

Vernon township Economic Development Advisory Committee

April 18, 2023 meeting minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chairwoman Sally Rinker.

The Statement of Compliance was read.

Salute to the flag:

Roll Call:

Present:

Sally Rinker

Jennifer Lubliner

Michael Gelfand

Jason Pierce

Beth Ziba

Carl Contino

Susan Berkley

Peter Knipe

Heidi LeBris

Absent :

Keren Gonen

Nick Pirro

Chairwoman Sally Rinker opened the meeting with a reminder the Committee works together and it is a team effort. As a group there are group issues and common goals. She stated that EDC member Peter Knipe posts EDC items on social media as his own ideas. His intentions were questioned.

Peter Knipe read social media posts instead of answering Sally Rinker's questions.

Michael Gelfand said the group is a team and the committee needs to be clear if you are using this committee as part of your platform to run for office.

Carl Contino reads a line from Peter's post. "Keeping with my idea to market Vernon..." Peter is insinuating it was his doing but it was a group idea.

Jennifer Lubliner said with new members some do not realize that we already worked on a Visitors Guide, Logo, etc.

Vote on Minutes March 7, 2023. A motion to accept was made by Susan Berkley. Second by Michael Gelfand. All in favor.

Vote on Minutes March 28, 2023. Sally Rinker asked to amend the minutes to include Peg Distasi made public comments and stated her statements were own opinions and she does not speak for the Town Council.

Sally also asked to include that sewer charge hook up fees were mentioned to be \$10,000 dollars with the town and SCUMA and she added "approximately."

A motion was made to accept the minutes with amendments by Carl Contino and second by Beth Ziba. All in favor.

Discussion on the need for Town minutes. The Town attorney said it was not necessary due to the fact that we were only an AD Hoc committee. Sally Rinker mentioned that she would support continuing doing minutes and asked everyone for their input. It was agreed to continue.

Sign Ordinance

A synopsis on Grand Opening signage is needed. Make it a simple sheet. Jennifer Lubliner and Carl Contino will work on it.

Country Side Exchange, Vision 2020, Dr. Lahr

Sally Rinker asked members what was one thing that you would like to see prioritized.

Susan Berkley stated that she would like a walkable downtown and have a place to ride her bike.

Mike Gelfand stated he would like to add to Susan's. There is no downtown and nothing happens on Main Street.

He would like to explore the use of commerce, ecotourism, farming, and business should be tied in together. There has been 20 years of nothing, as if Vernon is waiting for something to happen. Let's come up with a checklist.

Heidi LeBris stated that the problem is the regulations and taxes. They are too complicated.

Peter Knipe referred to Peddlers Village.

Jason Pierce agreed with the idea of a main street.

Jennifer Lubliner said we need unity in the township such as lake events. MountainCreek events are very fractured and we need to bring them together.

The elected officials change and new ideas are implemented.

Beth Ziba referred to Star Sites in the report. Look at what other towns have done, talk to them and the developer for making a downtown.

Sally Rinker stated we need to accommodate the public. We need to bring in large ratables. Develop our commercial corridors for tax ratables and sewer usage.

Carl Contino said we need to simplify town ordinances.

Mike Gelfand stated that Legends is a good location.

Sally Rinker said to lower taxes we need to bring in revenue. There are a few "gifts" Vernon received from the American Relief Fund and a multimillion dollar grant for water and sewer infrastructure that needs to be utilized.

Sally stated that we need to do something with Legends and need more collaboration with the administration.

Carl Contino stated that we are an advisory board.

Mike Gelfand said we should make a list from the minutes.

Community Wide Survey

Susan Berkley passed around a draft survey she prepared.

Carl Contino stated that random people need to fill it out. Maybe canvas Acme.

Sally Rinker stated that we should look over the survey and come back next meeting with ideas and approve a final copy to utilize.

Public Session

A motion to go into Public Session was made by Carl Contino and second by Peter Knipe.

Peg Distasi stated we need something for the kids. Bon Chef building and that area is a great location.

Rich Carson said we should attract businesses that are large enough, they need to be carefully located. He used Wayne as an example to not follow.

A motion was made to close the public session by Carl Contino and second by Jason Pierce.

Committee Comments:

Jason Pierce said try not to attract over large businesses. We need to reassure the public.

Jennifer Lubliner: Saturday April 22, 2023 at 9 AM the Rotary will be donating an all terrain wheel chair for the pump track. This will take place at the municipal lot.

On Monday the Chamber of Commerce is having the Taste of Vernon at Heaven Hill at 6 PM tickets are available on the web.

The Committee is encouraged to attend events in Vernon.

Carl Contino encouraged members to communicate.

Beth Ziba clarified homework and a list of items.

Susan Berkley - How to Open a Business Guide in Vernon.

Mike Gelfand wants to get the survey out and back.

Peter Knipe suggest to look at 2020 and other documents.

Sally Rinker stated the Healthy Thymes is sold and will remain a health food store.

Motion to adjourn made by Susan Berkley, second by Peter Knipe

Meeting ended at 8:51 PM

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Coulson