



Meeting of the
Economic Development Committee
September 21
6:30 pm

Members Present

BJ Breish
Denton Burnell
Carrie Hawkins Charlton
Alex Felts
Mark Ladley
Rege McKenzie
Bruce Schwartz
Richard Strahm

Members Absent

Also Present

John Ernst, Borough Manager
Michael Narcowich, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Danielle Baer, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Strahm made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 2020 meeting minutes, Mr. Burnell seconded, and the Committee voted 8:0; the minutes have been approved.

PRESENTATION

Business Improvement District, Danielle Baer and Michael Narcowich

Ms. Baer and Mr. Narcowich shared a presentation from the county Planning Commission as it relates to Business Improvement Districts (BID) in the region. BIDs are often paid for by the businesses within the district based on property values and offer incentives such as increased property values and decreased vacancy rates. Most BIDs are overseen by a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and a BID Manager.

Prior to rolling out any BID, there needs to be a needs assessment that looks at existing conditions, additional programs, negative issues (real and perceived) and willingness of businesses to participate. Following the needs assessment, a draft plan can be put into place which involves clearly defining boundaries, distinguishing programs and services that will be available, creating a budget, pinpointing a duration of the BID and identifying leadership and oversight of the BID.



LANSDALE
LIFE IN MOTION

Lansdale did have conversations about creating a BID in town roughly ten years ago, but with all the initiatives that were taking place at the time it took a back seat. Issues that were raised back then included absentee landlords not participating or hindering the process; lack of interest from businesses; unwillingness to make a financial commitment; missing a “big” businesses in town to lead the charge; factions within the business community.

Two items that we hear about often in the Borough are parking and street/sidewalk maintenance. Other BIDs have created parking maps to assist customers find and utilize parking as well as street/sidewalk clean-up programs. A BID could potentially help to identify solutions for the issues raised by current business/property owners.

Souderton Borough’s BID is currently in its first renewal and while successful, there have been some issues such as businesses not feeling they got what they paid for, lack of support through a pandemic were a few items mentioned.

The EDC discussed next steps they can take but warned that it may not be the best time to ask businesses for an additional expense. We could start with the assessment, yet asking during COVID would likely skew any responses. There was talk of coupling this assessment with the work we have contracted Eric Goldstein to complete.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS:

Façade Improvement Grant Applications

No new applications were received.

BOROUGH/DISCOVER LANSDALE EVENTS

Discover Lansdale

Looking to hold another “Lansdale Strong” week as we approach Small Business Saturday; this will depend upon reactions from the businesses.

Additionally, the Christmas Tree Displays will be in the windows of Main Street Businesses encouraging more foot traffic in town. More information on both events will follow as they are ironed out and confirmed.

OLD BUSINES

Business Spotlights



LANSDALE
LIFE IN MOTION

The Business Spotlights have been posted on the Borough's social media channels on Wednesday and are attracting positive feedback. The posts and businesses will also be added to the Borough website for citizens to view as well.

NEW BUSINESS

In-Person Meetings

Mr. Burnell asked if there was any interest in holding EDC meetings in person. Consensus of the group was to keep meetings virtual for the time being.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

****The next Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Monday, November 16, 2020****