

## **Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 4:30 pm

Middletown Town Hall, Town Council Chambers

### **Members Present:**

Joseph A. Cirillo  
Tom Kowalczyk  
David Lepore  
Robert M. Silva, Chairman  
Barbara VonVillas, Town Council Liaison  
Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

### **Members absent:**

John Bagwill  
Nick Coogan  
Erin Donovan-Boyle  
Liana Ferreira Fenton  
Rocky Kempenaar, Town Council Liaison

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

### **1. Approval of the minutes of the May 11, 2016 MEDAC meeting.**

Motion by Mr. Cirillo, seconded by Mr. Kowalczyk, to approve the minutes of May 11, 2016. By unanimous vote the motion was approved.

### **2. Request for review and comment on draft AIPC strategic plan.**

Mr. Wolanski stated that the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission is seeking comments on its draft strategic plan from various municipal boards and committees, including MEDAC.

Mr. Kowalczyk offered to get involved with AIPC's coastal resiliency efforts. By consensus the committee agreed that he should get involved and report back to the MEDAC.

Mr. Silva noted need for continued focus on efforts to provide improved internet service to the town's business community, and the island generally. Mr. Wolanski was asked to transmit these comments to AIPC.

### **3. 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 past meetings highlighted. There was continued discussion of potential opportunities to expand the program to certain hospitality businesses.

Ms. VonVillas again suggested that one-time tax incentives be considered to promote building improvements, rather than long-term tax exemptions or grants. Mr. Wolanski stated that he had researched such options. There are numerous examples of grant programs, but he found no examples of programs that provide one-time tax benefits for building improvement. It is something the town could explore. By consensus of the committee, Ms. VonVillas was asked reach out to fellow council members to get feedback on potential

expansion of the current tax incentive program, and options for one-time incentives for building improvements.

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

Mr. Wolanski stated that he and Mr. Silva had drafted a memo describing the concept of a BID in the Atlantic Beach area which has been sent to the Town Council. It will be received by the Town Council during its June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Provided that no concerns are raised by the Town Council, the MEDAC would then proceed with outreach to the businesses in that area to determine the level of interest.

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

Mr. Wolanski stated that the draft TIP has been released and noted that, with the exception of intersection improvements in the Atlantic Beach District, the Town's requested projects on Aquidneck Ave. are not included. The Town Council has passed a resolution requesting that the projects be added. Mr. Wolanski testified during a public hearing of the State Planning Council requesting that the projects be added to the TIP. He will keep the MEDAC informed about the process going forward.

**6. Other business**

Mr. Kowalczyk provided highlights of a workshop meeting recently held in Middletown focusing on improving computer science education in the state.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner