

TOWN OF NEWTON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
May 9, 2017
MINUTES

Mr. Hayek called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Walker called the roll: Mr. Hayek, Mr. Maruska, Mr. Krasnomowitz, Ms. Butterfield, and Dr. Clark were present. Mr. Prendergast and Mr. McKernan called ahead to be excused. Deputy Mayor Levante was also present.

Ms. Walker stated the Open Public Meetings Act had been complied with.

Mr. Hayek moved approval of minutes. Mr. Maruska made a motion to approve the minutes from March 21, 2017 and was seconded by Mr. Hayek. Minutes were approved by unanimous "aye" vote.

Old Business –

1. Krogh's – still working on it.
2. RPM – progressing nicely.
3. Style Shop – still working on it.
4. McGuire's – Mr. Levante shared that Woodmont has parameters that need to be met. They need a good price from McGuire's. They would like 1st floor commercial to not be a requirement. Adams Street lot would need to be included for their parking needs. Parking garage not feasible at this point. Woodmont sent us a letter 2 and ½ weeks ago. It is being reviewed by the redevelopment attorney and there is nothing out of the ordinary in it. Mr. Hayek mentioned that people are already concerned about parking with RPM coming in. This would make that worse. Mr. Maruska asked if the Post Office will be included. Mr. Levante said no. Mr. Ciaravolo stated that the two historic houses next to McGuire's have been donated to the Sussex County Historic Commission.
5. SCCC – videos are in!
6. G&H – Ronetco purchased - possible layout will be liquor store on far back of lot, 3 small retail units in front of it, plus a retail unit closer to 206 which may be a bank (Bank of America) or maybe a restaurant.
7. Hicks Avenue – Councilman Elvidge suggested the Town take that area over. This would mean we won't need to require a light at the intersection so development can begin on Hicks. Attorneys are reviewing this option. Gottheimer's office may be able to assist with grants.

New Business –

1. Business Directory – There are approximately 200 businesses listed. The Commission reviewed the list of businesses. Impressed with how many there actually are in Town.
2. Downtown Audio System – Everyone thinks this is a good idea. The Town Manager met with a representative today.

Mr. Maruska brought up that the Theatre's radio station was gone. Mr. Ciaravolo stated that there had been too much background noise for it to work.

3. Haddonfield visit – we are planning a day trip to meet with Town officials and learn about what has made their town successful.
4. SHU Research – they will produce survey research for us at deeply discounted rate.
5. Property Tax Rewards - % off tax bill or a check issued if not homeowner in town. Group that manages it gets a small percentage. It has proven successful in other towns. Mr. Hayek asked if the dollar amount is fixed by the Town or the retailer. We are finding out more information.

Mr. Maruska asked if we'd thought about sales tax breaks on handmade or hand crafted goods to encourage an artistic, creative community. Mr. Levante said that an Urban Enterprise Zone had been researched a few years ago and we didn't meet the criteria. He will look into it again.

6. BID - waiting until November after school referendum vote. If that passes, the BID will not be feasible because homeowner's taxes will already be increasing. Discussion ensued on the challenge of doing a BID with already increasing property taxes due to school construction. Halsted is not up to code. They will likely enlarge Merriam and consolidate the two schools. Mr. Levante recommends this approach. In regards to the BID, maybe we can look at expanding the foot print according to Mr. Ciaravolo's plan. Mr. Ciaravolo reiterated that doing the BID with part time direction will fail. Mr. Levante suggested that if BID is not feasible due to school referendum, maybe the Town can create a Business Development position and pay the employee split across all budgets. Mr. Maruska asked if we can look to private investors to help save a "dying" town. He also suggested that we should approach Bob Fuchs from Krogh's to see if he might be interested in setting up a tasting room on Spring Street. He also mentioned that the Downtown Dollar Store owner is the owner of a restaurant in Landing, Fanucci's, and wonders if he might be interested in opening a restaurant at the A&G location. A&G will not sell to another pizza place, though. Mr. Krasnomowitz wonders if we can bill insurance companies for ambulance calls. Not balance bill the patient. Just bill the insurance if they have insurance. If not, no bill. He is trying to do this in Hamburg also.

Adjournment-

There being no other business to discuss Mr. Hayek made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dr. Clark. The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Walker
Administrative Clerk