

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

May 11th, 2010

Flag Salute:

Roll Call:

Councilman Nick Maccaroni, Mike Mrvica, Chairman Joe Adolf, Bob Suchowierski, James Knight, Rita Christenson, Dottie Trate

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the April 13th, 2010 minutes was made by Jim Knight, and seconded by Mike Mrvica, on roll call Bob Suchowierski abstained, and all others voted aye.

Discussion:

Rita mentioned that she sent out a copy of the proposed Brochure, she asked for feedback and has received no responses yet. She also visited the Haasman Building, and could not gain entry, she would like to put a picture of the building in the brochure. Chairman Adolf presented updated statistics, and mentioned that this is the last meeting for discussion on the brochure, it needs to go into production, by the next meeting we should have a finalized copy, and a price for 500 to 1,000 copies.

Chairman Adolf discussed the seminar he attended in Trenton on revitalization vs. redevelopment. He learned that the redevelopment regulations have changed over time, and he is seeking redevelopment for the Owens Corning property. The cost savings for the Municipality that are passed onto the developer, and there is a redevelopment agreement that needs to be in place.

Revitalization of the downtown will implement the façade treatments. Mayor Armano has spoken with Brian Slaugh, our Borough Planner who feels that the revitalization does not qualify or fit into our plan. Chairman Adolf has spoken with Attorneys he met at the seminar, as well as planners, and Mayor Armano has agreed to go back and speak with Brian Slaugh regarding the number of properties in need of revitalization, and will discuss the redevelopment ordinances with Brian as well. To qualify for the revitalization the area needs to be 50 years or older, and a number of the properties need to be dilapidated. Redevelopment is the property is under utilized for 20 years, and in a very dilapidated condition. Some areas are the K-Mart lot, Cross Keys Road and White Horse Pike, and the Owens Corning property. Chairman Adolf is focusing on Owens

Corning because the building is down, but testing would need to be done on that site. Once a property is classified under the redevelopment the Borough can offer a 5 year abatement on the improvements done.

Chairman Adolf addressed the façade treatments, and last year it was not done due to budgetary conditions. There are zoning ordinances that need to be amended. Council has put money into the budget as a line item. Chairman Adolf asked for a motion to send a letter to the Governing Body to implement the change, Jim Knight made the motion and Mike Mrvica seconded the motion. All members voted aye on the roll call.

Rita addressed the fall fest that will be on September 18th, businesses outside of town will be invited. Jim Bilella could not be here this evening but his wife gave Rita ideas on new businesses. Rita reached out to the Pop Shop and got their requirements. It seems as though the downtown area should appeal to women. Most men do not shop, and the women do most of the shopping. There was an idea for a Gardening club, have a perennial swap, a cigar shop for men, a tea shop, candlelight shopping. Bring quaintness to the town. Facebook now has 94 fans. Rita also mentioned an idea of a phone blast through the schools about the meetings. They already do a phone blast for the business association meetings. Rita offered to go in once a month and record a statement that could remind people about our meetings. Chairman Adolf mentioned that he has a sign in sheet for visitors so they can be better informed of meetings.

Mike Mrvica asked if anyone has heard anything on the number of available properties, what is going on with them. Berlin Chrysler is up for sale, the bank is still up for sale, and WaWa is moving forward. Mike Mrvica commented on Carpet Flair, Jiffy Lube and the Bank Building as 3 perspective areas. We do not seem to have anything to offer the Pop Shop as we do not have anything that fits their criteria. Mike mentioned we would need to promote pedestrian traffic, there is no one walking on the street now, but we need the stores to promote that. We have obstacles to overcome. Chairman Adolf mentioned that about 18 months ago, there was a developer for Bank of America plus 5 or 6 stores that were interested. Dottie asked if we should contact Bank of America and invite them back, and Chairman Adolf mentioned that currently most developers are concentrating on their existing projects and closing them out.

Mike Mrvica mentioned that on Route 73, the industrial park was privately developed. There is 42 acres available at Owens Corning, have we ever reached out to a developer for an industrial park? They bring money in, no money out. Do we have a database of the developers that have reached out to the Borough in the past? Go back to those developers with a letter from the Mayor invite them back, with incentives. Know what you have to offer as a town. We only have 3 or 4 places, and a potential of a large tract of land with the car dealership on Route 73. You can give tax breaks if there is retail, which is funded from sales tax that is collected at that establishment.

Chairman Adolf opened this portion of the meeting up to the public. There was a question of what types of businesses are we trying to attract? Chairman Adolf mentioned previous comments were Starbucks, a nice eatery, etc. Another question arose that are

we as the Borough looking to encourage more pedestrian traffic like a Haddonfield? Chairman Adolf commented that we may not be a Haddonfield, but we definitely need to bring in stores to promote shopping. Public also mentioned that the Carpet Flair has a buyer, as well as the Forte property and January will be the sale. Another public question arose regarding the old school in the back of the Borough Hall. Will it be used for Borough space? There is an architect looking at it to see what needs to be done with it. Another resident questioned about an Art Show/Exhibit. The board informed the resident of the use of the Community Center and to contact the Borough for more information. With nothing further from the public, this portion of the meeting was closed.

Dottie mentioned a soup restaurant. Would only be open a few hours for homemade soup, and homemade desserts, and salads. Would not be open at night, just attract a lunch crowd. Rita commented if you have a medical arts or professional businesses that would feed the luncheonettes. Rita added to email her ideas and she will put them on facebook. Dottie made up a sheet on Trader Joes and how to get into the site and put your comments. She feels the Borough definitely needs a supermarket in town.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Knight, and seconded by Dottie Trate. Motion carried by assenting voice of the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Simone

CC: Charleen Santora, RMC, Business Administrator