

## **Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Wednesday, February 8, 2017, 4:30 pm  
Middletown Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

### **Members Present:**

John Bagwill  
Liana Ferreira Fenton  
Tom Kowalczyk  
David Lepore  
Robert M. Silva, Chairman  
Dennis Turano, Town Council ex-officio  
Barbara VonVillas, Town Council ex-officio  
Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

### **Members absent:**

Joseph A. Cirillo  
Nick Coogan  
Erin Donovan-Boyle, Chamber of Commerce ex-officio

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

### **1. Approval of the minutes of the January 11, 2017 MEDAC meeting.**

**Motion** by Mr. Kowalczyk, seconded by Ms. Fenton, to approved the minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting. **Vote:** 8-0-0.

### **2. Introduction of new Town Council representative, Dennis Turano**

Mr. Silva introduced new member, Town Council ex-officio member, Dennis Turano.

### **3. Update on status of design of roadway improvements in the Atlantic Beach district.**

Mr. Wolanski stated that the town is work with engineering firm VHB to develop a scope of work for preliminary design of roadway improvements. The scope would also include evaluation of undergrounding of utilities, and provide renderings depicting the district with the improvements in place. A copy of the final scope will be provided to MEDAC members once it is completed.

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

Town Administrator Shawn Brown stated that he has had a discussion with the town's bond council about the process to establish a tax increment financing district (TIF). It is permitted by state law and includes an involved process and requirements that must be met. Under current law, the district must meet one of the definitions of a blighted area. This would be a significant hurdle to overcome. The process includes designating the TIF district, establishing a redevelopment agency, completing a redevelopment plan for the district, and development financial projections and plans for the project. A TIF consultant must be hired.

There was discussion of potential concerns of property owners, including the designation of the area as blighted, and the eventual increase in tax assessments that would result from increasing property values. Business and property owners in the area should be consulted. The vision for the

area was discussed. The area should be identified as a destination rather than a gateway to Newport, while also capitalizing on ongoing improvements in Newport.

Discussion on this matter will continue during the March 8<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting.

**5. 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.

Mr. Wolanski stated that he discussed the concept with the tax assessor. His advice was that a one-time tax incentive based on the increase assessment resulting from façade improvements would be relatively small, and would not be sufficient to encourage a property owner to invest in the building. Consideration could be given to offering a larger tax incentive, but the lost tax revenue would have to be made up by other tax payers.

Discussion on this matter will continue during the March 8<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting

**6. Update on status of regional economic development efforts**

Discussion on this matter will continue during the March 8<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting

**7. Update on business outreach efforts.**

Discussion on this matter will continue during the March 8<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner