

Florence Twp Economic Development Committee Minutes 4/2/24

Florence, New Jersey

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 minutes reflect the meeting held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor, Kristan Marter at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Lisa Filippine, Katie Wittkamp, Tina Lloyd, Rich Popso, Councilman Nick Haas, Parth Patel, Melissa Bond

Also Present: Martin Eckert Jr.

Absent: Marvin Wainwright, Joan Geary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting of February 6, 2023

Motion of Filippine, seconded by Patel to approve the minutes as submitted.

COORDINATORS REPORT

- Marty Eckert provided to the committee information about upcoming events and activities that will be taking place over the next several months. Activities were as follows:
 - Easter Egg Hunts March 23rd and 30th sponsored by Boyd's Pharmacy, FTFP, Brookdale Senior Living and Trinity United Methodist Church
 - Steel Mill Street fair on May 18th sponsored by the Burlington Mercer Chamber of Commerce
 - Opening Day for Recreation Spring Sports on April 13th
 - Roebling Carnival running from May 29th thru June 1st
 - Annual Patriotic Celebration taking place Saturday, July 6th

COMMITTEES

- **Vacant Business Properties:** The committee discussed the excel report provided at the close of 2023 by Mark Remsa. The report identifies commercially zoned properties in the municipality where many of which are located in redevelopment zones. Some properties are actively operated and others may be vacant parcels or businesses that have had no activity for a period of time. Marty completed the section identifying the owner of record for each property and corresponding address for future mailings pending next steps. Marty did attempt to acquire photographs of each property that we taken by Mr Remsa

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however received a response that photos taken were for reference purposes and were not intended to be included in the submittal by Mr Remsa thus not available to be forwarded. The committee then shifted focus to a work session where members identified each location from the report, scrubbing the list to separate into categories based on plans to reach out to owners that have unoccupied or un-developed properties in an effort to gauge interest moving forward. And the second division of the list contains active properties where the committee may engage to discuss opportunities based on need of the existing establishment. The committee may learn what resources may be needed; is there interest in renovation or expansion; what grant opportunities may be available or ways that the township may be able to further support local business in the community. Marty will work on recreating the report as two separate reports and will provide to the committee for review.

The next steps of the project will be to create a letter of inquiry to be forwarded to property owner as a means to understand the plans or goals the owner may have for their respective properties.

CORRESPONDENCE, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- Upcoming events and activities were discussed during the coordinators report however, Marty provided that the township recreation committee is currently working to re-identify the use of the township community center by focusing more on community events and activities versus much of the current use as serving in the capacity as a rental hall. Music, comedy and other programs are being planned to compliment the already established exercise programs being offered. The township will continue to host end of season receptions for sponsored youth programs, township sponsored organization fundraisers and meetings. The rebranding as such is a work in progress but the goal remains to utilize the building as a means to bring the public together to enjoy activity as a “community center”.

NEW BUSINESS

- The committee discussed continued goals to aid in the efforts to provide valuable information and resources to local businesses. The township website and specifically the economic development page will be reviewed to place state and county approved sources for businesses to utilize as well as further develop a local business directory.

OLD BUSINESS

- The former Roebling Steel Mill property was discussed by the committee considering the appropriate way to present the property to prospective developers during an upcoming municipal/developer event scheduled in June 2024. Marty will acquire additional information from administration to provide to the committee for the April meeting.

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MEETING OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

No members of public present.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Filippine, second by Bond – 8:25pm