

**Upper Merion Township Economic and Community Development Committee
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for January 18th, 2021**

The Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC) met for its regularly scheduled meeting on January 18th, 2021 WebEx (due to COVID-19.) The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrea Esqueda, Chair
Clara Martis, Vice-Chair
Kyle Brown, Staff Liaison
Tina Garzillo, Board Liaison
Rachel Zobel, Secretary
Frank Buttaro
Pam Forster
Anmol Darooka

ABSENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATE:

Welcome to new member Rachel Zobel!

REORGANIZATION

Appointment of Andrea Esqueda as Chair, Clara Martis as Vice Chair, Rachel Zobel as Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

The October 2020 and November 2020 meeting minutes have been approved.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS UPDATES:

Catalyst

The entire project, including zoning, has been denied and will not be moving forward.

Layoffs and Early Retirements

Due to budget cuts within the township, ~4% of township employees have been laid off or retired early. Parks and Recreation was hit the hardest relative to other departments.

MLK DAY and Broadcast

Clean-up in the township for a day of service to celebrate Martin Luther King. There will be a broadcast on Thursday at 6pm on UMGTV or township website of Martin Luther King annual celebration.

Christmas Trees

The township is offering Christmas tree collection for compost in Heuser Park until January 31st. If a Christmas tree is kept past January 31st, arrangements must be made with Public Works to have the tree picked up.

PennDOT

Started construction on realignment away from the hanging rock at Route 320 (South Gulph Road) to enhance travel and safety. Estimated completion date is sometime in November 2021.

COVID Updates

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2700 vaccinations have been administered (first dose) and 3463 (both doses) within the township. Vaccination is based on occupation. There are 6 county-run locations for COVID testing. Call (610) 970-2937 to schedule an appointment. Total deaths in the county due to COVID is 1,099. Average daily positive cases in the county is 317. Number of positive cases in UM Township is 1,225.

Farmer's Market

Brian Seller is leading Farmer's Market moving forward with team approach.

Inauguration Concerns

There are no security concerns within the township regarding the Presidential Inauguration.

Crow Creek Trail

Construction is underway to connect Walker Field to Heuser Park.

2020 RECAP

ECDC Through COVID

Paused the committee for several months, re-evaluation of all prior priorities due to COVID restrictions.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)

Recommendation passed to establish Task Force to research/explore potential role in the township to focus on DEI. Anmol Darooka volunteered to lead Task Force working collaboratively with Tina Garzillo.

Small Business Initiatives

Passed recommendation suggesting review of policies which inhibit ability of township to promote small business initiatives. A variety of programming was planned and executed including:

- Small Business Pop-Up at Farmer's Market
- Small Business Shop Hop with BID
- Small Business Heroes
- Small Business Directory (collaboration with the BID)
- Promotion of 422 Campaign

Other Ideas

Holiday Lights Tour; WordArt for DEI; Township Cookbook; Township Yard Signs; RF100 Initiative with EAC.

Committee Members

Welcomed three new committee members within last 2 meetings which is about 50% of committee onboard in less than three months.

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2021 FOCUS – 1st HALF

Topics and Ideas

Discussed and generally aligned on a few focus areas including:

- EAC Collaborations: Anmol, Rachel, and Clara
- Community Building: Pam, Andrea
- DEI: Anmol, Clara, Andrea
- Small Business: Pam, Clara, Andrea

Discussed additional ideas:

- Small Business
 - Shop Small at Farmer's Market twice per year.
 - Savings Card- would work as a fundraiser for ECDC and promote small businesses
 - Include Small Business Directory in New Resident Welcome Packet
 - Refresh online versions of Community Resource Guides and resending to residents
 - Continue to collaborate with the KOP BID on the online small business directory – building a database behind it with additional business information
 - Establish an UMT small business anniversary recognition program (BoS makes proclamations to recognize milestone anniversaries)
- King of Prussia Diner
 - Launched by John Tallman who has supported ECDC previously. Discussed potential collaboration with the Diner offering employment opportunities for local residents with special needs/special abilities. Slated date of open is late April 2021.
- DEI Initiatives
 - School district is managing their own DEI initiatives/programming.
 - Continue ongoing communications with various township stakeholder groups (BoS, police, community groups). Discussed setting up a monthly meeting.
 - Discussed ideas and the importance of supporting black-owned businesses
- Community Building Initiatives
 - Yard Sign Design contest for residents to submit their ideas and slogans for a township sign

CURRENT BUSINESS

DEI

District Attorney Kevin Steele is leading the management on the Police Oversight Boards- will be independent review panel and will not be citizen oversight due to state laws which prohibit sharing sensitive data with citizens related to criminal matters.

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DEI Continued

C. Martis proposed ECDC play a role to help facilitate, enable, and brainstorm about the following:

- Sustainable Dialogue with Township/Police with Racial Justice Advocates:
 - Opportunity for Racial Justice advocate on various committees
 - Local police oversight committee mentioned by Gov. Wolf and Chief Nolan
 - Monthly check-in with Racial Advocacy groups
 - Keep on top of concerns and community needs
 - Communicate to community with fair and responsible images of POC
- Sustainable Commitment to Supporting Black-Owned & POC Businesses/Leadership
 - Currently at least 6 black-owned businesses in UMT- 3 of which are non-brick and mortar, 2 started in 2020
 - Township Local Business Directory plan could include surveying for Black-owned and POC ownership
 - Incorporate support into KOP BID future contract and township policies
 - i.e., Increase % of contracts and money spent at black and POC-owned businesses; incentives for increase of black & POC leadership and mentoring opportunities

NEW BUSINESS

Board of Community Assistance Grants

Another citizen board focused on grants for nonprofits and other boards. Source of ECDC funds in the past. Should begin brainstorming ideas for potential grants and funding for upcoming application process.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

February 15th, 7pm (remote)

March 15th, 7pm (remote)

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Esqueda adjourned the meeting.