

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) was held tonight.

Members present were: David Cohen, Jonathan Essoka, Maureen Haff, Charles Harmar, Fred Milbert, Kenneth Mirsky, Sheila Perkins and Brad Pransky. Staff present was: Bryan T. Havir, Township Manager. Guest: Stephen Burns, Township Finance Officer. (Attendance Sheet Attached.)

1. **Call to Order.** Mr. Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** Mr. Cohen asked for approval of the July 16, 2013 meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes were approved as amended by acclamation.

3. **Committee Reports by Chairpersons:**

A. **Design** – Mr. Havir reported on the following commercial signage applications in Mr. Kratzer’s absence.

- **Santander, 500 Central Avenue, Cheltenham Village District** – facade signage; free standing signage. Mr. Havir reported that the design committee indicated it assumes that the façade signs and free standing signs are not lighted and that it conforms to zoning ordinance requirements and does not exceed zoning requirements. The EDTF recommended approval of the signage based on the conditions listed above that these sign inserts replace existing signage.
- **Park Plates, 7852 Montgomery Avenue, Elkins Park East District** – facade signage. Mr. Havir reported that the Design Committee did like the signage but was not certain if the sign was backlit or face lit and asked for clarification. The EDTF recommends approval of the signage based on the condition outline above and compliance with the zoning ordinance requirements.
- **State Farm, 421 Central Avenue, Cheltenham Village District** – insert for existing façade sign; awnings. EDTF recommended that awnings should be solid without name or phone number on them unless sign insert does not have name or phone number on it. Approved with condition that it is in compliance with zoning ordinance requirements.
- **Sunoco, 300 S. Easton Road, Glenside District** – free standing LED Digital signage. The EDTF determined from the information submitted that the sign appears to be out of scale and out of compliance with the zoning ordinance requirements and with the Township’s Commercial District Enhancement Plan and not approved because it is too large in size and too tall in height. The EDTF recommended that a three-dimensional

rendering depicting the view of the proposed sign coming from Arcadia University into downtown Glenside headed north.

B. Organization & Development – Mr. Cohen noted that Mr. Essoka had coordinated a conference call with fundraising subcommittee members. It was suggested that advertising, perhaps in one of the Township's newsletters would be helpful since previous mailings produced no results. Discussion ensued regarding the new format of the fall newsletter and the number of businesses who advertised. It was agreed that the format was user-friendly and worked well. The committee members discussed next steps. It was agreed that Mr. Essoka would review the fundraising documents and update the cover letter for a 2014 fundraising campaign. Mr. Havir agreed that now is the best time to solicit the banking institutions for donations since they are preparing their 2014 budgets. A direct mailing followed by phone calls was recommended. Mr. Cohen requested that a staff member be appointed to respond to any calls regarding the EDTF fundraising effort. Mr. Havir will discuss with the Public Information Officer. Discussion continued regarding the contacts for area banks. Mr. Milbert noted that there are two new car dealerships in the area which may want to sponsor an event.

C. Economic Restructuring: Recruitment/Retention – Mr. Pransky introduced a discussion on the current commercial and business tax structure and brainstorm on a business, commercial and non-profit fee structure concept proposal which might encourage land development. Mr. Burns offered a brief description of the current tax structure in the Township. Mr. Burns described the business privilege tax, retail and wholesale tax which is based on gross revenue and verified by the federal tax return, the mercantile tax, the local services tax, the earned income tax and the net profits tax, as well as tax abatements which are described in the Township Municipal Code under Chapter 270. A discussion on the number of businesses in the Township as well as gross revenue and profitability, for profit and non-profit businesses was included.

Mr. Burns noted that Montgomery County, as a second class county, has the authority to assess property value through the County Board of Assessments.

Mr. Pransky asked, if another formula was used, what impact and costs would there be. Brainstorming continued regarding tax abatements and incentives for redevelopment. The concept of fees (sewer, infrastructure, stormwater) versus incentives was discussed. Mr. Havir noted that a current rate analysis study is underway regarding the Township's sewer fees based on a combination of fixtures and consumption for residential and commercial properties.

Mr. Pransky's intent is to have from three to six volunteers discuss and formulate a presentation. It was requested to have this item placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Meanwhile interested members are asked to identify various fees around the country and send that information to Mr. Burns.

D. – Marketing and Promotions Committee - Reports were provided from the following liaisons:

- District Liaison for Elkins Park East – Mr. Cohen reported that a new restaurant will be opening later this month in the former Yo Dogs! location called Park Plates. Creekside Co-Op continues to look at various ways to continue increasing traffic in the store. A membership meeting was held last week. The fundraising campaign for the renovation of the historic Elkins Park Train Station, also referred to as Train Central, continues with a Fashion Show scheduled for Thursday, October 24, 2013 at the Train Station. For more information, see www.elkinscentral.com.
- District Liaison for Glenside – Ms. Haff reported that the Welcome Back to School Night event for Arcadia University students held on August 29, 2013 was very successful. Ms. Perkins noted that there were approximately 120-130 students who

attended. Ice cream was donated by Dream's Ice Cream Factory and served outside on a clear evening at Elcy's Cafe parking lot. Mr. Harmar stated that there was music, a scavenger hunt and lots of photographs were taken. Ms. Perkins noted that the business area was decorated with balloons with Arcadia's colors. The Arcadia volunteers were excellent. A school bus was provided by Arcadia University to transport the students from the campus to the Glenside business district to introduce them to local merchants and businesses. The Glenside merchants are looking forward to next year making this an annual event.

Ms. Haff reported that The Downtown Glenside Community Partnership has proceeded with ordering snowflake decorations for Glenside Avenue. Fundraising has been directed to Glenside merchants and patrons. Ms. Haff has prepared a flyer and donation boxes are located at various businesses on Glenside Avenue. Ms. Haff reported that Wesley Pharmacy made a generous monetary donation and additional fundraising continues. Ms. Haff also noted that she has written to Cheltenham Township's Industrial Development Authority for a financial contribution.

- District Liaison for East Cheltenham Avenue – No report.
- District Liaison for Cheltenham Village – No report.
- District Liaison for Elkins Park West – Mr. Mirsky reported that work activity continues at the former Getty Station at Stahr and Old York Roads intersection.
- District Liaison for W. Cheltenham Avenue – No report.

4. Chairman's Report – Mr. Cohen spoke of Citizens Call, online community blog website which took a brief hiatus the last several months and is now redesigning its website model to be more profitable. Mr. Strahs will be forming a focus group who will meet on September 24, 2013 at 7:30

p.m. at Ms. Rappoport's house at 114 Waverly Road, Wyncote to determine interest and value for marketing.

5. Old Business – Chairman Cohen reported on the following:

A. Review of Business Checklist – The June 2012 draft of the Business Checklist was updated by Mr. Cohen and distributed to the EDTF members. The EDTF recommended some changes and asked to have the Checklist placed on the website and at the counter in the Building and Zoning Office. Mr. Cohen noted that EMCCC's Business Resource Information Center (BRIC) met to revitalize efforts to help businesses.

B. Classic Towns Program – Mr. Havir stated that the special Classic Towns for Cheltenham Township website is up and running. The password was e-mailed to the Township Staff in July. The Township Public Information Officer will be the first contact person for the website to make changes. The EDTF was asked to monitor the page for content and e-mail notices and photographs to the Township Public Information Officer with a copy to Mr. Havir. It was suggested that photographs be changed out quarterly or on a seasonal basis. Ms. Haff recommended including the Welcome Back to Arcadia event photographs for the website.

C. Old York Road Community Organization – Mr. Essoka reported that there was a meeting on August 15, 2013 with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) who explained that they could lend support for community engagement, organizing and launching events. A meeting was held on September 16, 2013 to discuss the beautification of the Route 611 corridor by implementing the recommendations of the America In Bloom (AIB) evaluation as a goal of the Cheltenham Township EDTF and EAC committee. Participants included master gardeners group, Melrose Neighbors, Friends High School Park and Arcadia University. Mr. Essoka stated that his goal is to start with something manageable to create momentum and try to have a group of

volunteers implement beautification projects that were listed in the 2011 AIB report. The group felt that fire stations and the Elkins Park Train Station would benefit. Sketches were roughly drawn up for the various fire stations. Mr. Havir recommended that instead of beginning with the fire stations they group should focus on the Township gateway entrances or public spaces in the commercial districts, for example, the corner of Old York Road and Church Road, as well as SEPTA train stations. The embankment across from Alexander's in Elkins Park was mentioned as well as other SEPTA train stations. Mr. Essoka noted Ms. Kelly from the Melrose group was contacting SEPTA about some landscaping near the Melrose Train Station.

6. *New Business:*

A. Mr. Cohen noted that the Eastern Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (EMCCC) will be hosting a Business Expo on Thursday, October 24, 2013 from 4 to 7 at Salus University. Mr. Cohen will not be able to attend but offered to supply cookies. Mr. Harmar agreed to staff the booth as well as Ms. Perkins. Ms. Perkins asked to have some decorations for the booth such as balloons. Ms. Haff also suggested that perhaps the EDTF could borrow a popcorn machine from New Life.

7. *Adjournment:* Mr. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.



Bryan T. Havir
Township Manager

Submitted by:
Kathryn McDevitt



Meeting Attendance Sheet

Economic Development Task Force



Tuesday, September 17, 2013, 7:00 P.M.

Township Administration Building
8230 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027

(Please Print Clearly)

| No. | Name | E-mail or Other Contact Info, if desired | Member (Y/N) |
|-----|------------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Sheela Perkins | Seabruny2000@yahoo.com | Y |
| 2 | DAVID COHEN | | Y |
| 3 | STEPHEN G. BURNS | | N |
| 4 | FRED MILBERT | FIMILBERT@GMAIL.COM | Y |
| 5 | MARKEEN HARR | Sweetmagglexand@gmail.com | Y |
| 6 | CHARLEY HARMAR | CHARMAR@USREALTYCAPITAL.COM | Y |
| 7 | Jonathan Essoka | jessoka27@gmail.com | Y |
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