

**Economic Development Committee Meeting
Town of Bridgeville
Agenda Minutes
Wednesday, December 14, 2016 9:00 a.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room**

Attending: John Brodeur, Deborah Brown, Brenda Rambo, Ralph Root, Jeff Tull, Ruth Skala, Sue Grenier, James Speegle, Richard Grinnell **Absent:** Jack Dalton, Harris Mager, Charles Smith, Lawrence Tassone

New Members: three new EDC members to be appointed at the January 9 Commission meeting introduced themselves: James Speegle, former Wesley College VP for Economic Development and small business owner; Sue Grenier formerly with Kent Sussex Industries in business recruitment; Richard Grinnell who was an IT specialist with the airline industry and owner of a Arkansas Bed and Breakfast actively involved in the town's historic district and tourism. All three are eager to join in Bridgeville's economic development effort.

Minutes: The minutes from the November 16, 2017 meeting were approved

Historic Tax Preservation Credits Meeting: Ruth Skala reported that the December 1st meeting at the Bridgeville Library with Joan Larrivee State Coordinator was poorly attended. Only two historic property owners were in attendance along with Historical Society representatives, Library Director Karen Johnson, EDC member Deborah Brown and I. The overall conclusion was that an increased effort has to be made to make historic property owners aware of this benefit for rehabbing historic properties. Town personnel need to be knowledgeable about the state and federal tax credits to educate residents when they apply for permits. Ralph suggested that tax credit availability be added to the town's checklist. Ruth said that she and Jesse Savage would be meeting on December 20th with Kara Briggs from the state to discuss the possibility of Bridgeville becoming a Certified Local Government in order to access additional historic grant funding.

Parade: Time and meeting place were discussed for EDC participation in the Bridgeville Christmas Parade {later cancelled due to poor weather conditions}.

License Plates: John Brodeur reported that ninety-four out of the original hundred license plates have been sold and an additional fifty plates have been ordered. The EDC wants to continue to offer the plates as a way of advertising Bridgeville.

Open Discussion regarding EDC Functioning:

- Ralph opened the discussion by saying he feels "the Commissioners don't want or support the EDC". Ruth suggested by making a budget commitment the Commissioners are supporting the Committee. There has been full support for the Façade Improvement Grants Program. At this point John Brodeur volunteered to create a window symbol (signage) that can be displayed at the businesses that have been grant recipients.
- It was suggested that the EDC make specific recommendations to the Commissioners regarding future actions.
- Steve Dell who was attending as an observer suggested that the EDC's purpose should be to increase the town's tax base. Ruth responded that "the mission is to create a community where people want to live, work and visit through an inclusive effort to increase economic, social and educational

opportunities, to provide community support services and to offer an appealing environment". Implicit to accomplishing this mission would be an increased town tax base.

- Increased advertising in business journals was suggested with the quick response WHAT would we advertise?
- Ralph Root suggested that the EDC be used as staffers/implementers not advisors.
- Jeff introduced the fact that historically Bridgeville had many businesses. He expressed the concern that the Commissioners feel the EDC has overstepped its role, that there is a tension regarding openness and that the EDC should be finding new businesses.
- John Brodeur suggested that outlying businesses be encouraged to move into the Market Street area. He will personally canvas such businesses and see if they can be encouraged to come into Bridgeville possibly with a grant incentive.
- Jim Speegle suggested that the EDC receive a direct "charge" from the Commissioners instead of the Committee giving the Commissioners recommendations.
- Sue Grenier said we need to fix the relationship with the Commissioners by clearly defining the problems and establishing what the Town really wants.
- A six month plan with a clear list of objectives needs to be established. Jeff Tull said we need to ask the Commissioners what they want. Ralph Root said we want to help and need to know HOW. One solution may be for the town to hire a part-time staff person responsible for economic development.
- FOR SUCCESS WE ALL NEED TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE.
- Jeff Tull underlined the fact that all the Commissioners love the town but may have different ideas on what is best. He volunteered to speak with Pat Correll and Jesse Savage. It was decided that it would be helpful if the EDC could be on the Commissioners' Workshop Agenda for January 18 at 10:30 and that the full Committee could attend for "Clarification of the EDC's role in implementing the Bridgeville Strategic Plan for Economic Development".
- Additional effort will be made regarding the Historic District, advertising Bridgeville's attributes and joining the Delaware Historic Byways Program.

NOTE: Next EDC meeting at 9:30 on Wednesday, January 18 in town hall prior to attendance at Commissioners' Workshop at 10:30.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Skala, Chairperson Economic Development Committee