

**MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 9, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.**

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Call to Order

Mrs. Gross called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Alliance

The Pledge of Alliance was led by Mrs. Gross.

Present:

Patricia Gross
Penny Wells
Tom Imbaratto
J. Roy Oliver
George Kumor
Ken Whildin

Approval of minutes from prior meetings

Mr. Oliver made a motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2015; seconded by Mr. Imbaratto Ayes: All present Nays: None

Discussion Items

1. Dunkin Donuts

Mrs. Gross advised the EDC members that Tiffany CuvIELLO, Planner, examined the Dunkin Donuts project and found that the delay of the construction is not due to Pinelands but the owners Engineer. Tiffany CuvIELLO did advise them that the Township is willing to help if needed.

2. Port-O-Call property

Mrs. Gross advised that she and Tiffany CuvIELLO met with the new property owners of the old Port-O-Call property. The owners stated that originally they intended to turn the property into a custard/ice cream stand but that they were approached by another business owner, who sells ice cream products, to consider not doing this type of business because it will conflict with his endeavors to construct a similar business. The new owners out of respect agreed to this request but are now looking for a new business idea. They are willing

to build to suit and will lease to the right business. The idea of Joe's Poultry (Vineland) setting up a satellite store was forwarded to the owners but it appears this will not work.

Mr. Oliver asked about the septic situation on this property. Mrs. Gross offered that Ms. CuvIELLO did indicate that the septic situation is a limiting factor for the type of business that can be located there. A business with a lot of patronage would require an upgrade to the septic system. Mr. Imbaratto stated that he spoke with the new owner and suggested the prospect of a strip mall. Additionally, Mr. Imbaratto approached the owner of Main Street Market but was told that he is comfortable with his current business and does not intend to expand. Mrs. Gross questioned whether a two-story strip mall could be placed on this lot. Mr. Oliver stated that it would be possible but would need further evaluation.

3. Veterans Vending Park

Mrs. Gross stated that a "sample" letter to the Veterans of the Vending park has been drafted by the clerk to remind about renewing their Certificate of Registration and inviting them to attend a meeting to promote the park. Mrs. Gross suggested that certain dates for the Veterans to be on site maybe a good idea as this could be advertised and promoted. Ms. Wells concurred that setting a particular day for the veterans to be on site would be beneficial. Mr. Oliver questioned whether a "flea market" setting on the weekends for the veterans would promote patronage. Mrs. Gross asked the clerk to check with NJDEP regarding the wording of "flea market" for advertising purposes of the veterans park to ensure that the township would stay in compliance with NJDEP rules. Mr. Whildin stated that vending indicates limited products. Further discussion included residents dropping donated items to the veterans to sell. Mrs. Gross questioned the prospect of obtaining the building located on the old CD Mechanical property (Dunkin Donuts) as it is rumored that the owner may want to get rid of it.

It was further discussed that the U-Sell Flea Market in Vineland may not be reopening this year.

Mrs. Gross announced that the Mauricetown Fire Company has turned the small billboard located near the Veterans Park over to Maurice River Township. This sign can be used to promote the park and advertise other township events.

Discussion took place regarding "why" the veterans are not returning to sell at the park. The consensus was because they are not selling. It was discussed to designate a day for them to sell and then advertise through the Reminder, etc. A meeting will be set up to discuss this topic with the Veterans to get their input on ways to promote the park and make selling products more productive. It was further discussed that the trees north of the location need to be trimmed due to diminished visibility of the park. It was further discussed whether a port-a-potty on site is beneficial to the veterans or is it being utilized more by travelers and truckers. It was determined that the veterans must have facilities while they are at the park. Mrs. Gross asked the clerk to forward a letter to the contiguous municipalities advising them of the park and where it is located.

It was further discussed to have “day events” to promote the park and advertise. Additionally solicitation to veteran organizations.

4. Adopt A Road program.

Mrs. Gross announced that the Adopt-A-Road program informational will be sent out to the local businesses. Participation in the program can provide off-site advertising for local businesses.

5. Spring Garden Road sign.

Mrs. Gross announced that East Point Lighthouse Historical Society has agreed to manage the sign. The potential agreement with businesses would be for 2 years and the fees would be \$50 every year which includes \$25 maintenance fee and \$25 management fee. Mr. DiDomenico is working on both agreements: one for the lease between the township and East Point Lighthouse and one between East Point Lighthouse and each business.

Mrs. Gross explained that information received from Jerry Vazquez of Cumberland County is that the grant for the lighthouse in the amount of \$400,000 is \$800,000 now.

6. SNJ marketing proposal.

Mr. Whildin stated the he and Mrs. Gross had recently met with SNJ to discuss a proposal to promote Maurice River Township and its businesses. SNJ stated that Maurice River Township has a identification issue. Ecotourism is a problem. Additionally Maurice River Township does not have enough to offer to tourist/travelers but this is in part to our unique restrictions. It was suggested that promotion items be placed on our website; provide a la carte items to choose from and advertise outside our area as outsiders do not know what Maurice River Township has to offer. Mrs. Gross stated that the township website needs to be updated which includes making it more interactive with links, etc. Mr. Whildin stated the search engines can be programmed to put “East Point” for example at the top of the list.

It was discussed regarding updated and reprinting the Maurice River Township pamphlets but it was further discussed that updating the website maybe more efficient. Links can be placed on the website stating real estate including business site opportunities, residential and commercial properties.

COMMENTS

Mrs. Wells expressed concern over “why” people are moving out of the township. She further stated that enrollment at the school went from 450 to 402 (including 30 Choice) students this year alone. Mr. Whildin stated that at one time there was the opportunity of living close to the prison if one worked there but now it appears that people are opting for the convenience of living close to stores, etc. Mrs. Wells further stated that recently her

daughter-in-law wanted to purchase a home in Maurice River Township through a program but the program advised her to purchase in Cape May Court House.

Mrs. Gross stated that at the County Economic Development meeting today and she provided a synopsis of all township activity and events. Renee DeBrick would like to hear about some ideas she has for promoting the township; Mrs. Gross will arrange the meeting.

Mr. Oliver announced that at the most recent Pineland meeting Nancy Wittenberg announced that Pinelands intends on purchasing more lands. Mr. Oliver explained the history of tax exempt entities purchasing lands and that a proposed threshold was never enacted. He further explained that Assemblyman Doug Fisher previously tried this but only three (3) municipalities qualified and they were all in his district. A response from Senator Van Drew, Assemblyman Andrzejczak and Assemblyman Land to Maurice River Township's Resolution 27-2016 was positive, possibly indicating that they may be championing this issue. The threshold will need to be determined. The problem is that once lands are owned by tax exempt entities that no taxes, no houses & no business will ever be seen on that land again. Mr. Oliver explained that the Garden State Preservation pays \$5.00 per acre, if over 50% tax exempt they pay \$10 per acre and over 60% they pay \$20 per acre. Mrs. Gross asked if all municipalities were getting a copy of this resolution. Mr. Oliver stated that quite possibly all South Jersey Counties will be copies once things start moving; it would not be wise to do this as "piece work". Mr. Oliver further explained that at this rate we will conserve ourselves into bankruptcy.

Mr. Oliver announced that a solicitation was sent out to the local businesses and the professional staff for donations toward the Wall of Honor and Becks Band. These donations will be used to offset the cost of the WHO and Becks Band. Mr. Oliver announced the dedication is set for May 14, 2016 at 11:00 am in the Leechester Hall.

Mr. Oliver announced that the architect determined that the chimney of the Port Elizabeth Library is not part of the original structure and therefore will not affect the historical value of the building. Bids are being prepared to replace the HVAC system and the roof section that is leaking. It was further stated that upon seeking historical designation, handicapped accessibility must be emplaced at the library.

It was discussed "what" type of businesses will draw travelers to the township. Several ideas were discussed including kayaking and boat tours.

The next meeting of the Economic Development Committee is May 10, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Adjourn

Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk