

Economic Development Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

Present: Otto Mills, Rick Brown, Brian Guerriero, Patricia Keppler, Heather Mahaley, Lois Opdyke, Matt Reece, Jason Wood, Recreation and Special Events Coordinator Caitlin Hernandez, Kris Boger of Discover Doylestown, Marjan Shirzad of the Mercer Museum, and Borough Manager John Davis.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes – Approved as submitted.

Mayor’s Stewardship Award - The Board had an extensive conversation regarding the number of nominations, and the extent of work that has been done to each of the properties. Rick Brown spoke about the building on E. State St. He believes it is worthy of the award because it is historic and whoever did the work did it right. Rick believes the work done on this home will last 50 to 100 years. The attention to detail in the house was impressive. The one on North St. should also be considered as well as the church. Caitlin will take photos of all the nominations, which will be posted on the social media channels. The Board had a discussion and voted on the Stewardship Award winner. The Board chose 148 E. State Street as the winner of the Mayor’s Stewardship Award. John will reach out to the property owner and make the necessary arrangements to present the award.

Comprehensive Plan Update - Given by Heather. The most recent Comp Plan Workshop meeting was well attended. There are 5 topics that are being covered with the objective of looking to the future to make the goals attainable. One of the biggest takeaways was the lack of communication. The public feels there should or could be more open lines of communication. The Board isn’t sure there are any other ways to communicate more than is already done (i.e., DMail, social media channels, mailings, et cetera). An interactive map or an app may be another way to communicate with the public about goings on within the Borough. There was an extensive discussion held about how the Comp Plan will affect new housing, whether it is high density housing or conversion of office spaces into residences. Affordability was also discussed at length. The discussion turned to how can all those things affect the economic vitality of the Borough.

Discover Doylestown Report - Arts Fest had approximately 30,000 people attend throughout the event. Given the weather, the turnout was excellent and exceeded expectations. Bucks County Book Festival is on the horizon within the next two weeks. Later in October is the Halloween parade and we will be wrapping up the year with Santa’s annual visit to town.

Doylestown Cultural District Report - The new sign at the Mercer about parking in the lot was worthwhile. Year to date, the Mercer Museum has had 28,380 visitors, Fonthill has had 25,119 visitors. The Cultural District is thriving as all our numbers are up. There will be a new exhibit opening at the Mercer in May 2024. It will be focusing on the Doan Outlaws and the American Revolution from the perspective of the Doan Outlaws of Bucks County, loyalists, and tensions that existed among neighbors. We are expecting it to be the largest exhibition since the Lego exhibit.

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Doylestown Historical Society Report – No report

Social Media Report - Caitlin gave an overview of all interactions on the social media channels. She broke down how well each of the social media sites did among various demographic groups. Caitlin did mention the importance of growing the pages. Facebook, for example, has had about 1,000 new followers. Caitlin gave statistics that show how the social media channels are helping to drive up attendance to different Borough sponsored functions, such as the block parties and the summer shows in Burpee Park.

Economic Development Report - Caitlin gave the vacancy report to the Board, as well as giving an overview of some of the new restaurants and businesses that have opened in town.

DART Report – No report

Mayor's Report – No report

Old/New Business – None

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Erika Fellman
Economic Development Advisory Board
Minutes Secretary