

**Lower Saucon Township
Economic Development Task Force**

Date: August 27, 2014
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Council Meeting Room

Attendees:

Karen Beyer
Sam Donato
Mark Ironside
Andrew Lauden
Mike Lieberman
Lou Mahlman
Jay McLaughlin
Dave Spirk
Mark Walters
Stephanie Weitzman
Steve Zaharakis

Dave Willard
Judy Stern Goldstein
Leslie Huhn

Guests:

Ron Horiszny

Dave Willard welcomed the Task Force members to the meeting.

1. Update on Route 412 Construction Status

Leslie Huhn gave a brief report on the meeting held in Hellertown Borough. PennDOT explained where they are to-date and the setbacks they had. Priscilla asked for progress reports to let the community know what their progress is. They hope most of the majority of the work is done by 2015.

2. Update on Task Force Motion and Council Discussion

Dave Willard said he presented the Task Force motion to Council with the recommendation that Council approves the rezoning of Applebutter Road. The conclusion of Council was that they really shouldn't vote on the matter until they have a full Council of five people. If there were only four present, there is a possibility that it would be deadlocked at 2-2. The Council member who can't attend the meetings put this back on the agenda last year and Dave Willard feels he should be part of the final decision.

Karen Beyer asked a question about the Council member phoning in. Dave Willard said on the Gaming Authority he was able to participate on the phone as he was out-of-town, and that is a possibility, but we haven't taken the step. Leslie said we're working on the audio and tested a couple of things. We are trying to work within the system we have and we need to be able to have an audio transcription that doesn't cut out. Someone said you can rent a phone and he can attend the meeting if he's capable of doing that. Dave Willard didn't want to go into the details of the medical condition of the Council member for privacy reasons. He said the Council minutes will be posted soon if you want to look at them.

3. Draft Report – Review and Comment

Dave Willard said on September 30th, they will approve the final plan and it will be presented to Council on October 15th. They are going to cancel the meeting scheduled for October 13th. The Economic Task Force reviewed the draft report and went over some corrections. Sam Donato thought the information on the front

side took away from what they worked on. There should be an Executive Summary in the front. Judy Stern Goldstein said they can reformat it and discussed what the Committee wanted.

Dave Willard talked about the timeline and said it needs to be part of the report and recommendation. This will set the clock running, so put January through December 2015 and go through the twelve months. Jack will figure out if he has the resources to implement it.

Some of you, if you have an interest in continuing in this process may be called upon. The things in the first three or four months are going to have to be developed into plans pretty quickly. Karen Beyer would like to add the rezoning of Applebutter Road in the final report and have it under Goal 1. She asked if we are recommending hiring an Economic Development Officer for the Township. Sam Donato asked if there was any grant money available from the County to pick up part of their salary for a staff person. Dave Willard said Diane Donaher from Northampton County said she'd be happy to meet with us when the report was finished to see how the County could be helpful, so that's a possibility.

4. Review Revised Action Plan Items and Timetable

Dave Willard said they will start in month one for the timetable. One of the first things we should do is re-examine zoning districts for the uses. Personal inventory would be a yes. Next is used utility base map and what sewer/water is best suitable for development and zoning. Judy Stern Goldstein explained the Comprehensive Plan to the Task Force.

They discussed the developer's processes and one of the deterrents is getting approvals can be extended for a long time and you can be in a black hole. Dave Willard said the goal is to make it easier for people; do we want to get more business than other Townships because it's easier to come here rather than less business because it's harder to come here? From the level of Council, that's all we're really concerned about. The Task Force vision statement is to support existing businesses and institutions while developing future opportunities through managed growth that reflects the Township's character.

Dave Spirk said, in the developer's minds, Lower Saucon Township is not very friendly. It could just be a perception. Karen Beyer said we are competing with other states, so we need some incentives. Dave Willard said LVEDC could send us any inquiries.

Sam Donato said the product we are selling is the mission statement. We are selling this part of the area, infrastructure, the schools, the hospitals, the education, that's what we are promoting. He would start looking at rebranding our Township. Dave Willard said we need at least four months for branding and marketing.

Karen Beyer questioned the open space money. Dave Spirk said we can't use the money for anything other than open space. Someone commented about the corridors entering the Township. They should look nice and, if the Township focuses on that, the Township will look presentable.

Dave Willard said if Council approves the Task Force recommendations, it will be a whole package of tasks we'll have to do in the first few months. Judy Stern-Goldstein said they've come up with some recommendations for Council to entertain for the first month and if they wanted to advertise and go through the process, it would take the next two months for that. Someone said they can talk to the Chamber in the next few months to see what they can do for the Township.

Dave Willard said extend outreach and bring to the table all local universities. Sam Donato said maybe we could get a student doing an internship or co-op in the Township and they could do some marketing in lieu of hiring anyone on staff. That could be part of their senior project, but there would be no salary involved. Mark Ironside said there are students at Lehigh University who focus on Real Estate as their major. Dave Willard asked him to look into this. Mark Ironside said there's also DeSales University. Someone said we

need to partner more closely with Lehigh Valley Economic Development and Northampton County to find out how to use and leverage their resources. That's the key for marketing.

Sam Donato said he thought Judy did a great job on the timeline. Judy went over how each section will be incorporated into the final report.

5. Other Business

Dave Willard said the next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 starting at 7:00 p.m. Dave asked Mark Ironside, Mike Lieberman and Stephanie Weitzman to present the Task Force report/recommendations at the October 15th Council meeting. Dave hopes that all Task Force members will attend the meeting to emphasize their support of the recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.