

## **Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Wednesday, March 8, 2017, 4:30 pm

Middletown Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

### **Members Present:**

John Bagwill  
Joseph A. Cirillo  
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 4:35pm

### **1. Approval of the minutes of the February 8, 2017 MEDAC meeting.**

**Motion** by Mr. Cirillo, seconded by Ms. Fenton, to approved the minutes of the February 8, 2017 meeting. **Vote:** 9-0-0.

### **2. 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.

Mr. Bagwill mentioned a conversation he had with the Town Administrator regard potential trail connections to the Atlantic Beach area. Mr. Wolanski stated that the town had previously applied for grant funding to pursue this concept of a trail from the beach connecting eventually to the Sakonnet Greenway trail. He offered to provide committee members with a copy of that earlier grant proposal.

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

Mr. Wolanski stated that since the last MEDAC meeting he and the Town Administrator had participated in two conference calls regarding tax increment financing (TIF). Legislation is being considered to simplify creation of a TIFs in Rhode Island. In the meantime the town could proceed with initial work. He stated that there are two types of TIF to consider. A project based TIF would be applicable to a single development project that would benefit from infrastructure improvements. The improvements are completed up front and funded through bonding. The increased tax increment resulting from the development of the subject property pays the bond. An area TIF is not as closely tied to a particular development project. As assessments rise in the designated area/district, the incremental increase is captured and set aside for improvements within the district.

Mr. Wolanski stated that the town has requested a cost proposal and scope of work from a consultant for preliminary financial analysis to help determine if a TIF in the Atlantic Beach District is feasible. He will provide MEDAC members with a copy of the proposal.

Mr. Bagwill noted the importance of moving as quickly as possible to ensure that the increased tax revenue resulting from recent and ongoing improvements to properties in the area is captured before it is incorporated into the general fund.

Mr. Kowalczyk questioned whether the funds should be segregated. Increased tax revenues should go to the general fund.

Mr. Silva noted that increasing tax revenues would be viewed by some, possibly including a majority of the Town Council, as an opportunity for tax relief for residential tax payers. There might not be support for setting aside funds for improvements in the Atlantic Beach District.

Discussion on this matter will continue during the April 12<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting.

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

Discussion on this matter will continue during the April 12<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting

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

Discussion on this matter will continue during the April 12<sup>th</sup> MEDAC meeting

**6. Update on business outreach efforts.**

Mr. Silva stated that MEDAC has been offered an opportunity to rent a booth for the upcoming Chamber of Commerce Expo in March 14th. The committee has participated in prior years. He questioned whether there are sufficient materials and information that would warrant renting a booth. There was consensus that MEDAC would not rent a booth this year. Mr. Silva noted that MEDAC should work to develop materials and reinvigorate outreach efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Ronald M. Wolanski, Town Planner