

**MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP
MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2023**

The January reorganization and regular monthly meeting of the Montgomery Township Business Development Partnership (BDP) was held at 8:30 A.M. at the Township Administration Building on January 17, 2023. A virtual option was available via Microsoft Teams. The members of the BDP in attendance were J.P. Northrop, Jim Brusilovsky, Allan Nappen, Jay Haenn, Ryan Frazier, Jacqui Baxter-Rollins, Mary Griffith-Alfarano, and Joy Zwicker. Also present were Beth Staab, Board of Supervisors Liaison, Marianne McConnell, Zoning Officer, and Derek Muller, Public Information Coordinator.

Reorganization Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

Nomination and Appointment of Business Development Partnership Chair for 2023: On a motion by Ms. Baxter-Rollins and a second by Ms. Zwicker, Mr. Northrop was nominated to be the 2023 BDP Chair. Members of the BDP unanimously approved.

Nomination and Appointment of Business Development Partnership Vice-Chair for 2023: On a motion by Mr. Northrop and a second by Ms. Alfarano, Ms. Lisa Martin was nominated to be the 2023 BDP Vice-Chair. Members of the BDP unanimously approved.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:35am

Regular Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Minutes: On a motion by Mr. Nappen and a second by Ms. Zwicker, the October 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

New Business

- **BDP Goals for 2023**
 - **Business Communication:** The BDP discussed increasing outreach to the Montgomery Township business community in 2023. Mr. Muller requested input about welcoming new businesses via social media. The BDP advised to welcome new businesses on social media following a BDP member in-person visit to welcome the new business owners. The welcome will include the name of the business, address (if not home occupancy), and website of the business. There will be no promotional aspect to the welcome.

- **Presentations:** The following presentations were proposed to take place during the BDP meetings in 2023. Various members of the BDP, including its staff and Board of Supervisor liaisons, were tasked with confirming the availability of the speakers.
 - February: Montgomery Township Update
 - March: North Penn School District Community Hosted Internship Program Update
 - April: Cyber Security
 - May: Montgomery Mall Update
 - June: Gilmore and Associates Transportation/Walkability Update
 - July: Employer Healthcare
 - *August: No meeting scheduled*
 - September: SEPTA Bus Revolution and Microtransit Update
 - October: Banking Update
 - November: Montgomery Township Emergency Services (Police/Fire/VMSC)
 - *December: No meeting scheduled*

Old Business

- Business Updates – This month’s business updates had common themes, resulting in more of a discussion than a roundtable share.
 - **Mary Griffith-Alfarano (Fulton Bank)** – Ms. Alfarano switched positions to focus on small businesses and consumers. She leads two teams in Montgomeryville and Doylestown. She is finishing her last lending deal, which will be a three-story luxury watch store near the Sunoco on 309. Borrowing rates are not anticipated to lower. Fraud is prominent, and there have already been several arrests for check-washing. She recommends not paying with checks, and paying online instead. A tool called Bitfender and other similar tools, can help keep passwords secure. She reminded everyone to carefully document transactions on services such as Venmo and Paypal with exact wording to avoid paying taxes on personal transactions. Non-personal transactions are considered taxable income.
 - **Joy Zwicker (Berkshire Hathaway Fox & Roach)** – The real estate market is more balanced, and becoming a buyers’ market. Properties in Montgomery Township have been selling within 14 days. A total of 16 properties are on the market in Montgomery Township, which is well below average. Commercial properties are not selling as quickly, with 1 out of 5 selling on the MLS.
 - **Jacqui Baxter-Rollins (Partnership TMA of Montgomery County)** – PennDOT is rolling out the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) bill. The focus is to make it so that there is no more than 50 miles between Level 3 charging stations to increase the range electric vehicle owners have when driving long distances. The Partnership TMA has been working with the Holiday Inn and Royal Farms in Towamencin Township to help them apply for grants to become charging stations for this initiative. They are also working with Montco Works to provide in person workshops to help job seekers identify accessible transportation options. The Partnership TMA is celebrating their 30th anniversary as a nonprofit agency. They will hold an event on May 19th. More information to come.
 - **Ryan Frazier (Citadel Credit Union)** – People are investing more money again. Members are having issues with debit card skimming at ATMs. This is mostly happening at gas stations and older ATMS. He recommends giving your card a

tug after inserting it to see if there is a skimming device on the ATM. This is happening all across the Philadelphia area and its surrounding counties.

- **Allan Nappen (Nappen & Associates)** – Industrial real estate is still 100% occupied in Montgomery Township. The supply chain is getting a little better, but there are still construction issues for developing new industrial properties. Office spaces are still struggling.
- **Jay Haenn (Auto Groups, Inc.)** – Used cars are falling in price. New car inventory is getting better, but it is still not back to where it used to be pre-pandemic. Pricing in general is coming down. The Philly Auto Show is returning this year on January 27th. There will be a new EV track.
- **Derek Muller (Montgomery Township Public Information)** – The website redesign is nearing completion, and Mr. Muller showed a quick preview. The BDP asked about walkability and transportation in the Township, which would be helpful pieces of publicity.
- **Beth Staab (Montgomery Township Supervisor)** – The Environmental Advisory Committee is working on residential and business surveys about single-use plastics and the effect a ban on them would have on businesses. She suggested a member of the BDP attend the upcoming EAC meeting to learn more and provide a voice for the business community.
- **Marianne McConnell (Montgomery Township Planning & Zoning)**: Penn Medicine resubmitted their conditional use application. There is resident pushback on the project, which is proposed for a commercially zoned property near a residential development. The Planning Commission is anticipated to see a number of residents voicing their public comments on the project. Love Car Wash is going into the old Army/Navy Store property, Shake Shack will be where the old Wendy's was in Airport Square, and Krispy Kreme will take over the space that used to be Applebee's. Planning & Zoning is working on digitizing their old documents so they can reduce paper in the office.
- **Jim Brusilovsky (Marks Jewelers)** – Business in December was very brisk. The year was flat with 2021.
- **J.P. Northrop (Edward Jones)** – Don't fight the Fed rate hike. Reduced rates should be coming in the cycle. It is recommended to keep money in the market for when better days come for investing.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the BDP, the meeting adjourned at 9:42am. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 @ 8:30am at the Township Administration Building. This meeting will be held in person with a virtual option available.