

## **Florence Twp Economic Development Committee Minutes 3/7/23**

Florence, New Jersey  
April 4, 2023

The Florence Township Economic Development Committee held a regular meeting on the above date in the header at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person.

The meeting was called to order by Economic Development Chair, Katie Wittkamp at 7:00 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Katie Wittkamp, Marvin Wainwright, Joan Geary, Richard Popso, Lisa Filippine, Councilman Nick Haas and Economic Development Liaison, Martin Eckert Jr.

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie

Absent: Mike Rinaldi, Joseph Bongiorno, Melissa Bond

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Regular Meeting of February 7, 2023

Motion of Wittkamp, seconded by Geary to approve the minutes as submitted.

### **COORDINATORS REPORT**

- **Annual Mayors Luncheon:** Mayor Wilkie and Marty attended a luncheon along with mayors from neighboring municipalities as well as representatives of businesses and organizations in our area. The event was held providing municipal officials the opportunity to share information as to development within their respective communities. The event was well attended and informative for all attendees.
- **Roebbling Community Carnival:** Marty shared information about the return of the Roebbling Carnival in 2023. The dates for this year's event will be from Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> thru Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Marty is currently working with the ride company and local organizations to create another enjoyable community event.
- **Local Business Spotlight:** Marty shared that he has been meeting with businesses in town posing questions and learning about their products and services. From this local business spotlights are generated. Marty encouraged members to try to stop in local businesses and have the conversations based on our surveys that we put out in the fall.

### **COMMITTEES**

- **State Plan Endorsement of Route 130 Plans:** The state plan endorsement was received in the last week. Future steps will be funding and eventual scheduling of projects in our area.

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### NEW BUSINESS

- **Economic Business Meeting / Community Center:** Marty and Mayor Wilkie discussed information about the planned local business gathering which will be held at the Florence Township Community Center on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. This event will include guest speakers and allow for networking opportunities. Marty will be working on the flyer and other information for the event.
- **Main Street Bank and Parking Options:** Mayor Wilkie discussed with the committee observations on potential development in the Village of Roebling. He cited that along with the additional vehicles of residents residing in the village, further opening of shops or businesses along Main Street would have some challenges due to the limited availability of parking. One consideration in the past was to either establish parking within some of the islands or modify some existing on street parking. This approach would alter the longstanding design of the village and the feedback was not supportive of changing the historical layout of the area. A possible solution to gaining parking would be if the current post office could be relocated to one of the exiting buildings or storefronts, then allowing the township the opportunity to clear the lot and remove the building and situate more parking spaces developing a larger lot in addition to the current parking lot that exists now. Mayor Wilkie shared that other towns have done similar because many of the small local post offices are limited in that they are not used as delivery hubs. Shifting to a smaller location would continue to allow the same existing services to be provided. The committee was supportive of the area where the post office currently sits being an additional option for parking so long as the post office remains in the immediate area along Main Street.
- **Explanation of Pilots:** In 2020 Mayor Wilkie provided a power point presentation outlining the PILOT program concept. The mayor created an updated presentation and provided the overview to the economic committee for review and feedback. This new version provides more in-depth information of the positive impact of the pilots and the total amounts generated and what they support within the municipality.

### OLD BUSINESS

- **Small Business Interviews:** Marty shared that he is currently working on the written spotlights. He has not yet worked with businesses for video interviews. This is more of a detailed process where if we are going to consider filming an interview, we want to ti look professional if we are going to share with the public. This is a bigger discussion as to how to put something like this in place.
- **Vacant Business Properties:** Mark Remsa will be following up with the committee regarding work done to date about identifying vacant properties. More information to be provided at the April meeting.

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### **MEETING OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Talaya Loftin – Participated during the meeting providing feedback to the Village of Roebling parking challenges. Mayor Wilkie shared the various options the township had considered including if the future allowed for the ability to utilize the post office property. Ms. Loftin as well as some members identified the intersection of Union Street & W Front Street. She shared that if a person is leaving Union Street and turning onto W Front directionally towards Burlington Township that it is difficult to see oncoming traffic due to cars being parked along the apron of the corner.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion of Geary, seconded by Popso – 8:37pm