

**Economic Development Committee Meeting**  
**Town of Bridgeville**  
**Minutes**  
**Wednesday, June 1, 2016 9:00 a.m.**  
**Town Hall Meeting Room**

**Attending:** John Brodeur, Lawrence Tassone, Jack Dalton, Harris Mager, Ralph Root, Deborah Brown, Ruth Skala **Absent:** Brenda Rambo, Charlie Smith, Jeff Tull

**Minutes:** minutes from May 18, 2016 were approved.

**Report on Main Street Now Conference** - Ruth Skala, Conference Attendee gave the following report to the committee:

After three days of intensive seminars, I realized that all communities working on revitalization of their downtowns are facing the same challenges. Some have been extremely successful while others are struggling. The fundamentals of revitalization are defined as:

1. Identify the Community Vision for Success: understand the market, know the market data, specialization positioning.
2. Create Community Transformation Strategies: economic vitality, design, promotion, organization.
3. Impact and Measurement: identify visible results.

Revitalization efforts have to be community driven and require broad community engagement leading people to action. There has to be a clear direction with defined priorities. Partnerships need to be developed and an investment/funding structure identified.

Additional Conference Highlights:

- Impact of Local Business: economic multiplier, connection to place, business support network
- Develop a brand; brand recognition, capture market, *definition of a brand – proprietary, visual, emotional, rational and cultural image*
- Finding entrepreneurs: early school training, community groups and churches, having a local plan and telling the community story, keeping young people
- Trend returning to downtowns and city centers, creating livable communities to grow up and grow old, walkable and safe main streets, multiuse buildings, streetscape, incubator stores
- Diverse team for leadership
- A business as a destination regardless of town size and/or location, reinvent marketplace
- Value of volunteers, community pride, recruit for specific job, and equip volunteers with tools to do task
- Shop Small as promulgated by American Express “Shop Local Saturday”
- To grow business district: identify customers, complete commercial assessment, financial incentives, work plan, talk with realtors and property owners, PROMOTE and

SELL VISION PLAN, establish a network, market vacant spaces, marketing campaign, recruit specific tenants, contact prospects, business retention, financial assistance (SBA, specialty loans, angel investors), publicize special events, use all media

- Façade improvement leading to increased sales and increased first time customers
- Connectivity of distinctive neighborhoods, work on physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, financial infrastructure, work with strengths in a coordinated collaborative system
- FUNDING Sources: Micro lending - SBA, CDBG (HUD), USDA, CDF (Jack Riddle); Venture capital, Angel funds
- National Historic Tax Credits – National Park Services partnership with Certified Local Government – specific Bridgeville properties may be eligible for Delaware and National Tax Credits

Based on Ruth's report, members of the committee felt that we are on track and kudos should go to Ben Muldrow for his work and guidance last spring. Preservation should be an important part of the EDC's efforts.

**Discussion Items:**

Ralph Root said that he had spoken to Jane Houtman, manager of Antique Alley and she indicated she was thinking about how to utilize the Tull Property (former Dollar General) on Market Street with three or four businesses in the building. She has been in touch with Jeff Tull regarding this but nothing has come of it at this time. She is looking at things like a bakery, coffee shop, etc. She has no leads at this time but it was just a thought for now. Ruth commented that this is similar to the "incubator" concept discussed at the conference.

Jack Dalton asked if the town still has a moratorium on homes being made into apartments. No one on the committee was aware of this moratorium but Tazz said he would find out if it is still in existence. Jack indicated that historically part of Bridgeville's earlier economic success resulted from being at the railhead.

John Brodeur, Harris Mager, Jack Dalton, Deborah Brown, Lawrence Tassone and Ruth Skala had all attended the SEDAC meeting at Jimmy's Grill on May 31. Jack mentioned that once again, for the third time, the committee was being told that Bridgeville needs to invest in infrastructure to the available commercial property in order to move ahead. Tazz indicated the town cannot afford the investment. The EDC agreed that it would send a letter to the Commissioners recommending that they rethink the use of 2017 unbudgeted transfer tax money. For the past two years excess transfer tax has been applied to reduction of outstanding debt. The committee is suggesting that this year the money be used for the infrastructure connection. Further discussion is needed since the committee doesn't know the actual cost of the connections or the amount of transfer tax in excess of budget. This methodology would complete the work without incurring new debt.

Ruth shared the Commissioners letter regarding its adoption of the Strategic Plan on May 9, 2016.

Ruth gave Ralph Root a copy of Milford's "opening a business timeline" for comparison with our checklist. The flow chart indicates the timeframe for each step required to open a business.

Ralph indicated that he had not received the digital thumb drive containing code information that he had requested from April in order to review regulations/code pertaining to development. Tazz said he would follow up with April.

**Report on License Plates** – John Brodeur who is coordinating the sale of license plates said that almost fifty percent of the hundred plates ordered have been sold in the first week. He has been doing direct sales but will be placing license plates for sale in town hall and the Sugar Beet. Plates will be sold at the Friends of the Library's Jumpin June Jamboree on June 4.

**Prioritization of Strategic Plan & Master Plan Strategy Board**

The EDC ran out of time to do the in-depth analysis of the Strategic Plan. The intention is that each member chose an area of interest to concentrate on and coordinate for future committee efforts. It was decided that this will be done at the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Bill Plaff, Southern Delaware Director of America's SBDC, who was in attendance at the SEDAC meeting, indicated he would like to meet with our committee. It was agreed that he would be invited and Ruth would see if his work could be coordinated with our SP meeting in July.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 20 at 9:00 a.m. at Town Hall**

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Skala, Chairperson  
Economic Development Committee