

**Economic Development Committee Meeting  
Town of Bridgeville  
Minutes  
Wednesday, March 16, 2016 9:00 a.m.  
Town Hall Meeting Room**

**Attending: EDC:** Lawrence Tassone, Jeff Tull, Brenda Rambo, Jack Dalton, Ralph Root, Ruth Skala  
**Absent:** Charlie Smith; **Realtors:** Tommy Cooper, Greg Sizemore, Rob Harmon, Trey Hardesty, Bob Wheatley, Woody Hunsberger, Brad Gillis; **Town:** Pat Correll, Commission President, Bill Atwood, Chair of Planning and Zoning Commission

**Minutes:** the minutes from the February 17, 2016 meeting were not reviewed in order to leave time for Roundtable discussion.

**Realtor Roundtable:**

Committee Chairperson, Ruth Skala, thanked EDC members Brenda Rambo and Jack Dalton for making this meeting possible by compiling the realtor list and inviting the participants to the Roundtable.

As participants introduced themselves they were asked to share their opinions regarding what the town needs to proceed forward with economic development.

Bob Wheatley began the Roundtable by adamantly stating that the town needs to *extend its infrastructure of water and sewer* to the large commercial areas that do not have it at this time. This would expedite development. Concurrently a mechanism to recover costs would need to be created. Consideration should also be given to IT and power connections. Bob stated that developers look at critical mass as well as the intersection traffic. There needs to be *offsetting incentives*. He indicated five Bridgeville sites are in play for a motel. There was some discussion regarding the pump station capacity at the corner.

Rob Harmon stated that small businesses cannot carry large infrastructure costs so they look for buildings that are in place. DelDot and DNREC rulings also make development challenging. Delaware's DelDot was mentioned as the worst state agency to work with. Rob indicated that the new DelDot Secretary Jennifer Cohen is aware of this reputation and wants to work to improve the agency's effectiveness. Frequently projects can be delayed up to two years as due diligence is completed.

Greg Sizemore mentioned the difference in the needs of small businesses as opposed to larger brands – the downtown vs. larger commercial areas.

Discussion ensued regarding how important it is for a town seeking development to be *user friendly and project a welcoming atmosphere*. Startup fees should be carefully reviewed. An example discussed was the bakery on Market Street. It took a long time for the bakery to open in part because of town regulations and a bilingual interpreter was/is needed to communicate

with the owner. The bakery still does not provide the retail services that the community would like from the double storefront. Brenda Rambo indicated that she can provide an interpreter for future consideration.

Woody Hunsberger requested assistance in bringing water and sewer connections to the lots he is trying to sell on Sussex Extension.

Tommy Cooper expressed his long term concern that Western Sussex County has not developed comprehensive water and sewer infrastructure from Greenwood to Delmar similar to what exists in Eastern Sussex County. He suggested that Bridgeville *use SCAT to help lobby for support in developing a comprehensive system*. He has one potential project. He also mentioned that Chinese developers have been seriously considering the Baldwin Farm for producing soybeans. He indicated that major chains put heavy emphasis on demographics. A positive for Bridgeville is its police presence that provides a safe environment. There is also access to good hospitals and schools.

Brad Gillis, although arriving toward the end of the meeting, was eager to know exactly how the "IT" for Bridgeville is being defined. Chairperson, Ruth Skala, offered him a quick catch up regarding the earlier discussions.

All the realtors emphasized that the town needs to be EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH. It should not create barriers to development and should have a welcoming GO TO PERSON.

Development of an Assisted Living/Nursing facility was suggested by the realtors as well as a motel and a food store. Additional suggestions were a movie theatre and a box warehouse store such as Costco, Sam's Club or BJ's. Bob Wheatley suggested that we schedule *quarterly meetings* and include the bankers that are closely involved with business development.

In conclusion Tommy Cooper emphasized that he felt that Bridgeville's Economic Development Committee and the town are taking all the correct steps. He stated that he would do all he could to help move our efforts forward.

Everyone in attendance felt that the Roundtable discussion was extremely constructive and would further encourage the realtors to seek developers for Bridgeville.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Skala, Chairperson Economic Development Committee