

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
REORGANIZATION MEETING APRIL 2, 2015 – 7:30 pm
North Plainfield Borough Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Michael Giordano, Jr. at 7:37 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Janice Allen, Anne Soto, Tom Fagan, Lenny Lange, Paul Alirangues,
Skip Stabile

Absent: Frank A. Stabile, Sandy Marrow, Joe Tevlin

Also present: Mayor Michael Giordano, Jr.
Gail Kaufman Cain, Recording Secretary

The Statement of Compliance was read by Mayor Michael Giordano, Jr.

Minutes of the last meeting were not available.

The Mayor administered the Oath of Allegiance to Members of the Committee whose terms were reappointed January 1, 2015.

The 2015 Calendar of Meetings was set by the Committee. All meetings will be at 7:30 pm in the second floor Conference Room of Borough Hall unless otherwise noted:

June 4th – Vermeule Community Center

September 10th

December 3rd

The Mayor called for nominations for a 2015 Chairperson for the committee. Paul Alirangues nominated Anne Soto to serve as the 2015 Chairperson for the Economic Development Committee. Tom Fagan seconded the nomination. Anne Soto accepted the nomination. All voted in favor and Ann Soto was unanimously elected as the 2015 Chairman of the Committee. Everyone congratulated Ann and conveyed their enthusiasm in working with the Administration and Planning Board to get the EDC back in full swing.

Skip suggested we have a Vice Chair as it is a traditional position. Lenny Lange nominated Tom Fagan for Vice Chair of the Committee. Skip Stable seconded the nomination. Tom Fagan accepted the nomination contingent on the fact that when Frank Stabile was well enough to be back at the helm, he would relinquish his seat to him. All voted in favor and Tom Fagan was unanimously elected as the 2015 Vice Chairman of the Committee. Everyone congratulated Tom.

Gail Cain was appointed by the Mayor as Recording Secretary.

Tom thanked the Mayor, Frank Stabile, and Lenny Lange on behalf of the Planning Board for their hard work while the EDC was not actively meeting. He credited Lenny Lange and Frank Stabile for taking the initiative in approaching Vornado to solicit the redevelopment of the old K-Mart Site, resulting in Costco, The Tile Store, Texas Road House, and several other potential new businesses. Texas Road House has submitted their permit package and is currently in plan review. The Mayor and Borough's Business Administrator will be meeting with Vornado regarding a potential new tenant for the site on Wednesday, April 8th.

Tom also spoke about the old Sears site on North Drive and the recent interest by Kiddie Academy in taking over the site. The Academy has submitted a Planning Board Application. Sears has not used the facility in several years.

The Villa Furniture Site remains vacant at this time, although several businesses have shown interest; they have been unable to close a deal with the owners of the property.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the status of other businesses and vacant sites in the borough. Tom Fagan mentioned the closing of the new 7-Eleven on Route 22 West. Skip questioned if anyone had information regarding Home Owners Heaven. The Mayor replied that the last he had heard a Storage Unit Facility was looking at the site. Lenny Lange mentioned that he has noticed a lot of activity at the Eber's Site. The gym that originally looked at the site was not willing to bring the facility up to ADA Compliance. There is nothing new at the moment regarding the vacant McDonald's site. Sanger Hall has received all of its approvals.

Janice opened a discussion on the Downtown Design Committee. There are very few vacancies in the downtown area. Tom questioned how much money is left in the revolving Small Cities money. Janice remembers that since the project is over, remaining funds can be used for whatever we would like. Tom asked about the criteria. The Mayor will check with Dave Hollod. The discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Paul Alirangues updated the committee on this year's Farmers Market. The Market will open on Saturday, June 28th and run through the summer. Hours of operation will be from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm in the Borough Parking Lot located across from Borough Hall. Several new vendors have shown an interest in this year's market.

Paul took a Facebook survey asking residents if they are interested in continuing the one (1) day Festival that takes place in July. Because of the overwhelming positive response received, Paul has scheduled the Festival on Saturday, July 11th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in the Borough Parking Lot located across from Borough Hall. This year the event will be staffed completely by volunteers. The six (6) bands being featured throughout the day have volunteered to play for free. Paul will secure all necessary permits for the festival.

Paul is very excited about the potential of “Rent Company” coming to North Plainfield to help raise money to help fight hunger in our community. Paul has worked closely with Rent Company in Maplewood and made several connections that he feels would be a great opportunity for us. He feels strongly the organization has strengthened the Maplewood Business District and created a strong sense of community. Tom Fagan questioned some of the logistics of hosting such events. Questions regarding space, liability insurance, expenses, social permits from the ABC, etc. were discussed. Janice showed some concern over holding a family event that included alcohol.

Paul would like to run our first Rent Party event this September. Skip would rather not see us rush into anything as there are many moving parts in running these types of events. Skip would like to see the committee take the necessary time to fully investigate the pros and cons before undertaking a project of this magnitude. The committee as a whole had several questions and echoed the necessity of further details before moving forward. Janice had some reservation regarding how exactly this falls under EDC. The Mayor would like to meet with the group before moving forward with any further discussion or decisions by the committee.

Rent Party, founded in October 2009, is a live music series based in Maplewood/South Orange, New Jersey. Proceeds from the events would help fight hunger in our community. Paul will invite Rent Party to our next meeting in June to make a presentation. For further information you go to rentpartylive.com.

Paul also mentioned a grant opportunity that he will follow up on with Rutgers. Skip suggested checking with Doug Singleterry.

An updated Roster will be sent to all Committee Members.

Motion to adjourn by Lenny Lange, seconded by Skip Stabile and carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm by Mayor Giordano.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Kaufman Cain
Recording Secretary