

The regular meeting of the **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE (EDTF)** for January 2016 was held tonight. Members in attendance were: Dwight Lewis, Jonathan Essoka, Charley Harmar, David Kratzer, Fred Milbert, and Kenneth Mirsky. Guests present: Judah Labovitz, Joan Brandeis, and Rita Rosen Poley. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS.** Mr. Lewis requested nominations for Vice President. A motion was made by Mr. Harmar, seconded by Mr. Mirsky, and unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote to elect Mr. Essoka Vice Chair of the EDTF.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** A motion was made by Mr. Harmar, seconded by Mr. Mirsky, and unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote to approve the December 15, 2016, EDTF meeting minutes.
4. **COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

**A. Design –**

- 1) *Signage Application for 81 Limekiln Pike* – Mr. Kratzer described the awning sign being proposed for 81 Limekiln Pike. The sign will go above the door and will display the address. A backlit sign with a white background was requested for the adjoining 83 Limekiln Pike, but it was deferred until the February meeting. Mr. Kratzer explained that a dark background is preferable to minimize light pollution.

A motion was made by Mr. Kratzer, seconded by Mr. Harmar, and unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote to recommend issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the awning sign at 81 Limekiln Pike.

- 2) *Digital Signage* – Mr. Kratzer suggested the EDTF and the Township look into regulating digital signs in Cheltenham. He said his preference is to outright ban digital signs. Ms. Elliott cautioned that since Pennsylvania municipalities must provide for all lawful uses within their borders – unless they have a regional comprehensive plan with a shared burden agreement – Cheltenham should look into regulations that place limitations on location, size, and display to make sure they go in suitable locations. It was a consensus of the EDTF that exploring the regulation of digital signs be added to its action plan.

**B. Liaison Reports**

- 1) *Elkins Park East* – Mr. Milbert reported that all stores in the commercial district are now rented. A high-end consignment shop just rented the former spa location on High School Road. A soft opening is scheduled for February. Mr. Milbert said the Creekside Co-Op seems to be busier. Members of the Co-Op also put up money to reduce the \$3M debt down to \$550,000, which will increase its financial stability. A public meeting was also held last week to discuss the revised SEPTA schedule which reduced service to the Elkins Park Train Station.
- 2) *Glenside District* – Mr. Harmar said the Downtown Glenside Community Partnership met to discuss events.

- 3) *East Cheltenham Avenue* – None.
- 4) *Cheltenham Village* – None.
- 5) *Elkins Park West* – Mr. Mirksy reported that the clothing drop off bin was removed.
- 6) *West Cheltenham Avenue* – Mr. Lewis reported that there will be a meeting with legislators next month to discuss the Cheltenham Mall address and zip code. All the stores affected by the proposed Mall renovations closed December 31, 2015. Some of the stores looked for space at Cedarbrook Plaza; however, there is no space available. The former Pathmark store at Cedarbrook is being replaced by a Fresh Grocer (a Shoprite subsidiary). Ms. Elliott reported that she anticipates the land development application will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in February or March for approval.

## 5. CHAIR'S REPORT.

- A. **Fundraising Letters.** Mr. Lewis presented draft letters requesting donations for various Township events and asked for the EDTF's input on soliciting donations. Mr. Essoka said the Township was not successful in past attempts, but suggested sending the mailer out earlier might yield better results. Ms. Elliott said that in her experience, soliciting donations for Township events is very difficult. It takes personal knowledge of a business owner, specifically one that is civically-oriented; a specific request, i.e. event sponsorship; and a lot of follow through. Blanket letters tend to be ignored. She suggested EDTF members make targeted calls to businesses that have ties to the community, are looking for publicity, or do business with the Township and ask them to sponsor either an entire event or a significant portion of it, so they might take "ownership" of the event. It was a consensus of the EDTF to pursue this avenue. Ms. Elliott said she would gather costs for each of the events. Mr. Essoka asked members of the EDTF to put together a list of potential businesses to solicit.
- B. **Meeting Calendar.** Mr. Lewis asked members if they would support taking the EDTF "on the road," like last year. Mr. Essoka suggested that if this were to happen, EDTF should focus on topics relevant to each community. Ms. Elliott suggested that the best turnout would most likely be for spring and fall dates and enough time should be allowed for legal advertising of the location changes.

## 6. OLD BUSINESS.

- A. **Update on Draft Zoning Ordinance Review.** Ms. Elliott reported that the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) has compiled comments on the proposed Zoning Ordinance and will be presenting the matrix and recommended action on each comment at the next few Building & Zoning Committee meetings. A final public comment period will expire on February 1, 2016. The Building & Zoning Committee also asked MCPC to perform a fiscal impact analysis on two properties affected by the proposed MU-3 District. It is unknown how the Board will manage the revision process at this time, but that will be a topic discussed at the next Building & Zoning Committee meeting.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS.

- A. **Membership.** Mr. Lewis stated that the Board will appoint four new members: Ms. Levin, Mr. Labovitz, Ms. Brandeis, and Ms. Poley at their January 20, 2016, meeting. EDTF is a 15-member committee and there are currently three vacancies. Mr. Lewis asked members to think of some good potential candidates for membership.
- B. **2016 Goals, EDTF Role in Business Recruitment and Retention, EDTF Role in Marketing and Business Liaison Model.** Mr. Lewis asked EDTF members to consider these items and bring their suggestions for discussion at the February meeting. Mr. Mirsky suggested the business directory on the Cheltenham website be upgraded to be a better resource for the community. Mr. Kratzer suggested EDTF look into developing a resource for people who are interested in moving their business to Cheltenham that will match them with available properties. Mr. Mirsky said that Upper Dublin hired a consultant to help them with economic development activities. He added that Lower Merion Township received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for façade improvements and that the Township should go after businesses that contract with the School District for the gross receipts tax. Ms. Elliott said Cheltenham Township has received CDBG funding for streetscape repairs on John Russell Circle and Cedar Lane in La Mott. It has also received a significant amount of CDBG funding for maintenance and upgrades to the La Mott Community Center over the years. The La Mott census tract is the only census tract in Cheltenham Township eligible for CDBG funding.

Ms. Elliott said she did a bit of research in preparation for the meeting and found several interesting items to note. One of which is that people are choosing to settle in areas that provide “quality of life” amenities and that cost of living is not as important as quality of life factors in choosing a place to live. She asked members of the EDTF to think about the many assets of Cheltenham and how we might be able to develop them into a targeted marketing campaign selling Cheltenham. Ms. Elliott also asked members to consider the types of businesses that work well for Cheltenham to help target its business development plan. It was suggested that the Township had completed a business development and recruitment plan and that members review previous documents to familiarize themselves with work that has already been done. Members of the EDTF asked Ms. Elliott to summarize her findings and ideas for EDTF members to consider at the February meeting.

## 8. STAFF REPORT.

- A. **Easton Road Detour through Glenside.** Ms. Elliott provided EDTF members with an overview of the detour which bans truck traffic over 13 tons from crossing the Montgomery County bridge on Easton Road by Toxany Avenue. She said they will need to use Limekiln Pike to access Easton Road. SEPTA has received an exemption from the detour and the County has encouraged fire companies and the school district to apply for exemptions. The detour is expected to last three years until the bridge can be repaired.
- B. **Habitat for Humanity Neighborhood Revitalization Program.** Ms. Elliott said she attended a meeting of the Montgomery County Consortium in which the Habitat for Humanity Executive Director provided the membership with a presentation of the different programs they offer, including a Critical Home Repair program and a Neighborhood Revitalization program. She thought these programs might be an avenue

for EDTF to pursue to help improve some areas of the community. There have been several residents in Cheltenham who have already benefitted from the Critical Home Repair program – outside of the Township’s involvement. She will provide more information about the programs for EDTF to review once she receives it from Habitat.

9. **CITIZENS’ FORUM.** – None.

10. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, Mr. Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.



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Bryan T. Havir, Township Manager

Submitted by: Alyson Elliott



# Meeting Attendance Sheet

## Economic Development Task Force



Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

**Curtis Hall & Arboretum**  
1250 West Church Road | Wyncote, PA 19095

*(Please Print Clearly)*

No.	Name	E-mail or Other Contact Info, if desired	Member (Y/N)
1	Dwight Lewis		✓
2	Ken Mirsky		✓
3	Jonathan Essoka		✓
4	Fred Milbert		✓
5	David Kratzer		✓
6	Charley Harman		✓
7	Judah Labovitz		
8	Joan Brandeis		
9	Rita Rosen Polky		
10	Alyson Elliott		
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