

Economic Revitalization

2018 Initiatives and January 29 2018 Meeting Minutes

Well it's been one year since we formed the Economic Revitalization Team in January 2017.

Lets be clear and revisit our responsibilities. Established at the urging of the Historical Society and citizens concerned with the deterioration of the Business District, the team makes recommendations to Council for their consideration. It is independent of the Land Use Board that is responsible for the Master Plan. However, the Group attempts to develop both short term and long term strategies to implement the pertinent recommendations of the Master Plan.

Economic Revitalization Team Meeting Minutes 1/29/2018

Team Members in Attendance: Councilman Don Kakstis, Councilman Chuck Maschal, Bonnie Wells, Jeanette Lloyd, John Wachter, Sam Kelly, Kate Krier Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce, Economic Redevelopment Consultant Emily Givens, Barbara Cona, (new member), Beach Haven Chamber of Commerce

Team Members Missing: Ken Muha, Joe Pisano, Ralph Scorge and Caroline Lechaux

Audience Observing: Mayor Davis, Borough Manager Sherry Mason, Deborah Whitcraft property owner 514 and 528 Dock Road, John Bell Maschal Property Owner 513 Dock Road, Fran and Ganine Kleber owners of Morrisons properties.

The following agenda was followed and related discussion summarized:

So, where are we today? Using the survey information, Beach Haven and its Economic Revitalization Team needs to come to agreement on the following proposed initiatives in 2018:

- Invite the different Chambers of Commerce, Business and Non-Profit organizations to participate with the Beach Haven Economic Revitalization Team:
 - a. Planning of Events and Activities
 - b. Improving Communications
 - c. Prioritizing Public/Private partnership Community Improvement projects
- Prioritize and Implement the recommendations of the Beach Haven Master Plan
 - a. Reduce nuisance flooding
 - b. Streetscape Improvements to the Business District
 - c. Park Improvements
- Establish Economic Redevelopment Zones in the Business and Maritime Commercial Districts.

- a. Because of higher property values that would be realized in these two districts, there will be significant intermediate and long term higher tax revenues from these properties reducing the tax burden of home owners.
- b. Enables Beach Haven to be pro-active in reducing the number of empty stores and vacant lots while being selective in the type of project/business that would receive consideration
- c. Enhance the attractiveness of these districts
- d. Through the use of short term tax abatements and a relaxation of existing zoning requirements provide a greater financial return to interest investors.

Discussion: The Economic Revitalization supported this path forward.

This brings us to today's Agenda:

1. Understanding and gaining support for Council's recommendation to establish an Economic Redevelopment Zone in the Marine Commercial District.

Discussion: The benefits associated with having a non-condemnation Economic Redevelopment Zone and an explanation of the steps in the process were presented to all in attendance by Don Kakstis and Emily Givens. The home owners in attendance requested a letter be drafted and sent to them to summarize these benefits. We will also attempt to send this letter to the other property owners prior to the Land Use Board Meeting of February 5, 2017.

There was concern voiced by Debbie Whitcraft that the property owners were not adequately notified about this initiative. Emily Givens stated that letters were sent to all affected property owners on December 15, 2017 with her contact information to address their concerns. Any property owner contacting Emily Givens or Council members were responded to immediately to answer their questions. Included was a discussion with the Beach Haven Marlin and Tuna Club. We will attempt to meet with them once again prior to the Land Use Board Meeting.

Mordecai Marina had earlier requested that they not be included on the listing of properties and their request honored. Emily Givens indicated that any property owner on the current listing can request that their property be removed. Councilman Kakstis stated that removing them from the listing would not be a problem. Debbie Whitcraft requested that her two properties be removed from the listing. Her request will be satisfied when received.

Also, to provide additional time the Economic Redevelopment of the Maritime District resolution was removed from the January Land Use Board Meeting to the forthcoming February 5 Land Use Board Meeting. **(Update: It will be heard on March 5, 2018)** It was also noted that the matter of establishing Economic Redevelopment Zones was addressed at a full house public meeting on December 7, 2017.

Debbie Whitcraft noted her displeasure that her request in April 2017 to be added to the Economic Redevelopment Team that was established in January 2017 was denied.

It was questioned which properties were included in the Economic Redevelopment Zone. There are 21 total addresses with 15 owners. A map of the area under consideration was passed around.

It was questioned why the Maritime District was selected and not the Business District. Mr. Kakstis explained that a number of factors entered into this decision:

- The Business District is a much larger area than the Maritime District comprised of hundreds of addresses.
- Developers and Investors are aware of the Borough's initiative to establish Economic Redevelopment Zones. These Individual Developers have shown an interest in specific properties in both the Business District and Maritime Districts. Essentially both areas are being considered simultaneously.
- To be better informed an extensive survey of visitors and home owners was conducted over the summer to identify business needs, the customer base and preferences. The information was presented on December 7, 2017. These results highlighted the importance to make improvements to the Maritime District.
- The Borough's COAH requirement was not finalized until September 2017.
- The Draft Master Plan and its recommendations for the Borough was not presented until the 3rd quarter of 2017.
- A dynamic process, all of the above have factored in the timing of establishing Economic Redevelopment Zones.

2. **Recently there has been a request from the Land Use Board to Council to update and revise the current ordinances in the Marine Commercial area. As a point of clarification, this request currently rests with Council and the Borough Manager to address and is independent of establishing the Economic Redevelopment Zone for this area. It is not being addressed by the Economic Revitalization Team.**

Discussion: This point of clarification was made with no follow up discussion.

3. **Development of a 2018 Marketing and Communications effort.**

Discussion: There are a great many activities being sponsored by both the Beach Haven and Southern Ocean County Chambers, the Historical Society, Maritime Museum and individual organizations throughout the year. There was agreement that an improved marketing and communications strategy needs to be developed.

Bonnie Wells is developing an improved internet link that she demonstrated to the Group. New technologies will also be used in 2018 for the purchase of beach badges, tennis and pickleball passes etc.

4. **Plans for an Economic Redevelopment Zone for the Business District.**

_ This agenda item was covered as part of Agenda item 1.

5. **A quick update on the following programs currently underway:**

- a. **Beach Haven School Pocket Park**

Discussion: The schedule for completing this project will be discussed at this Wednesdays Engineering Meeting. A Spring Completion is targeted.

- b. **Taylor Avenue Field and new Bay Pavilion.**

Discussion: These two projects are both scheduled for completion this Spring. It was suggested that because of the popularity of the three pavilions for weddings and other events, that a process and fee be charged to reserve these spaces. This will be taken under consideration.

- c. **Application to the State for a grant for two pumping stations, valued at \$2 million to reduce nuisance flooding.**

Discussion: Highlighted in the Master Plan recommendations, we are awaiting a response back from the State of NJ to our application.

d. Tuckerton-Beach Haven summer water taxi.

Discussion: Chuck Maschal and Kate Krier gave an update of the pilot program scheduled for the Summer Season. Tuckerton will be seeking a \$20,000 grant to offset the costs to run the program. More details to follow.

e. Community Policing and a 2018 summer Bicycle Safety Program.

Discussion: Following up on the popularity of bike riding, the Beach Haven Police will be developing a Bike Safety campaign for this summer season.

f. Additional Beach Volley Ball nets and possible tournament.

Discussion: A permanent volleyball net installed on the Beach this past summer. Well received an additional one or two nets will be installed this summer and the possibility of a volleyball tournament sponsored by local businesses will be explored. It is also hoped that it will attract the twenty to thirty-year-old customer base that the summer survey found to be under represented.

g. Plans to change out 100 street lights along Bay Avenue to LED lighting.

Discussion: Beach Haven is awaiting survey information and a final cost estimate from Atlantic City Electric to retrofit approximately 100 light fixtures on Bay Boulevard to a more efficient LED bulb. The projected economic payback is under two years.

h. Municipal Building Update.

Discussion: The move into the new municipal building should begin the end of February, 2018. A Grand Public Opening is scheduled later in the Spring after the move is complete. Both the Historical Committee and the Maritime Museum have offered to furnish photos and other displays to complete the fit out of the building. It is hoped that the building will be utilized for public meetings, e.g. School Board, Non-profit organizations etc.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion: The LBI shuttle bus was previously free. A plan is being developed to charge a fee in 2018 to offset its cost. The summer survey recommendation to have the shuttle bus do a limited number of pickups on the mainland will not be considered until 2019.