

## **Economic Development Committee Minutes**

**January 12, 2016**

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Chairman Doug Callantine, Jim Marshall, Bruce Goodman, Dave Mulvey, Bill Meyerowitz, Karen Wiley Sandler, Judith Kratka, Christopher Lionetti, Mike McPaul, Richard Gaglianese, Jack Loew, Wendy Klinghoffer, Michael Markman, and Tara Wehmeyer.

**In Attendance:** Commissioner John Spiegelman

**Excused:** Charles Kahn Jr., Randee Elton, Barbara Nye

**Not In Attendance:** N/A

**Note:** The EDC is strictly an advisory committee and takes no action on township matters required under state legislation. EDC meetings are essentially a workshop environment for ED policies, programs, or projects which develop over a considerable length of time. When finalized, programs and projects are presented for public discussion to the Commissioners under the Public Affairs agenda. As such, minutes are summary in nature and not verbatim.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 1: Welcome**

Chairman Doug Callantine opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance. Doug then read a 'Thank You' card written by Jay Leistner, Phase 2 Architecture & Interiors showing his appreciation for his recognition for the work he has contributed on the property at Old York Road and Susquehanna Road. Mr. Leistner was one of several recognition awards given at the EDC's annual party in December.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 2: Penn State Abington Updates**

Dr. Karen Sandler reported the good news that she will, in fact, be continuing her role as Chancellor for Penn State Abington until June 2016 at which time the new chancellor, Dr. Damian Fernandez, will be ready to begin.

The student housing project is moving along and on track. The goal is to open the student housing building in the fall of 2017.

Penn State Abington received one of 6 seed grant awards from INVENT Penn State to support the innovation incubator pilot program to start initially at Abington Art Center with the hope to transition to some corridor space or to the college in the future.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 3: Old York Rd / Susquehanna Rd Project**

A Multimodal grant was submitted to DCED and also to PennDOT for Phase 1 of the Old York Rd/Susquehanna Rd project. The grant award announcements have been put on hold until the state finalizes its budget.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 4: Business Resource Guide**

The EDC has a goal to update the current business resource guide and to create a quick reference guide for local businesses and those interested in opening a business in Abington Township. A draft of the updated business resource guide has been completed and will be reviewed by the guide's subcommittee.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 5: E. Willow Grove Park Update**

Romaine Crawford, Willow Grove Park Mall - PREIT General Manager, joined the meeting to report on Willow Grove Park. Ms. Crawford highlighted that WGPM is 1 of 4 premier malls allowing for a profitability and tenant mix. WGPM, she added, has the largest mall walking community. The security at the mall is a combination of mall security and a police officer from Abington Police Department. Security is a priority with practice and drilling revolving around topic areas of terrorist threats and active shooter drills done in collaboration with the Abington Police Department. Ms. Crawford also reported that business sales are above average as compared to other shopping centers and regular malls. WGPM is on 84 acres and has 4 anchor stores.

The holiday season brought an overall disappointment in general to the retail businesses. The final numbers were not in at the time of Ms. Crawford's visit, but she did emphasize that the internet is not killing the bigger malls.

When the question was asked where Ms. Crawford sees the mall in 5 years she responded by advising that she would like to see more entertainment come to the WGPM. For example, a community event, PAL fundraiser, lifestyle event, or possibly an outdoor art event to proceed the March of Dimes.

Ms. Crawford was also asked what the vacancy rate is at WGPM. She responded by saying that the vacancy rate is low with 95% being leased.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 6: New Business**

- a. A list of the 2015 EDC accomplishments was distributed and discussed.
- b. The 2016 Potential Goals was also distributed and will be voted on at the Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> EDC meeting.

### **Agenda Item EDC - 7: Schedule Presenters for upcoming EDC meetings:**

A list of potential presenters for upcoming EDC meetings was created. The idea was designed to find out what the future plans are for the presenter/business, what their thoughts and ideas are moving forward, how we, as the EDC, can in cooperate the vision into our future plans. The list, subject to additions and not limited to, is:

1. Abington School District - Feb. 3 EDC meeting
2. Standard Press Steel (SPS) - March 1 EDC meeting
3. Baederwood Shopping Center
4. Developer's Diversified
5. YMCA
6. Penn State
7. Jim Scully
8. Abington Hospital
9. Franklin Residential - Steven Balin
10. Abington Art Center
- ~~11. Abington Shopping Center - Sept. EDC meeting~~
- ~~12. Rydal Park - Nov. EDC meeting~~
- ~~13. Willow Grove Park Mall - PREIT - Jan. EDC meeting~~

**Next EDC Meeting: Tuesday, February 3, 2016 at 7:30AM**

**Respectfully Submitted:**  
**Tara Wehmeyer**  
**Assistant Township Manager/Economic Development Director**