coogan
Joseph A. Cirillo
Erin Donovan-Boyle
Rocky Kempenaar
Tom Kowalczyk
Robert M. Silva, Chairman
Barbara VonVillas, Town Council
Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

Members absent:

Liana Ferreira Fenton
David Lepore

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

1. Other business

Mr. Kowalczyk provided information about an upcoming event as part of SCRATCH Day at FabNewport on May 14th with Octavia Abell of the RI Office of Innovation. He discussed an upcoming luncheon with the Chief Innovation Officer for the state of RI, Richard Culatta on June 7th, hosted by the Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

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

Ms. VonVillas requested a correction to the minutes to indicate that she was in attendance. The minutes including the correction were approved unanimously.

3. Discussion of state economic development programs with Elizabeth Tanner, Executive Vice President, Client Services, RI Commerce Corporation.

Ms. Tanner described the programs and incentives offered by the Commerce Corporation. She described the business navigation center, streamlining of state and local permitting processes, and the ability of her office to intervene with state agencies on behalf of applicants. A complete listing of incentives and programs is available on the Commerce Corporation website.

Ms. VonVillas suggested to Ms. Tanner that additional printed information on programs be provided to supplement her presentation.

4. Election of Officers

On a motion by Mr. Wolanski, and voted unanimously, Mr. Silva was elected chairman, and Mr. Cirillo was elected vice chairman. Mr. Wolanski will continue to serve as secretary.

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

Mr. Wolanski again provided a draft of the town's economic development incentive ordinance with potential revisions discussed during the last meeting highlighted.

There was discussion of potential expansion of the program. Ms. Donovan-Boyle offered to reach out to the Chamber membership to gain feedback on the interest in local incentives. By consensus it was decided that the Town Council should provide guidance as to the level of support for extending the program to the hospitality industry (hotels & restaurants). It was suggested that Ms. VonVillas should initiate the conversation with fellow Town Council members. This will be discussed further during the next MEDAC meeting.

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

There was discussion that Bob Silva would send a communication to the Town Council describing the concept, and informing the council of the intent of the committee to begin a conversation with the business owners in the district.

7. Update on status of the town's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) application.

Mr. Wolanski stated that the draft TIP has been released. He provided a summary of the projects included in the draft TIP. He noted that the Town's requested projects on Aquidneck Ave. are not included. The Town Council is expected to pass a resolution requesting that the projects be added. He will keep the MEDAC informed about the process going forward.

8. Update on Regional Economic Development

Ms. Donovan-Boyle stated that the effort to implement the regional economic development office is continuing. TIP Strategies may be asked to return to assist with this ongoing effort.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner