

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

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** A motion was made by Mr. Labovitz, seconded by Mr. Rosenberg, and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of March 15, 2016.
3. **COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

A. Design –

- 1) *Signage Application for 119 South Easton Road, Glenside* – Ms. Elliott presented information about the proposed internally-illuminated freestanding cabinet sign with dark lettering on a white background to be placed on an existing pole for a multi-tenant commercial building in the C3 Commercial District. Cabinet signs are not permitted in the Commercial Enhancement Districts and internally-illuminated signs should have a dark background with white lettering. This will be one of three signs on the property. The design committee felt three signs are too much for the property and would like to see the wall sign be replaced with a freestanding sign appropriate to the design guidelines for the Commercial Enhancement District.

A motion was made by Mr. Rosenberg, seconded by Ms. Rosen Poley, and carried by a 7-1 vote, with Ms. Brandeis opposed, to convey to the Planning and Zoning Department a recommendation to deny issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed sign at 119 South Easton Road, Glenside, based on lack of compliance with §295-195.A.(11) and §295-194.F.(1)(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, and supports the design committee's recommendations:

- Merging the existing wall sign with the proposed freestanding sign. The proposal for three signs (freestanding sign, wall sign and canopy sign – all of which are permitted by zoning) will make the property too cluttered.
- Design the freestanding sign as a wood sign on two supports with finials and a curved top, and individual boards to identify each business at the property.
- Externally light the sign.

B. Liaison Reports

- 1) *Elkins Park East* – Mr. Milbert reported that Paul Ross, the jeweler is closing, but someone is considering buying the building.
- 2) *Glenside Business District* – None.
- 3) *East Cheltenham Avenue* – None.
- 4) *Cheltenham Village* – None.
- 5) *Elkins Park West* – Mr. Milbert inquired about the left turn lane from southbound Old York Road onto Church Road and whether it was part of the traffic signal application the Board is considering authorizing for that intersection at its meeting this week. Ms. Elliott said the improvement is not part of this phase of the streetscape improvement project. However, the Township applied for a Multimodal Transportation Fund grant last fall for phases II and III of the Elkins Park West streetscape. The left turn lane is part of the work proposed under that grant project.

- 6) *West Cheltenham Avenue* – Mr. Lewis reported that demolition has started on Cheltenham Mall; however major union challenges are expected since they were left out of the bidding on the project. Mr. Milbert asked if the contractor, Alliance, was registered for a business privilege license. Ms. Elliott said she would check.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

- A. **Small Business Week.** Mr. Lewis announced that his office will be holding an event at Arcadia University on May 3, 2016, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to honor small businesses in the community for Small Business Week.
- B. **Montgomery County Department of Commerce.** Mr. Lewis reported that the Montgomery County Department of Commerce will attend the May EDTF meeting to talk about its programs and how it may be of service to the Cheltenham Community.
- C. **2016 Goals.** Mr. Lewis passed out a working draft of goals for the EDTF to work on in 2016. The following items were discussed:
- *Fundraising* – Members of the EDTF agreed that fundraising was not a task they wanted to focus on. They determined that creating opportunities for business recruitment and was more important.
 - *Messaging* – EDTF members agreed that developing a coordinated action plan and message about the Township that the EDTF, Commissioners, Township Administration and Staff champion is very important.
 - *Newsletter:* The newsletter should have articles that explain how to set up a business in Cheltenham and other articles that address the concerns of local business owners. There should also be articles that promote quality of life issues that are important to attracting young families to the Township.
 - *Website:* EDTF would like to update the business directory to provide a more comprehensive list of businesses in the Township. They would like to use it as a tool to generate revenue through increased advertising visibility. They would also like to see if they can create either a message board or ranking system to help residents find good businesses. Ms. Elliott said the Township is updating its systems so it will be in a better position to update the directory in a few months. Additionally, there are some other improvements that could be made to the business section of the website to make it an asset to the Township.
 - *Business Recruitment and Retention* – Eliminating barriers to doing business in the Township, such as streamlining the sign permitting process; identifying and developing ways to attract the types of businesses that would do well in Cheltenham; and ensuring that proper zoning is in place to attract the types of businesses that would do well in the Township.
 - *Partnerships* – EDTF believes partnerships with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, local universities, and other organizations will be helpful in promoting its goals.
 - *Strategic Plan* – Mr. Lewis said the culmination of this effort will be a strategic plan that the EDTF can present to the Board of Commissioners at a future Public Affairs Committee meeting in order to gain their support and buy in.

5. **STAFF REPORT.**

- A. **Curtis Arboretum Landscape Management Plan.** Ms. Elliott reported that the draft landscape management plan has been posted on the Township website for public review and comment. Public comments will be taken until May 10, 2016. There was a public presentation at the April Public Affairs Committee meeting and the reception of the plan so far has been positive. There seems to be support for moving the plan forward. This is an important economic development issue 1) Curtis Hall as a revenue source and 2) Curtis Arboretum is a natural, historical, cultural, and quality of life asset to the Township.
- B. **Elkins Park West Streetscape Update.** Ms. Elliott reported that the design for the streetscape is moving forward through the clearance process. Staff and the consultants are working to obtain temporary construction easements for sidewalk improvements from 12 property owners along Church and Old York Roads. Design must be completed by the end of July in order to obligate the grant funds for construction. Ms. Rosen Poley and Ms. Levin requested to work with the owner of the gas station on the corner of Stahr Road and Old York Road to see if it can be cleaned up.
- C. **Montgomery Awards.** Ms. Elliott announced that the Montgomery County Planning Commission is seeking nominations for the 2016 Montgomery Awards, which promotes outstanding design and innovative planning projects in the County. David Cohen suggested supporting a nomination for Wyncote Commons. It was a consensus of the Task Force to support the nomination.
- D. **Jenkintown/Wyncote Train Station Request for Proposals.** Ms. Elliott reported that SEPTA will be completing renovations to the Jenkintown/Wyncote Train Station and will be seeking proposals for tenants to fill the approximately 8,000 square foot space. This space has been operated for many years as multiple restaurants, but SEPTA has sought input from both Jenkintown and Cheltenham for ideas. SEPTA has suggested developing its Request for Proposals to solicit the following types of businesses: restaurants, mixed retail and office, and a mini farmers market. It was a consensus of the Task Force to recommend a chain restaurant, such as a Fridays, and gastro or brew pubs.
- E. **Business Privilege Tax Update.** Ms. Elliott reported that the Finance Committee authorized staff to amend their administrative policies to enforce a provision of state law that permits the Township obtain business privilege taxes from businesses not located in Cheltenham who do work in Cheltenham for more than 15 days in a calendar year.
- F. **Update on Draft Vacant Building Registry Ordinance.** Ms. Elliott reported that the Public Works Committee has started review of the Vacant Building Registry Ordinance, which is geared toward encouraging owners of vacant properties, particularly those that are not maintained to get them cleaned up and occupied. The most recent draft is available on the website for review. There will be a few changes based on comments from the April Public Works Committee meeting.
- G. **Zoning Workshop Meetings.** Ms. Elliott reported that the Zoning Workshop meetings are continuing. The Board of Commissioners is planning at least two more public meetings. The first is this Thursday, April 21 and the second is scheduled for Thursday, May 12. Both meetings are at the Township Administration Building and will be scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

A. **Sign Review Process Update.** Ms. Elliott said she is working with the Planning and Zoning Department to make the sign permit application process smoother for the applicants. Some of the following has been proposed to date:

- Applications received by the first Friday of the month, will be scheduled for an EDTF Design Committee review the second week of the month, so a recommendation can be made to the EDTF or the applicant can be notified of any applicable comments in an expeditious manner.
- The memorandum attached to this month's applicant will be used as a template to help staff with their review and recommendation to the EDTF and in working with the applicant.
- Additionally, as part of the review process the design committee thought the sign ordinance may need some tweaking to help bring the regulations in line with the Commercial Enhancement District guidelines and reduce applicant confusion.

B. **Future EDTF Community Meetings.** To follow up on the Task Force's proposal to have focus-group type meetings in various areas of the Township, Ms. Elliott suggested having meetings September, October, and possibly November of 2016 and then meetings in March, April and May of 2017. She suggested the following meetings and possible locations:

- Elkins Park Library on Elkins Park Streetscape Project
- Rowland or La Mott Community Center on Habitat for Humanity Programs
- Business Owner Meeting
- Realtor Meeting
- Developer Meeting

The Task Force was agreeable to these ideas.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

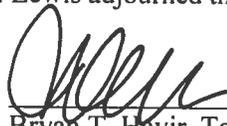
Mr. Kratzer arrived at 8:25 p.m.

A. **Congrats Grad Program.** At the April Public Affairs Committee meeting Commissioner Sharkey suggested the EDTF consider re-implementing the Congrats Grad Program. Members of the Task Force thought it, or a similar program, might be something to consider for next year.

B. **Elkins Park Train Station Planting Project.** Mr. Essoka reported that the group responsible for the planting project is planning to start fundraising for the next phase of the project. Members of the Task Force commended the group on their work and said the plantings look beautiful this year.

8. **CITIZENS' FORUM** – None.

9. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, Mr. Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.



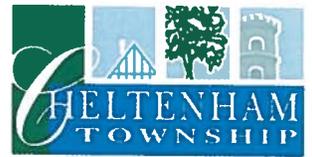
Bryan T. Havir, Township Manager

Submitted by: Alyson Elliott



Meeting Attendance Sheet

Economic Development Task Force



Tuesday, April 19, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Cheltenham 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	Dwight Pedrafewis		X
2	JOAN BRANDELS		X
3	JUDAH LABOVITZ		Y
4	Caryl Leurg		Y
5	RYTA ROSEN POLEY		Y
6	FRED MILBET		Y
7	Jane Rosenberg		Y
8	Jonathan Essoka	jessoka27@gmail.com	Y
9	Ann Rappoport		YN
10	David Kratzer		Y
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