

**Economic Development Committee Meeting
Town of Bridgeville
Minutes
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 9:00 a.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room**

Attending: John Brodeur, Deborah Brown, Sue Grenier, Richard Grinnell, Ralph Root, Ruth Skala, Jim Speegle, Jeff Tull; **Absent:** Harris Mager, Brenda Rambo, Charles Smith, Lawrence Tassone; **Guests:** Diane Laird, State Coordinator Downtown Delaware, Rev. Jim Penuel III UUMC

Introductions: Our two guests Diane Laird and Rev. Jim Penuel were introduced to the Committee members.

Approval of Minutes: minutes of the January 18, 2017 meeting were approved.

Member Updates:

License Plates: John Brodeur reported that there are forty-six license plates on hand.

Grant Signage: John indicated nothing further had been done regarding the grant recipient merchant signage. Diane Laird said she would ask Ben Muldrow for a peel and stick template that John can have produced. She felt Ben would suggest a possible source for production.

Outlying Business Attraction: John Brodeur has not identified businesses to approach. This is an area of interest to Sue Grenier and Jim Speegle. Ruth reported that they had provided a thoughtful report with various ideas to be addressed by the EDC.

Historic Tax Credits: Deborah Brown reported she discussed Historic Tax Credits with Jerry Butler and will provide him with written materials to be shared with historic property owners that request permits for property improvement.

CGI Banners: Deborah Brown spoke with Al Forys, CGI Communications Inc. and they are willing to provide seasonal banners (25) that include local business advertising to Bridgeville at no cost to the town. Bridgeville businesses would be asked to sponsor banners in the same way that CGI approached businesses at the time they did our website video. The Commissioners will need to decide if they want the EDC to pursue this project. Seaford currently has CGI banners on route 13.

Historic ByWay: Richard Grinnell spoke with Michael Hahn, State Byways Coordinator. He indicated that the Historic Byways Program is not yet formally organized. Richard than met with Hildegard Rieger who is the local volunteer team leader. She indicated she would be meeting with Dan Parsons. Richard will continue to pursue Bridgeville's participation in the program. Sue Grenier mentioned that Hildegard, who is also a local tour operator, writes a column in the Cape Gazette. After reading her column on Greenwood, Sue and Jim Speegle visited Greenwood and the places mentioned.

Railroad Signage: Harris Mager was not in attendance but he reported having made contact with Rapa Scrapple regarding the possibility of a Bridgeville sign on the old railroad depot that is now owned by Rapa Scrapple. The request has been forwarded to their headquarters.

Median Sign: Ruth reported that the Welcome to Bridgeville sign in the route 13 median is hard to read. The gold lettering has faded. Jesse Savage indicated that Howard Hardesty had been involved with its original installation. John Brodeur will contact Howard Hardesty for details. The Bridgeville sign on northbound 13 is positioned next to all the debris from Streets Farmers Market. There is a horrible mess at that site which totally detracts from the sign. The space needs to be cleared.

Farmers Market: Jeff Tull continues to research a Farmers Market for Bridgeville. The possibility of having food trucks in town on specific dates during the summer months was discussed as an alternative or in combination with a Farmers Market.

2017 Main Street Conference: Richard Grinnell plans to attend the Main Street Conference in Pittsburgh. Having owned a B&B in Eureka Springs, Arkansas as well as being involved in their Downtown Program, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau, he is exceedingly well qualified to represent Bridgeville. Ralph Root said he was considering attending the conference.

Façade Grant Update: Ruth Skala reported that three grant recipients completed their work: Bridgeville Building & Loan – new signage, Layton's Hardware – new front awning, Bridgeville Emporium – new signage, lighting, removal of old sign and cleanup of storefront.

EDC Budget Balance: A discussion ensued regarding the remaining budget allocation and the best use of the balance. Jim Speegle felt that a coffee shop would be a wonderful asset for downtown. The committee is in agreement that a matching incentive grant to attract new businesses would be a wise use of money. Ralph Root questioned the legality. Diane Laird as well as various committee members felt it was not a problem. Diane suggested that possibly La Dolce in Milford might be interested in opening a satellite. Adding a coffee bar to Downtown Alley is a strong possibility and would be a good community gathering space similar to Gallery 16 in Greenwood. Reverend Jim Penuel felt a coffee shop would be a real positive for his church members. The space currently occupied by the "bakery" that now wholesales only would be an ideal location as one side is fully furnished as a restaurant. The space should be used as a retail bakery and coffee shop. Diane Laird suggested that maybe the EDC could suggest an alternative location for the current wholesale bakery operation that would not consume prime retail space. Ralph Root said he will mention to Jane Houtman, owner Downtown Alley, the type of grant we are planning to offer.

Town Hall had provided a short Market Street vacant inventory list. For greater property detail, Diane Laird suggested that we match the list with a business inventory that Rick Ferrell had completed several years ago. She promised to assist with our pursuit of businesses for the vacant places. There may be some USDA funding that can be utilized as well as our matching incentive grant.

The Committee unanimously approved EDC membership in the Greater Seaford Chamber of Commerce. This would allow a committee member to represent Bridgeville at the Chamber's monthly Economic Development Forum meeting where all levels of government are represented. The cost is \$100 per year. Ruth will give the application to Jesse for processing.

The Committee agreed it will give a recommendation to the Town Board to include a part-time staff person for Economic Development in the FY2018 budget.

Ralph Root questioned if any of our current year budget can be encumbered for future use after June 30. The EDC also has additional money from the sale of license plates. This has to be researched.

Jeff Tull reported that he had met with Jesse Savage regarding EDC's mission. Jesse said the EDC focus should be on attracting at least one business to downtown through an incentive grant as well as concentrating on large development on route 13 and 404. The committee questioned Heritage Shores' role in attracting businesses. Ruth reported that the access road from Heritage Shores to 404 should be completed in 2017.

The importance of local merchants working together was discussed. Sue Grenier and James Speegle expressed an interest in approaching local businesses to discuss their problems and ideas. The EDC's ultimate goal would be hosting meetings where the merchants can gather to develop a strategy to increase business traffic and improve downtown. Ruth will provide Sue and Jim with a merchant contact list.

The goal is to use the budget balance for: new business matching incentive grant(s), conference attendance, repair or replacement of route 13 median sign and a railroad “Town of Bridgeville” sign on the old railroad building.

Diane Laird said she would work with Rick Ferrell on attracting a coffee shop and/or other businesses for our Market Street vacant locations.

She also suggested we look at the Muldrow Master Plan and have Randy Wilson, one of the plans consultants, return to Bridgeville to help with further implementation.

March Meeting: Wednesday, March 15 at 9:00 a.m. at Town Hall

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Skala, Chairperson