

Economic Development, Business & Redevelopment Commission Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2021
Virtual Meeting via GotoMeetings

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Council Chair, Brian Livesey

Attendance:	Brian Livesey	Linda Martin
(Present)	Jay LoBosco	Jennifer Jordan
Guest:	Cathy Zavorskas	
Absent:	Anthony Caltabilota	Nick Reeve
	Dean Fazio	Stephanie Buckel
	Lainey Acosta	

Minutes of Jan. 28th meeting presented; Jen made motion for approval, Jay seconded, all approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Chamber of Commerce

- Linda reported that the Chamber is continuing its virtual meetings with a paint party next week. Netwalking will start up again as soon as weather permits. Everyone is ready to get back to in person events as soon as possible.
- The Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans began a 2-week phase restricted to small businesses with under 20 employees. The process has proven to be long and frustrating for many businesses and this could help loan servicing companies concentrate on smaller businesses. The Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) discount with companies such as Staples and Office Depot was temporarily brought back giving up to a 70% discount to registered businesses.

Website Options

- Section on website “In & Around Matawan” has too many links. There are many Facebook pages; can try to coordinate. The EBD page and/or business page could be options to put all information together. Cathy to speak to Grace about getting access to the EBD page for Linda to post agendas, minutes, etc.

Realtor Rollout Ideas

- Realtor sheet is close to being finalized. How to reach out to commercial realtors with finalized sheet – email or zoom meetings; need different approaches for different realtors. Linda mentioned that a video could be prepared for YouTube. Jen suggested drone shots similar to what was done by Ghost Nation for Burrowes Mansion.
- Jen mentioned that 137-143 Main St was on market and shared the listing.
- Cathy shared brochure prepared by Cranbury, a 3-fold map highlighting businesses, parking and attractions in town. This could be a relatively inexpensive promotion for Matawan which already has a recycling map in place. With help from a graphic designer, it could be tailored to our business needs. Jay mentioned selling advertising space to featured businesses; could be added down the line; start simple as it will be outdated quickly. Cathy will work up a map with Grace, Jen will assist, Brian may have a template. The EBD Commission has no budget but maybe something could be worked out.
- Cathy also shared the steps for opening a business in Newtown, NJ. There are 4 major steps, from zoning approval, filing with clerk, fire & CO certificates and Health Dept. permits, if applicable. Matawan could put together something similar to give prospective businesses a simplified process. A caveat at end would mention that there were exceptions or could be extra steps.

- Per Brian - our long-term goal would be a downtown organization similar to Keyport's where businesses pay in and funds go towards festivals, etc.

NEW BUSINESS

Property Tax Cards

- Brian introduced idea for property tax cards similar to Marlboro, Manalapan and Old Bridge. Linda has one from Old Bridge but doesn't really use it. There are not too many businesses participating. Brian mentioned that Marlboro's program was successful. It may be possible for a Matawan/Aberdeen collaboration. This can be looked into, but the cost would fall to businesses if they were willing to participate.

Downtown NJ Status

- Revitalize downtown events; advocates for businesses; they have webinars for individuals & towns; can apply for Downtown NJ status which supplies grants, etc.

Public Art

- Project started at Jackson St. park handball court by art teacher & students at school

Permit Fee Waiver

- Loopholes - A business applied for permit for signage, however, the waiver was not valid because it was not a construction permit, rather a zoning permit which was not included in the permit fee waiver. Also, there is no end date for how long the waiver would stay in place, for example, 6 months, a year? Both items to be addressed

OPEN

- **Matawan Means Business** Campaign – Cathy presented a proposal to bring residents and businesses together with the focus on restoring downtown and overall business community.

Steps to Campaign

1. Research – questionnaire to residents (mailed?, postcards?, online?)
2. Collect data & prepare report
3. Develop marketing plan with short & long term goals

Cathy to consult with Councilperson from Cranbury as to timeline, etc. (Cranbury had a 72% response rate to their survey which is very promising).

Jen shared spreadsheet from similar questionnaire she put together in 2018.

Brian to present ideas to Council Workshop and get approvals to move forward

Farmers Market

- Jay started to explore companies that run farmers markets/craft fairs. Per comments from Brian and Linda – too much work to do ourselves and since it is not a fundraiser, hiring a company could produce the desired result, i.e., bringing people into town.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Martin

Recording Secretary

Economic Development Business & Redevelopment Commission of Matawan