

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
February 8, 2022  
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The following are the minutes of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee meeting, which was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2021 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:

Maria Connolly, Vice Chairperson  
Peter Ferrone  
Ryan Kennedy  
Andrew Frank, Chairperson  
Stavros Papafilipakis  
Edward Freeland  
Tushar Patel  
Melissa Clark  
Joan Brame  
Cathianne Leonardi  
Patricia Farmer, School Board Liaison  
Craig Dinwoodie, Community Aide

Absent:

Alan Di Sciullo  
Brian Vaughn  
Teresita Bastides-Heron, Environmental Resources Representative  
Charles Lavine, Zoning Board Representative  
Christopher Bobbitt, Council Liaison

Excused Absence:

James Kilduff

Also Present:

Jeffrey Radice, Secretary

**Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson:**

The committee secretary opened the meeting by asking for Chairperson nominations. Andrew Frank was nominated by Joan Brame, seconded by Peter Ferrone and was the only nomination. Andrew accepted his elected position of Growth and Redevelopment Committee Chairperson.

Andrew then asked the committee for Vice Chairperson nominations. Maria Connolly was nominated by Joan Brame, seconded by Melissa Clark and was the only nomination. Maria accepted her elected position of Growth and Redevelopment Committee Vice Chairperson.

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**Minutes:**

November 9, 2021 minutes were approved.

**Business Reports and Discussion on the New Business Manual:**

Craig Dinwoodie opened the meeting by explaining his new role with Lawrence Township as the Community Aide. The committee asked Craig questions regarding his new position and responsibilities.

At the previous meeting, the committee discussed interviewing some local business owners in order to see how smooth their onboarding process was with Lawrence Township. Maria Connolly interviewed the owner of Karate Fit USA. This business recently moved from Hamilton, NJ to the Lawrence Shopping Center. The owner said it was helpful to have a contractor friend to help walk him through the process with the municipality or else he would not have known who to contact for permits. He said the permit process was more cumbersome than it needed to be. The fact that there was no construction needed to the space that he purchased helped move the process along quicker. The owner said a FAQ handout could be helpful in order to explain the process to new incoming businesses. He said that the Lawrence Gazette only publishes stories on sponsors, so he was looking for other publications that may further promote his business.

Committee member Joan Brame interviewed the owner of the Gingered Peach. The owner did not have a great experience with the municipality when onboarding her business. She said that the lack of information on the township website and in writing played a part in her struggles opening the business. She said a flow chart, walking business owners through each process would have been very helpful. According to her, the current website has made some improvements in explaining the process of opening a business compared to where it was seven years ago. The customer service provided to her by the municipality seven years ago needed to be improved from her opinion. The committee discussed the logistics of the Gingered Peach's owner's new breakfast restaurant.

The committee then opened a discussion regarding the business manual and township website. The Community Aide spoke about his compilation of a Lawrence Township business database and how he has gone about collecting the data. The committee discussed the most efficient way to keep this list accurate and up to date. The Community Aide spoke about the goals that the township has in mind to onboard incoming businesses in the near future. The committee agreed that it is necessary to have dual capabilities to onboard a new business, both online and with paper forms.

The members of the committee broke down the 'Working with our Planning and Zoning Boards & A Guide to our Permit Process' document found on the Lawrence Township website.

One of the committee members provided a draft outline of what an up to date business manual should include. This outline included a data portion, which sparked a group discussion on how the municipality's economic background from a tax sense can be acquired from the NJ Department of Treasury if a township liaison would request the information. The committee discussed what could be added or adjusted on this outline.

A brief discussion was held regarding the 2022 Award Ceremony. A cocktail party, rather than a dinner was discussed as a replacement option. The group discussed a way to simplify the nomination process. There were no decisions made regarding the ceremony, but the committee agreed to circle back to the idea in the coming months.

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**School Board Update:**

Patricia Hendricks Farmer is the new LTPS School Board liaison to the Growth and Redevelopment Committee. She is a lifetime Lawrence resident. Patricia went through her background with the school district, as the current President of the LTPS School Board and also local government, as a former member of the Lawrence Township Planning Board.

**Update from Council Liaison, Christopher Bobbitt:**

Absent.

**Other Business:**

None.

**Public Comment:**

A member of the public commented and gave his opinions on the conversation regarding the onboarding of new businesses. The public member shared his expertise in the technology that would be needed in order to make this process as efficient as possible.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Radice  
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: \_\_\_\_\_