

Economic Development, Business & Redevelopment Commission Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2020
Virtual Meeting via GotoMeetings

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Council Chair, Brian Livesey.

Attendance:

(Present)	Deana Gunn	Linda Martin	
	Brian Livesey	Jennifer Jordan	
	Jay LoBosco	Anthony Caltabilota	
(Guest)	Cathy Zavorskas		
(Absent)	Nick Reeve	Lainey Acosta	Dean Fazio

Minutes of July 30 meeting presented and approved.

OLD BUSINESS

- Chamber of Commerce

- Matawan Day – Linda notified all the vendors and sponsors from last year that Matawan Day was cancelled this year. Most were not surprised and looking forward to next year.
- Networking Events – still doing virtual events and next week two mental health professionals will be presenting How to Cope in the New Norm. Response not good so far.
- Looking to do an outdoor luncheon mid-September at LaCashina and then some of the restaurants in Matawan that are large enough to hold us, such as MJ's and maybe the Reception Center (now open for outdoor dining).

- Lakeside Dining

First week was very successful. Cathy said there was an incredible response on Facebook with 12,000 people engaged. Burger Shop was very happy. They went back and forth all night with food. Brian reported that at least 120 people came to event. This week was Aby's turn, and 30 people responded for tonight. No Labor Day weekend dining. Angelo's will be two weekends from now

Per Cathy, the Independent picked up the story on Lakeside Dining and sent over questions. Cathy and Scott put together an article entitled "Matawan Rises Above COVID 19" and will send it to the Independent and Asbury Park Press.

- Website

Brian looked at different town's websites and shared Asbury Park's. We will put something similar together for Matawan's website. There was a checklist for businesses to navigate if they were looking to open in town, a pdf application, and links to websites. Cathy asked Brian to send her the link to Asbury article so she can start on it. Linda will send links to the helpful websites which can be added.

- Guest Speakers

Brian has a friend from Riverton who has a Facebook Page, Explore Riverton, who he will ask to speak. He also has two contacts with the Aberdeen Business Council who may be willing to speak.

- New Businesses in Town

Amato (took over A. Scotto's), Home Services USA, Three of a Kind and The VIVE

NEW BUSINESS

- Realtors/Landlords & a Matawan Flyer

Brian asked for two volunteers

– Jay volunteered to drive through town looking at the empty properties and making note of address, realtor, and phone number along with any further information he finds.

- Jen volunteered to do a Matawan Flyer/Fact Sheet to be sent to realtors and landlords to promote the town. She will put something together, show to group and then give to Scott (Borough Administrator) for approval. The flyer would include present improvements and upcoming improvements such as the Transit Village. Cathy offered to help her put it together. Deana asked her to include the incentive programs that the Borough is offering – no permit fees if building is vacant one year or more.

- Halloween Decorating/Holiday Wreaths

Commission will partner with Recreation on the painting of windows for Halloween. “Artists” will submit pictures and we will connect them with the businesses in town to paint their windows. It will be advertised on Facebook and in the schools. This will be available to all businesses in Matawan. We can build on it for the holidays with participating businesses given a wreath to decorate and a contest will be perhaps something hidden in the wreath as an incentive to visit the business.

- Attracting New Business/Empty Storefronts

Prior to meeting, Jen sent a proposal (similar to NYC) for the Commission to discuss whereby the landlords with empty storefronts would start to incur a tax or penalty – that money would then go to small business. There seems to be no incentive to lease spots, examples, the old Aby's and the Edge. They have been empty for over 5 years. We should try to get them to reduce rent to bring in businesses. Property is owned by LLC's. They are not from here and do not care about the empty spaces. Questioned whether they got a tax break to not lease – per Deana, not from the Borough but per Anthony, it could be a write off on their income taxes.

Deana does not believe that the Borough has the authority to impose a penalty/tax but will check. Per Brian, it may have the potential to penalize smaller companies which is not the goal.

Suggestions that we promote town to these landlords – call it Small Business Incentive – have conversations to see what is on their minds, show them the projects on horizon, ie, 126 Main to be new home to Food Emporium; distribute the Fact Sheet.

Jay believes there will be a vacuum as COVID ends creating a demand for new places/downtown resurgence. Brian believes that with closing of so many stores it will be a choice of just big box stores or back to Main Street.

OPEN FLOOR

- Governor expected to reopen indoor dining mid-September.
- Brian mentioned that restaurants up north used an economic loan from county to put together climate-controlled greenhouses to get them through the winter.
- Linda spoke of the liability issue for business that still has not been approved via Phase 4 of stimulus package.
- Anthony brought up the \$30 M NJ Grant whereby restaurants would be reimbursed for food spoilage from the first reopening of indoor dining in early July which was pulled back right before it was supposed to start.
- What businesses took advantage of Monmouth Grant? Money is there but people are not applying. Chamber received grant; Historical Society applied; need to call to follow up to get to front of line.
- Cathy has draft of Spotlight on Matawan business for Anthony to approve.
- Deana reported that A Salut should be opened within the next month; patio done, sign changed - they are waiting for final inspections.
- Next meeting 4th Thursday in September; changes to calendar for November & December only.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Martin
Recording Secretary
Economic Development Business & Redevelopment Commission of Matawan