
Town of Berlin

Department of Economic Development
BERLIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES of Monday, December 5, 2016

240 KENSINGTON ROAD, BERLIN - Room 8, Town Hall, 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Cyr, Chairman
Michael Baczewski, Treasurer
Peter Campanelli

Ed Egazarian, Vice- Chairman
Robert Sisti
JoAnn Angelico- Stetson

ABSENT:

Chris Coppola

STAFF:

Chris Edge, Economic Development Director
Kristen Grabowski, Recording Secretary

Chairman Dave Cyr called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Public Comments - There were none.
2. Approval of Minutes – November
Commissioner Egazarian moved to approve the minutes of November 14, 2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baczewski and passed unanimously.
3. Incentive Programs (Tax Abatement & Façade & Infrastructure Loan Program)
 - Stick Village – Buildings 3 and 4
Commissioner Egazarian made a motion to approve a 3 year tax abatement for 3 years for 50% in year 1, 40% in year 2 and 30% in year 3. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baczewski and approved unanimously.
 - Façade Discussion
The façade sub-committee is finalizing the suggested changes and will have them for the January EDC Meeting.
 - Applications
 - Massirio – 39 Mill Street
Director Edge noted that a new application was submitted. He noted that that applicant is proposing more color variation, which will make the building more visually appealing. The Commission discussed the elements of the request, noting that the dumpsters should be eliminated from the incentive program request. The landscaping portion of the application was discussed, noting that it would break up the sidewalk. Commissioners also discussed the

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Department of Economic Development previous application, noting that the applicant was originally approved for \$15,000, and it was pulled. The Commission noted that the building looks very industrial and the need to visit the property prior to voting on the application request. Mr. Edge set a date for the Commission to visit the site (12/15 @ 4:30). The application will be pursued at the January EDC Meeting.

Chris Edge brought up the application from Dr. Horn at 365 Main Street. He did some additional work amounting to \$1840.48. As it was a continuation of the initial work that was done, Director Edge asked that this amount be approved. Mr. Egazarian made a motion to move funds forward in the amount of \$920.24 to Dr. Horn, seconded by Mr. Sisti. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public relations/Promotion/Let's Do Business

- Serenity Solutions – 11/2 – Director Edge noted the location of the new business, stating that it is on the 2nd floor of building that Euro-American moved out of. They will offer holistic natural health improvement.
- Sigma Wear – 11/18 – 202 New Britain Road – Sigma Wear will produce sports teams and embroidered shirts. They will have the ability to hold fundraisers on their website.
- CarStar – 12/7 @ 9 a.m. – They will be celebrating their expansion.
- Realty 3 – 12/12 @ 9 a.m. – They will be a tenant in building 2.
- Forrest Machine – 12/19 @ 9 a.m. – They will be located on Christian Lane. There will be a groundbreaking at that time.
- Networking Event – 11/15 – 30-35 attendees (25 different firms)
Director Edge noted that the next networking event could be held in February. He explained that people were excited about it, and he reviewed the feedback with the Commission. It was noted that professional speakers could potentially be possible to discuss advertising and marketing at the next event.
- Bus Tour and BBQ – 20 attendees
Director Edge noted that ratings were very good, and the department received a lot of good feedback. It was noted that it should be done twice a year.
- Holiday Gathering – January – Director Edge noted that he has received quotes from 3 locations.

5. Grants – STEAP/Brownfield

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- TOD Planning Grant (\$150,000) Upcoming meeting is on 1/11 @ 6 pm. This public forum will be held in the community center.
- STEAP – Streetscape 2 (\$500,000) No update
- Trails Grant (\$125,000) Spring 2017
Director Edge noted that it was walked other day. The plan includes redoing the cart paths. A bid will go out soon.
- Brownfields (\$35,000) Director Edge noted that an application was put together for the final assessment work and sent into DECD. A 30% property owner match is involved.

6. Downtown Revitalization

- Springtime – revisit Main Street
Director Edge noted that he met with the property owners and Jack Healy, Public Works Director. There are a few things that will be reconfigured, specifically in front of Home Sweet Home. He noted the need for a few parking spots in front, especially with a potential coffee shop opening in early 2017. Any work will take place around April 1st.
- Public Parking Area on back burner
Director Edge noted the need for a definitive commitment from the property owners. He explained that there is a definite interest. He also noted that there would be signage and some type of façade. The proposal will be going out for RFQ for a new consultant will be on board for Phase 2.

7. Berlin Turnpike

- Acura retail building – agent now on board
Director Edge noted that he is looking at a restaurant or food option for the front of the building, and he has reached out to a few possibilities.
- Set up meeting for Turnpike owner and businesses to meet – It was noted that a potential meeting should take place in March/April
- More left hand turns possible?
It was noted that a letter could possibly be drafted to DOT noting the need for more left turn options south of route 9

8. Plan of Conservation & Development/Planning & Zoning

- Text Amendment – Retail showroom
Director Edge noted that the text amendment was originally set up for the potential marble operation. It was noted that the amendment would include all of New Britain Road and Farmington Avenue, as well as Mill Street. He explained that there are granite and marble yards on Deming Road and Washington Road. He explained that the Planning and Zoning

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Commission would like the feedback from the EDC. The Commission discussed the potential for negative impact throughout the zone, noting that a new buyer could reapply given the opportunity. It was discussed that an entire zone should not be changed based on the possibility of a use. Director Edge noted that variances can only be sought in industrial zones, and the proposed zone would not allow for a variance. In addition to the potential noise generated by the fabrication, the Commission also discussed the eyesore that could potentially be created with outside storage.

Commissioner Baczewski made a motion against the text amendment as written based on the following concerns included but not limited to:

- Outside storage
- Potential noise pollution with fabrication
- Does not support the Farmington Ave, New Britain Road, and Mill Street revitalization

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Campanelli, and it passed unanimously.

○ POD to R-86

Director Edge noted that potential for a zone change from POD to R-86 on Chamberlain Highway by Southington Road. He noted that the only permitted use at the present time is agriculture. There is no public water and sewer, and the regulations stated that it is needed for any potential development. Director Edge noted that a public hearing was opened at the PZC meeting, and comments were made about the look of the property. He explained that 95% of the land is farm land, with little tax dollars from it. He explained that there is no more commercial land available in Town.

Commissioners expressed concern regarding the potential zone change including:

- The possibility of allowing commercial land to become residential property
- The special requirements associated with potential commercial land development. The commission would recommend to ease the special requirements outlined in the regulations including well and septic use as part of commercial development.

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The Commission noted the need to review the restrictions currently in place and how to change them to promote and increase the probability of a commercial development.

- Climate Engineering – Commerce Street
Director Edge noted that Climate Engineering will be seeking a use variance to repair and install refrigeration units. Until an actual application is introduced to the Planning & Zoning Commission, this body will not take any action.
- European Deli – Asian Noodle Restaurant
European Deli will be on the PZC agenda new week.
- Steelwrist – Berlin Turnpike – 1st location in the US
Director Edge noted that Steelwrite is a new company that is looking at the possibility of opening a business at 1623 Berlin Turnpike. Business operations will be require an outside area to dig and do demonstrations. Commissioners expressed concerns with the proposed location on the Berlin Turnpike. It was noted that Christian Lane would be a better possibility, especially because it is zoned industrial. The Tech Air building was discussed. It was also discussed that the New Park off of Berlin Turnpike would be a better option, as the zone is PI. Steelwrist could then dig behind the house and no one could see anything. Director Edge noted that they business would not display any machinery on the outside, and they would have a showroom.

Commissioner Sisti moved to recommend that Steelwrist explore other potential business locations in industrial zones including, but not limited to:

- Christian Lane
- New Park

Commissioner Egazarian seconded the motion.

Commissioners noted that the proposed location at 1623 Berlin Turnpike would not be the best location in Town to support the business, specifically stating that the proposed digging locations seemed narrow.

The motion passed unanimously.

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9. Director's Report

10. Other Matters

Meeting dates for 2017 were discussed. The Economic Development Commission will meet the first Monday of each month, unless it falls on a holiday. In that case, the meeting will be held the following week. Officers will be elected in January. Commissioner Egazarian moved to approve the meeting calendar, seconded by Commissioner Baczewski. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Commissioner Egazarian, moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Angelico-Stetson. The motion passed unanimously at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen M. Grabowski
Recording Secretary

UNAPPROVED