

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
February 10, 2026
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The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee meeting, which was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the Lawrence Township Growth & Redevelopment Committee has been provided by filing an annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk and by filing the agenda with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building and mailing to the Trenton Times.

Roll Call:

Present:

Peter Ferrone
Stavros Papafilipakis
Melissa Clark, Chairperson
Joan Brame
Edward Freeland, Vice Chairperson
Maria Connolly
Jeremy Ryan
Kevin Vanhise, School Board Liaison
Joan Brame

Absent:

Excused Absence:

Edward Garcia

Also Present:

Nishka Desai, Student Representative
Melyssa Mabes, Secretary
Kelly Edelstein, Staff Liaison
Amanda Santos, Council Liaison

Minutes:

December 9, 2025 minutes were approved.

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Electing Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The committee elects Melissa Clark as Chairperson and Edward Freeland as Vice Chairperson.

Job Fair Event at Quakerbridge Mall

A job fair will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Quakerbridge Mall. To date, 13 businesses have registered to participate. The event aims to expand employment opportunities within the Township of Lawrence.

Committee members attending will include Joan, Peter, Jeremy, Edward Freeland, and Stavros.

Student Rep Report

Nishka reported that she has been promoting the upcoming job fair among her peers. She noted that many of her classmates are actively seeking summer employment and have expressed interest in attending.

Update from Council Liaison, Amanda Santos:

Councilwoman Amanda Santos revisited the previously discussed proposal to rename the Committee to the "Business and Economic Growth Committee." She will present this idea to the Council at its upcoming meeting.

Councilwoman Santos also shared that she received an invitation to visit Natural Hair Salon, a newly opened, Black- and women-owned business in Lawrence Township.

Regarding the potential transition of the Community Center to nonprofit status, Councilwoman Santos stated that efforts are underway to reach out to potential bidders in advance of a forthcoming RFP. She does not have additional details at this time but will provide updates as they become available.

Other Business:

Jeremy provided an update on the 250 Committee. The Committee has placed promotional banners along Route 206 to advertise its event, which is intended to support and promote local businesses. A fundraising goal of \$10,000 has been established.

The committee decides on an event schedule for 2026. It is discussed that March will be a discussion about the outcome of the February Job Fair. April will be a networking event surrounded around local businesses. Kelly is working on scheduling a date for the large meeting room at the Library. It is decided that there will not be any events held from May to August due to the community's busy summer schedules. September is still in discussion.

An Awards Ceremony is in discussion to possibly be held on October 4, 2026 at the Lawrence Township Community Day Event. The Awards Ceremony is to recognize local businesses and expose more people in the community to this committee and what it represents. The awards will be aligned with this committee's mission. To streamline planning and expand outreach, the Committee agreed that participating businesses should RSVP through the website, which will also help build the Committee's email contact list.

Public Comment:

Councilwoman Farmer, speaking from the audience, shared that a new restaurant, **La Fe**, an authentic Salvadorian eatery, has recently opened in Lawrence Township.

The Committee discussed the possibility of holding its next meeting at La Fe.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melyssa Mabes
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: _____