

**Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee
Minutes of August 8, 2018, 4:30 pm
Middletown Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room**

Members Present:

John Bagwill
Erin Donovan-Boyle
Liana Ferreira-Fenton
Tom Kowalczyk
David Lepore
Robert Silva, Chairman
Dennis Turano
Barbara VonVillas
Ronald Wolanski

Members absent:

Joseph A. Cirillo
Nicholas Coogan

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

1. Approval of the minutes of the July 11, 2018 MEDAC meeting.

Motion by Mr. Bagwill, seconded by Ms. Fenton to approve. Vote: 6-0-0 (Mr. Lepore, Mr. Silva, and Ms. Boyle had yet to arrive).

2. Update on status of Atlantic Beach District roadway improvements design contract.

Mr. Wolanski stated that the town's engineer, VHB, is continuing to work to complete the 30% design plans on the town's streetscapes project, including the addition of Wave Ave. to project as requested by the Town Council. Completion is estimated to be in late Fall.

The RIDOT intersections project is expected to be advertised this Fall for construction in 2019. RIDOT will hold a public informational meeting on the project on September 19th at 6pm in the Town Council Chambers. RIDOT will be directly notifying property owners in the area.

3. Update on status of discussions regarding potential undergrounding of utilities in the Atlantic Beach District.

Mr. Wolanski stated that National Grid will be providing the cost estimate for design of utilities undergrounding. VHB must provided them with the remaining survey work for Wave Ave., which was expected to be completed shortly, if not already complete. There is ongoing communication between VHB and National Grid.

Mr. Silva noted that his contact with a National Grid official was successful in getting the effort moving, though the town will still be responsible for cost of the design work.

4. Discussion of proposed tax increment finance (TIF) district in the Atlantic Beach District. Recommendation on proposed TIF district boundaries. Joint meeting with Town Council August 20th.

Mr. Wolanski reminded the committee of a joint meeting with the Town Council and Planning Board scheduled for August 20th to hear a presentation from the town's bond counsel on the process for creating a TIF district.

There was discussion of the anticipate schedule for adopting the TIF prior to the end of the year. Mr. Wolanski will provide a tentative schedule of tasks.

Mr. Bagwill provided information on the tax increment revenue needed to fund the bond(s) for the anticipated total project cost of \$9 million. He also mentioned that he has been in contact with Frank Latore, director of the Providence Downtown Business Improvement District, who offered to meet with MEDAC to discuss his work in Providence and the value of BIDs and TIFs.

Mr. Wolanski explained that the total cost includes the roadway/streetscapes project and the undergrounding of utilities. Even though the goal to get the streetscapes project on the state transportation improvement program (STIP) list for funding, the project will be included in the TIF master plan to allow such funding to be used if necessary. The TIF is primarily being considered to fund the undergrounding of utilities, which has a preliminary estimate cost of \$5 million, including the connection of individual properties. Ms. Donovan-Boyle noted that the funds being dedicated to the TIF district will be funds that otherwise would go to the general fund. This results in an increase in taxes paid by other property owners in town. Mr. Bagwill stated that providing the proposed improvements will increase assessments in the district, which results in the collection of additional tax income that would not otherwise be generated. Ms. Donovan-Boyle state that the Chamber strongly supports the proposed TIF.

Mr. Wolanski provided a map of the proposed Atlantic Beach TIF District boundary and requested a recommendation to the Town Council on the proposed boundary. Following some discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Kowalczyk, seconded by Ms. Fenton, to recommend to the Town Council in favor of the proposed boundary. Vote: 9-0-0

5. Update on status of regional economic development efforts.

Ms. Donovan-Boyle introduced her niece, a high school student from Smithfield who is shadowing her.

Ashley Medeiros of Connect Greater Newport provided an update on recent activities of Connect Greater Newport, including outreach to the local business community. She highlighted some of the input she has received regarding challenges in the region including the parochial nature of the local business community, which makes it difficult for new businesses from outside the area to make connections and get established. High housing costs, transportation access, and workforce pipeline were also issues identified as concerns for the region. Connect Greater Newport will continue to identify issues of concern and work toward finding solutions.

Ms. Medeiros was invited to attend MEDAC meetings a regular basis.

6. Mr. Kowalczyk stated that he has invated staff from the City of Newport innovation office to attend the September 12th MEDAC meeting to discuss efforts to establish an innovation district in the north end of Newport.

7. Next meeting September 12, 2018, 4:30pm

8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35pm

Respectfully submitted:
Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

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