

Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 11, 2017, 4:30 pm
Middletown Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

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

Members absent:

Erin Donovan-Boyle, Chamber of Commerce ex-officio
Dennis Turano, Town Council ex-officio

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

1. Approval of the minutes of the November 9, 2016 MEDAC meeting.

Motion by Mr. Cirillo, seconded by Ms. Fenton, to approved the minutes of the November 9, 2016 meeting. **Vote:** 9-0-0.

2. Discussion of status of the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan.

Mr. Wolanski stated that there had been discussion since the last MEDAC meeting, initiated by Mr. Bagwill, regarding the potential updating of the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan, which was completed in 2007. Mr. Wolanski stated that following conversation with the Town Administrator, the recommendation is to devote limited resources to continuing to implement improvements in the district consistent with recommendations of the current plan, rather than embarking on an effort to update the plan.

3. Continued discussion of potential funding opportunities to pursue undergrounding of utilities and other improvements in the Atlantic Beach District.

Mr. Wolanski noted that various funding mechanisms should be considered to fund desired improvements in the Atlantic Beach district. Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the proposed business improvement district (BID), grants, and private foundation funding should be considered.

Town Administrator, Shawn Brown stated that he will be talking with the town's bond counsel about the feasibility of TIF in the Atlantic Beach area and other parts of town. He will update MEDAC during its next meeting.

There was discussion of the need to complete conceptual design work, including renderings showing the goals for the area, as a means to soliciting funding. Completing more advanced engineering design work may open the door to funding, including grants and potential participation by the RI Dept. of Transportation.

There was discussion that there must also be a demonstration of benefit to the property owners in the district, particularly if they will be asked to participate in funding improvements, such as through a BID.

There was consensus that renderings are needed as a first step, and that a letter from the Town Administrator confirming the town's initial financial investment in the effort should be provided to help solicit private non-profit and foundation funding.

4. Continued discussion of potential revisions to the town's economic development tax incentive ordinance.

Mr. Wolanski provided a revised draft of potential revisions to the town's economic development incentive program. The revisions include a proposed incentive to promote façade improvements.

There was discussion that a one-time tax incentive based on the increase assessment resulting from façade improvements would be relatively small, and might not be sufficient to encourage a property owner to invest in the building.

Mr. Wolanski was asked to discuss the concept with the Tax Assessor and report back to the MEDAC.

5. Update on status of regional economic development efforts

Mr. Silva stated that he will request that Ms. Donovan-Boyle attend the next meeting to provide an update on the Chamber's efforts to create a regional economic development office.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner