

CITY OF MILFORD
CITY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

November 19, 2010

A meeting of the City of Milford Economic Development Steering Committee was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers of City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, DE 19963 on Friday, November 19, 2010 at 8:30 am.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rogers, Councilman Garrett Grier, Councilman James Starling, City Manager David Baird, Richard Carmean, Richard Johnson of Richard Y. Johnson Construction, Brendon Warfel of Brendon T. Warfel Construction, David Hitchens of Key Properties Group, Elmer Fannin of Key Properties Group, Melodie Booker of Delaware Economic Development Office, Jason James of Burris Logistics, Terry Murphy of Bayhealth Medical Center, Sher Venazulas of First State Manufacturing, Tim Johnson, Councilman Owen Brooks, City Planner Gary Norris
Also: John Rhodes of Moran, Stahl & Boyer, Recording Secretary Christine Crouch

City Manager David Baird thanked the committee for returning today to review the draft Economic Development Strategy for the City. Everyone should have received a copy already, but if anyone needs a copy, there were hard copies available.

Mr. Rhodes of MS& B thanked everyone for what has been a terrific experience in getting know them and this community. It has truly been a pleasure.

What he has prepared for everyone is a draft of what he sees as the strategies for the City. Today the committee needs to give him feedback on what has been submitted and together we will look to the future in order to determine what needs to happen now so the City is prospering in the future.

Mr. Rhodes noted what he learned about the city is it started off as a shipbuilding community around 1680. That industry kept the city going for many years until it changed toward more agricultural and canning. This community has been thriving since the late 1600's due to decisions made by the city's forefathers and city leaders ever since. He continues to hear the same family names in circles that he has met with as being an important part of the city's history. He further noted that the majority of public objections to council decisions has been in the last decade, which coincides with the influx of retirees from outside the community. This is interesting because they are relatively new to a community that has been around, doing well, since the late 1600's.

With that said, Mr. Rhodes began reviewing key points of the Draft Economic Development Strategy, which will be included in the minutes.

On page five of the document, Options for Economic Growth Segments, he asked for input from the committee. If the committee had a total of \$100, how many dollars would they spend on each segment? Essentially, it is a valuing system of what the committee views as important in terms of their effort, time and money spent. Ultimately, after discussing the merits of each, the committee decided on the following:

30- Health Care

25- Technology Product (Manufacturing)

20- Tourism

15- Entrepreneur

10- Professional/Technical/Business

Followed by Retirement, Agriculture, Warehousing, Retail, Cultural/Education

Continuing with the review, Mr. Rhodes determined the strengths of Milford include our geographic location, cost of labor, support of Chamber of Commerce and the administration of the local government, which is further detailed on page 18 of the draft.

According to page 19, Mr. Rhodes felt the challenges of Milford include not only the negative perceptions of economic growth as viewed by the expanding local segment of retirees, but also the performance ratings of the school district versus the national averages. This will be a potential issue for families with school age children considering relocation here.

There are three options for moving forward the implement the strategy plan. The first option is to have a staff member who is a local become the economic development director. This person should be very familiar with Milford, its history, and be what is considered a local. The second option is to team with the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford. This can be a challenge because the strategies and goals are not always the same for the City as the Chamber, naturally. The last option is to hire and third party, independent nonprofit. One of the strengths of this option is nonprofits can typically raise the most money for their initiatives.

Mr. Rhodes feels a new resident outreach program is critical for the City. A group of residents meets once a month with a representative of the City and is informed of everything going on in the City. That group then summarized that information and spreads the word. When a new resident comes into the city, a welcome package is sent to them that includes the goings-on, coupons for local shops, a list of officials and how to reach them, a calendar with meeting dates on it. Sometime shortly after moving into the City, a person from this group, who has roots in this community, gives the new resident a call to see how the settling in is going. This is not a new concept across the country and actually used to be done here in Milford. He suggested a government advisory group meet once a month for the new residents to attend in order to vent their frustrations appropriately instead of their public attempts to block most projects.

Further, the City needs a community center. He heard from several people they do not want to have their functions at the Senior Center, more so because of the name. A community center, for the entire community, that can be rented out to anyone would be of benefit to the city and a way to generate money as well.

In conclusion, Mr. Rhodes will work with Mr. Baird and Mr. Grier to determine who on this committee will be assigned what, determine priorities, and an action plan. He anticipates having a final draft of the Economic Development Strategy Plan to Mr. Baird and Mr. Grier in early December.

Mr. Baird thanked Mr. Rhodes for his dedication to this project stating he felt this document is very clear on detailing what's here, what we have, what we need, where to go from here and how we can communicate it to our residents. As he receives information from Mr. Rhodes, he will pass it along to the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Crouch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Crouch
Recording Secretary