

**MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP
MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2021**

The monthly meeting of the Montgomery Township Business Development Partnership (BDP) was held at 8:30 A.M. using the virtual meeting platform, TEAMS. The members of the BDP in attendance included Lisa Martin (Chair), JP Northrop, Allen Nappen, Mary Griffith-Alfarano, April Donahue, Jim Brusilovsky, Troy Tradewell, and Gwyn Karpf. Carolyn McCreary, Township Manager, and Derek Muller, Public Information Coordinator.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Lisa Martin, Chair.

Minutes: The minutes for the April 20th meeting had been previously circulated for review and approval. On a motion by Mr. Northrop and a second by Mr. Nappen, the minutes were approved.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- A discussion regarding the format of future BDP meetings ensued. It was determined that beginning with the June 15, 2021 meeting, the BDP will meet in-person at the Montgomery Township Building's public conference room. There will be an option for members to attend these sessions virtually for those who cannot attend due to ongoing COVID-19 business policies.
- Ms. Martin provided a recap of a workforce webinar that addressed challenges the COVID-19 Pandemic has placed on businesses, including inventory supply and staff shortages.
- As has been past practice, each Committee member provided an update on their business operations and any issues they are continuing to deal with because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Ms. Griffith-Alfarano (Fulton Bank) reported that bank rates are steady at this time. She noted it is difficult to find qualified staff, and that competitive salaries are also making it difficult to find staff that are qualified. As an example, she mentioned two new full-time employee offers were accepted, but shortly fell through as those candidates accepted higher-paying positions elsewhere. She shared that following the CDC and Commonwealth of PA's update to suggest that vaccinated persons may remove their masks, they are following an "honor system."
 - Mr. Northrop (Edward Jones) shared that short-term predictions show that the inflation that is happening across the board should level out, and it appears to be temporary. Clients who come to EJ are still being asked to wear masks. He also

provided an update regarding Montgomery Township's Autumn Festival and the options being considered.

- Mr. Nappen (Nappen & Associates) stated he is continuing to deal with inventory issues because of auto related delays and shortages. He also noted that inflation is bad for construction due to skyrocketing prices for auto related construction materials. The fact that Amazon is currently cornering the construction supply market was discussed.
- In lieu of Jay Haenn (Lansdale Chrysler Dodge Jeep), Mr. Nappen also provided a brief update that there is a tremendous shortage of cars, including used cars. Values of used cars in 2021 are equal to or greater to the values they held two or three years ago. Used car values have increased by 25%-35%.
- Derek Muller provided an update on the Community & Recreation Center and Township Building policies regarding masks. The Township Building will be following a "Masks Requested" policy, while the CRC will continue to require them for the foreseeable future. He reported Silver Sneakers group fitness classes have returned to the CRC. He announced the appointment of Kristin Maas as Sr. Human Resources Administrator and Angelina Capozzi as Community Recreation Program Director. He also shared information regarding "Crave Montco Month" and the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Public Survey. He noted both items will be emailed with the minutes.
- Mr. Brusilovsky (Mark's Jewelers) shared that there are staffing issues, as many employees are opting not to return in-person. Supplies continue to be an issue, leading to jewelers' frustrations. Fully vaccinated staff can remove their masks. Hybrid staff meetings are continuing for the time-being.
- Mr. Tradewell (5 Points Automotive) echoed the issue of staff shortages, supplies being slow to arrive, and the resulting customer frustration. While staffing remains an issue, he was pleased to announce that they are onboarding a new hire from out-of-state.
- Ms. Donahue (QNB Bank) stated they continue to offer low rate mortgages and issue PPP loans regularly. On the non-profit side, she shared that the Rotary Club continues to meet regularly. There will be a Blood Drive on June 14th at the Line Lexington Mennonite Church.
- Ms. Karpf (Simon Properties) stated the mall requires masks in common areas, but each vendor is responsible for their policies within their respective retail spaces. The mall is operating with modified hours to accommodate for staffing issues. The former Sears location is now a walk-up COVID-19 vaccination site run by Montgomery County. Outback Steakhouse maintains an anticipated August 13th scheduled opening. She also shared that the mall offers short term contracts to vendors so they can try the space before committing to a longer term.
- Ms. Martin (Costco) shared that Costco is also implementing an "honor system" for staff in regards to masks and vaccination. She stated Costco has been approved for fuel sales, which should help to increase warehouse sales. She thanked Officer Rob Johnson and the Montgomery Township Police Department for their involvement in Costco's fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network and

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia this past Saturday. During this individual fundraising date, \$1530 was raised. She indicated the Fire Department of Montgomery Township will be present at their fundraiser Saturday, May 22 @ 11am-1pm, and Star Wars characters will be present Saturday, May 29 @ 12pm-2pm. To date, \$37,500 of their \$50,000 goal has been raised. These proceeds help fund medical needs that insurances do not cover.

Adjournment:

Ms. Martin thanked everyone for participating and sharing their information with the group. There being no further business to come before the BDP, the meeting adjourned on a motion by Ms. Martin and a second by Mr. Northrop. The next meeting will be in-person at the Montgomery Township Building on June 15, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. There will be a virtual option for those who cannot attend in-person.