

**BOROUGH OF BERLIN
ECONOMIC RE-DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

January 12th, 2010

Flag Salute

Roll Call:

Councilman Nick Maccaroni, Chairman Joe Adolf, James Knight, Councilman Jim Bilella, Drew Straub, Dottie Trate, Rita Christenson (late).

Absent:

Gary Knight, Mike Mrvica, Freank Seman, Bob Suchowierski

Approval of Minutes:

No Minutes

Election of Chairman:

Councilman Maccaroni made a motion to elect Joe Adolf as Chairman, and Mr. Knight seconded the motion. All members voted aye.

Meeting Dates:

Meetings will be the 2nd Tuesday of the month with the exception of October and November due to conflict with a Holiday and a Council meeting.

Discussion:

Chairman Adolf summarized the last 3 years. The committee obtained services from a professional to create a proposal for a marketing research. The total cost was \$76,000 and the grant would have been for \$50,000. The borough would have needed to come up with \$26,000, and it did not pass. The Borough also has a Planner that was asked to determine what areas in the Borough qualify for Re-development zones, and it was determine that there are none with the exception of the corner of Cross Keys Road, and White Horse Pike. Last year we also went back to the Tarquini report, and recommend adoption of the façade treatments, and could not be accomplished due to financial constraints. There was also a request from this committee to have money placed in the budget for the committee for certain things that also did not pass.

There are also several vacant buildings in the Borough that needs to be addressed. Chairman Adolf listed the properties as Chevy 73, the Bank on White Horse Pike and Estaugh Avenue, Jiffy Lube, Berlin Chrysler, Berlin Auto Body, The Corner of White Horse Pike and Cross Keys Road, and Carpet Flair.

There will be another attempt to address the façade treatments in the ordinance and additional money in the budget for the committee for other things. Chairman Adolf has discussed this with the Mayor, Councilman Maccaroni and Councilman Bilella.

Councilman Maccaroni gave an idea of marketing the available properties in the Borough. By cataloging these properties, we will have pictures, and information regarding zoning, permitted uses, building structure information etc. We can also post the information on our website as well. Councilman Bilella stated that would be a matter of the committee volunteers doing the research. Dottie Trate asked if there is Grant money available for Re-Development? Councilman Bilella stated that we would have to see how things go with the new Governor taking over, and what the direction will be. Mr. Straub asked about Owens Corning? Councilman Maccaroni stated all buildings are gone, just the water tower is there. There is also still a sewer moratorium in the Borough as well which makes it difficult for new Construction. Councilman Bilella mentioned that Lamberti's has the property behind Broadview, and wanted to put a retail center there. There is also where Enterprise is, Walgreens wanted to go there, but they were going to contact the State for curb cut and the jug handle.

There was additional discussion regarding the Shopping Center occupancies where McDonald's and Kepples Carpet is. The Dollar General is now a Jiu Jit Su place, the McDonald's will be tearing that building down and moving it's location. Right now the market is very bad. Councilman Bilella commented that we should find out what our biggest Business are and what they like about our town. If they plan on leaving, what can we do to convince them to stay in the Borough.

We will research all the properties and put together all the information regarding square footage of the buildings, acreage of the lot, etc. This will all be marketed, or cataloged and hopefully use it as a tool. Debbie will get information from the Tax Assessor. Jim Bilella asked about the Jiffy Lube. There is currently a sign that states the site is being developed by Goldman, however nothing has come before the Planning Board, and there is no For Sale sign. All members will try to reach out to the vacant property owners and ask selling price as well. Chairman Adolf mentioned signage "Welcome to Berlin Borough". Councilman Maccaroni added that with the new Engineers, the Borough is asking them to look at all the Re-Development zones, and what can be done with it.

Mr. Knight commented on the traffic on the White Horse Pike. Rita mentioned that the Borough has the perfect opportunity to go into a "Retro" look. Councilman Maccaroni commented that a lot of the owners of the buildings are absentee owners, so they don't really see what is there. Chairman Adolf stated that is one of the reasons why we want to get the façade treatments into the ordinance. Rita mentioned that Starbucks seems to attract a lot. That would provide a destination for people to go to. Mr. Knight stated

until the parking is addressed on the White Horse Pike, so that there is visual contact with the buildings. If the parking is removed from the Pike that will allow people to see what businesses are there. Councilman Bilella added that the State will bring in an Engineer to address pedestrian and bicycle safety through a traffic assessment, that will help. There needs to be a control factor in the speed limit along the Pike. If additional striping is added to show that there are spaces there. Chairman Adolf added that along the White Horse Pike the State has jurisdiction. Mr. Knight added what if we added parking meters, to add to the revenue, and tickets can be written. Right now tickets cannot be written there are no ordinances and no signs. Councilman Maccaroni mentioned that the Planning Board will be re-establishing the Site Plan Review Committee, and working with the applicants. By sitting down with the Site Plan Review Committee, the applicant will be able to come before the Planning Board and make the applicant's process easier. We need an anchor type business that will bring other businesses. The location at the Corner of Cross Keys Road and the White Horse Pike is the ideal location.

Rita mentioned that each member should come back to the next meeting with 3 ideas of 3 new businesses that we would like to see in the Borough. This way we can have an idea of who or what type of businesses we are going to reach out to.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn made by Jim Knight; seconded by Councilman Nick Maccaroni. Motion carried by assenting voice of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Simone,
Secretary

CC: Charleen Santora, RMC, Business Administer