

Florence Twp Economic Development Committee Minutes 9/1/26

Florence, New Jersey

The Florence Township Economic Development Committee held a regular meeting on the above date in the header at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person. The minutes reflect the meeting held on Tuesday, July 7, 2026.

The meeting was called to order by Economic Development Chairperson, Tara Sandusky at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Tara Sandusky, Bridget Wiese, David Williams, Councilwoman Gina Sullivan, Tara Schultz, Scott McKelvey, Sal Belardo

Also Present: Thomas Sahol, Twp Administrator

Absent: Martin Eckert, Jr.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- First Session of record; No previous minutes

Motion n/a, seconded by n/a.

COORDINATORS REPORT & NEW BUSINESS

- Administrator Sahol welcomed the newly formed committee. Members have all been approved through township council and selections of Tara Sandusky serving as Chair & Tara Schultz serving as Vice-Chair were confirmed.
- Goals of the committee were discussed where priorities of developing listings of all existing businesses located within the township. The committee discussed with Tom Sahol as to acquiring lists and it was reported that the Florence Township Fire Department would have the most current listings due to their inspection schedule and that will be followed up by Tom and coordinated to Marty.
- Project Freedom Expansion. Administrator Sahol shared the plans to expand the footprint of the existing Project Freedom property, which will continue along Route 130 South, where the township is purchasing properties to create the area needed for the expansion. The expansion of Project Freedom is part of the township's process in fulfilling affordable housing mandates. Tom shared an overview of the project with the committee.

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- Welcoming new residents. The committee discussed how new residents are identified and talked about the welcome letter. Bridget Wiese and Tara Schultz noted the opportunity to provide additional information including businesses or eateries in town. If coupons or discounts may be considered and other ideas to compliment the mayor's letter. These efforts not only welcome residents but also support the local businesses. The committee asked for a copy of the current welcome letter and any other information that may be included.
- Peoples Paper. The committee discussed local publications that may be worked with to further support the committee's efforts. Administrator Sahol shared that Marty may have direct contact information for the editor.

OLD BUSINESS

- Committee Nest Steps. Councilwoman Sullivan discussed the need to identify vacant properties in an attempt to gauge owner interest in redevelopment, sale or rental opportunities. This will help to stimulate local business interest to the area.

Social Media Presence. Utilizing the township website, Facebook and other means to connect with the public.

Revamping the Economic Development page. The committee discussed the current page and thoughts on cleaning it up as well as potential additions like developing a local business directory.

Member Testimonials. Members may provide testimonials as to why they came to town, opened a business and this information would be included on the economic page.

- Community Engagement. Bridget shared hosting events in town and inviting the business community as well as residents creates connections (i.e. a music event along the waterfront). These events should repeat periodically to create consistency.
- Businesses involved with Events/Recreation. Tara Schultz provided thoughts on businesses learning about events within the community and how to support. This would also include opportunities for local eateries to have visibility to attract visitors or attendees of events to go to their businesses for meals, etc.

MEETING OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident, Cristin Mustillo shared with the committee her observations about the waterfront area in Roebling and how future development along Hornberger Avenue where future housing may be located, could be met with developing access points, supported development through walkways and trails to connect residents safely to park amenities.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by T. Sandusky, second by T. Schultz – 8:34pm