

**FLORENCE TOWNSHIP  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
(Reflecting May 3, 2022)**

MEETING DATE/TIME: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 7:00 PM  
Florence Township Municipal Complex  
Front Conference Room (Virtual Meeting)  
711 Broad Street  
Florence, NJ 08518

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

2.

ROLL CALL	PRESENT	ABSENT	REMARKS
Katie Wittkamp	X		
Marvin Wainwright	X		
Joan Geary	X		
Rose Sullivan	X		
Joseph Bongiorno	X		
Richard Popso	X		
Councilman Nick Haas	X		
Bridget Wiese	X		
Mike Rinaldi	X		
Martin Eckert Jr.	X		

**Quorum Present (7 Voting Members)**      Yes   X        No       

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Minutes from the meeting of April 5, 2022 were approved (Wittkamp/Wiese)

**4. CORRESPONDENCE, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

- A. **Recreation Spring Sports:** Marty shared that with the opening of the spring sports programs, it is always very nice to see that season-by-season local businesses and organizations continue to support the youth programs. Their annual sponsorships are displayed on uniforms, banners and on many league postings throughout the season. Additionally, many extend support to school district and community engagements as well.

- B. **FTFD/Boyd's Pharmacy – Annual Easter Egg Hunt:** After a brief absence due to Covid, the annual egg hunt took place and was very successful. Joining the Florence Township Fire Department, Boyd's Pharmacy owners and staff manage this annual event for the community. Boyd's now in their 99<sup>th</sup> year in business have always been a fixture in the community in terms of supporting community activity. The staff prepare well in advance for this enjoyable event and prep eggs and other goodies for the kids during the week leading up to the egg hunt. Their efforts are very appreciated.
- C. **Economic Development Website Updates:** Marty shared that with the launch of the new township website several additional items have been placed so that the site may be more of a resource to the public. In recent months our committee has discussed resources for existing and prospective business owners that are available thru both state and county outlets. Marty placed these resources on the economic development tab of the website and shared them on the community Facebook page for residents to see. These additions and more in the future will hopefully help to provide valuable information to someone interested in growing their business or starting a new business in town. Much of the information was provided by Bridget Wiese. Thank you.

## 5. COMMITTEES

- A. **Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee:** Mark Remsa provided that he will be presenting results from the Vision Statement to council on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The results are a vital component in completing the township Master Plan. The survey was completed by over 500 people from the community which is an excellent response.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Former 84 Lumber – Zoning Application:** An application has been submitted for the former 84 Lumber property located on Route 130 South with the intention as managing the site as a "truck repair" facility. This is not a permitted use in this zone
- B. **Harkins Plaza – Proposed Self Storage Facility – Zoning Application:** The property located between Tina's Tacos and the Riverline has submitted an application for zoning approval. The intent is to build a 5 story self-storage facility. This submittal will be under review by the township Zoning Board.
- C. **900 Richards Run:** An application was made to the planning board and inquiries have been made regarding the proposed exterior lighting at the site. The overall lighting exposure was raised as a concern and is currently being reviewed further.

- D. Shops at Florence:** A parcel located on Route 130 S just below the area of Town Liquors has recently started land clearing efforts. There has been an existing approval on this land for a proposed strip mall. No further information has been provided to the township to date, however they are able to clear land. Development or potential end users or tenants are yet to be determined.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Inventory of Commercial Properties for Economic Development:** The committee continues to discuss opportunities to be proactive in identifying commercial properties that have the potential for redevelopment. Several properties have been identified but more remain in both Florence and Roebling.

The committee discussed interest in seeing the township to revamp and reintroduce opportunities to bring back more of a “downtown shopping district”. Buildings set individually and in the strip plazas along West Front, Broad Street, Main Street and others could undergo a redevelopment or be included in a redevelopment zone to gain favorable resources to aid in redevelopment efforts. Nick Haas suggested that rather than submit a plan area by area, to consider submitting to council all redevelopment areas but suggest that they be approached in phases (i.e., Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3). This would allow for language developed to be universal and for the process to be accepted as a whole instead of reintroducing over time. The committee discussed areas like Burlington City and Collingswood enjoying the redevelopment of their business improvement districts. Mark Remsa was going to draft some language for further review and consideration as to how we can approach this redevelopment concept.

- B. Master Plan:** Mark Remsa shared that the townships Master Plan is set to be introduced to Council during the month of May. Public comments for the Master Plan will follow its introduction.

## **8. MEETING OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT & REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Marty Eckert shared that thru his Clean Communities program, reusable shopping bags were purchased as part of the May 4<sup>th</sup> “Ban the Bag” program that became effective eliminating the use of single use plastic bags throughout the state. Marty and community liaison, Don Cammus distributed bags to businesses throughout the community to hand out to patrons. All businesses appreciated the support and posed for pictures supporting the new initiative. Marty took the photos and posted on social media alerting the community and since the bag ban took place during Small Business Week, Marty encouraged the public to support the town’s local businesses and while shopping to pick up a reusable shopping bag.

Mark Remsa shared that another way to assist in marketing local businesses was to conduct interviews with local business owners and build out an article to publish on the township's website and social media. This would enable the community to know more about its local businesses. Taking it a step forward, if the interviews were recorded then it would be something that could be watched and stored on the website archives along with any article placed. This is a concept that would need to be worked on by a sub committee and a draft of questions and who would schedule and visit businesses to bring this idea to fruition.

**9. ADJOURNMENT – 7:40pm (Geary/Wainwright)**