

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
REORGANIZATION MEETING SEPTEMBER 10, 2015 – 7:30 pm
North Plainfield Borough Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Anne Soto at 7:35 pm.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Sandy Marrow, Joe Tevlin

Also present: Gail Kaufman Cain, Recording Secretary

The Statement of Compliance was read by Skip Stabile.

Minutes of the last meeting were emailed to all Committee Members prior to the meeting. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Tom Fagan and seconded by Lenny Lange. Minutes were accepted as written. Skip Stabile abstained.

Chairperson Anne Soto made a motion to retire Frank Stabile's Chair for the remainder of 2015. Tom Fagan seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Anne would also like a Resolution written and presented from the EDC in honor of Frank Stabile and his valuable contributions to the Economic Development Committee and the community.

Skip opened a discussion regarding the location of the Farmer's Market. Councilman Righetti has requested the Farmer's Market be placed on the next Council Agenda for discussion. He would like to see the Market moved to the Vermeule Community Center. Frank feels the parking is better suited for this type of event at the Community Center. He also feels we have the potential for attracting more vendors at the Community Center. Paul does not believe that our current Farmer would be willing to relocate to the Community Center but will reach out to him. Janice and Anne would like to open discussions with other farmers to see if there is any interest.

Several options were discussed to help expand the Farmers Market. Skip talked about the possibility of opening a second location. The Food Bank is located at the Community Center and may benefit people using the Voucher System. Vouchers are available at the Clerk's Office at Borough Hall. Anyone living in Somerset County that qualify for the Voucher System can pick them up in North Plainfield as well as Somerville. The Satellite Office of the Food Bank located in North Plainfield also serves our surrounding communities. It was agreed by all that both the Voucher System and the Farmers Market should be better advertised to reach a target audience. We have a small group of residents that would like to hold a Craft Market at Vermeule a couple of times a month that could be combined with the Farmers Market. Paul feels we need to further cultivate our relationship with the business community. Everyone agreed this topic deserves further discussion.

The ultimate goal would be to develop both the downtown location and the Community Center location. Skip suggested that members of the EDC come to the Council Meeting Monday night. Skip will ask that the discussion point be in the beginning of the meeting and that the members of the Committee sit at the front table as part of the discussion.

Economic Development is going very well in North Plainfield. Tom Fagan stated that several new jobs are coming to town. Good Will has been approved by the Planning Board for the old McDonald's site. Kiddie Academy has opened on the old Sears site. Lazy Boy will be going in at the old Radio Shack site. A new retail business will also be going in next to Lazy Boy. The Tile Shop is doing very well and will most likely subdivide the building. IHOP is doing very well. A brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed Metro Storage on the old Home Owners site. Tom feels things are looking very good and the Route 22 corridor has brought many new jobs to town and the area has esthetically improved.

Paul has been invited to attend the next NP Forum Meeting to discuss "Rent Party" and possibly gain support from our Clergy and other Civic Groups. Anne feels one the main obstacles is an appropriate venue. Paul will be attending a Rent Party Picnic in Maplewood this Saturday and invited the Committee to attend. This discussion will continue at our next meeting.

Janice is very upset about being named in NJ Monthly as one of the 100 worst places to live in New Jersey. Her sentiments were echoed by all. Janice and Anne will compose a letter to NJ Monthly challenging this finding. The committee has a whole supports this action. Paul feels we need to change the perception of how the town and our schools are perceived. A new Christian "Classical" School has opened at Norwood. The school currently has 15 students and hopes to double by next year.

Motion to adjourn by Lenny Lange, seconded by Skip Stabile and carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm by Anne Soto.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Kaufman Cain
Recording Secretary