

**MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 16, 2024**

The April regular monthly meeting of the Montgomery Township Business Development Partnership (BDP) was held at 12:30 P.M. at the Township Administration Building on April 16, 2024. A virtual option was available via Microsoft Teams. The members of the BDP in attendance were J.P. Northrop, Mary Griffith-Alfarano, Ryan Frazier, Jay Haenn, Jacqui Baxter-Rollins, and Joy Zwicker. Also present were Beth Staab, Board of Supervisors Liaison, Derek Muller, Public Information Coordinator, Marianne McConnell, Director of Planning & Zoning, and Brianna Colantoni, Public Information Intern. Mark Harris from Warren McGraw & Knowles LLC attended as the guest speaker.

**Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Moment of Remembrance for Bruce Shoupe**

**Minutes:** On a motion by Mr. Haenn and a second by Ms. Zwicker, the March 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

**Public Comment**

- Derek Muller introduced Brianna Colantoni to the BDP.

**New Business**

- **Presentation: Succession Planning – Mark Harris, Warren McGraw & Knowles LLC**
  - Mark Harris, a lawyer who specializes in succession planning, explained the benefits, challenges, and options of transferring ownership and leadership to the next generation, the executive team, or a third party. He also shared some examples of successful and unsuccessful succession plans from his experience.
- **Business Updates:**
  - **Marianne McConnell (Montgomery Township Planning & Zoning)** discussed upcoming developments and planning commission activities, including the installation of a permanent drive-through for Quick Lube of Carolina next to LUV Car Wash, and Panera Bread's proposed move to a pad site at Airport Square Shopping Center. She also mentioned the land development processes for Chase Bank and Raising Cane, highlighting ongoing discussions about traffic improvements and environmental considerations. Additionally, McConnell touched on the Village Shopping Center's transition to a mixed-use facility, pending sewer reviews and the submission of building permits for various projects.
  - **Mary Griffith-Alfarano (Fulton Bank)** discussed the current banking environment, noting the challenges and uncertainties surrounding Federal Reserve policies and potential interest rate hikes. She advised caution, recommending that both business owners and homeowners secure lines of credit and home equity lines as a safety net against economic downturns. Furthermore, Mary suggested securing long-term

financial products like 12-month CDs, especially for those with banking relationships, to lock in rates at around 5% amid inflationary concerns.

- **Ryan Frazier (Citadel Credit Union)** discussed the current challenges in the consumer lending market, noting that car lending has become more stringent due to incentives offered by manufacturers affecting both financing and cash transactions. He highlighted the issues faced by individuals who purchased cars one to two years ago when market prices were inflated; these buyers are now experiencing negative equity on their vehicles. Additionally, he pointed out the difficulty in securing financing for trade-ins that exceed 128% of the car's value, requiring buyers to have excellent credit to manage such transactions effectively.
- **Jacqui Baxter-Rollins (Partnership TMA of Montgomery County)** discussed an upcoming Annual Meeting at Joseph Ambler Inn on May 23rd focusing on sustainable transportation, featuring topics like the transition to propane-powered buses at North Penn High School and Transnet, with notable speakers including the Secretary for Transportation and leaders in hydrogen solutions from PDC Machines. She also provided an update on SEPTA's ongoing 'bus revolution' project, indicating delays in board approvals but continued behind-the-scenes progress on vehicle procurement and planning. Additionally, she mentioned outreach activities, including training for adults with disabilities and upcoming bike safety events in May, emphasizing community engagement and safety education.
- **Jay Haenn (Auto Groups, Inc.):** discussed the current state of the automotive industry, noting a recent downturn in truck sales which contrasts with the increasing sales of cars, a reversal of trends observed over the past 15 years. Manufacturers, including Tesla, are reducing prices across various models, intensifying competition in the market. Additionally, there is a shift in focus from fully electric vehicles (EVs) to hybrids and plug-in hybrids due to logistical and market concerns, with major automotive players reevaluating their strategies toward electrification.
- **Joy Zwicker (Iron Valley Real Estate)** discussed the National Association of Realtors (NAR) litigation, explaining that misconceptions caused by media misinformation have complicated the understanding of real estate commissions, particularly in states without transparent contracts like Pennsylvania. She also mentioned ongoing settlement negotiations by Berkshire Hathaway, anticipating significant financial implications. Additionally, Zwicker highlighted the intense real estate market in Montgomery Township, characterized by high demand, low supply, and escalating property prices due to competitive bidding.
- **Derek Muller (Montgomery Township Public Information):** highlighted upcoming community events, including an e-recycling event and a Memorial Day celebration called "Stars, Stripes, and Remembrance," which will feature food trucks, amusements, and fireworks. He also mentioned the successful completion of local government week, which involved engaging activities for second-grade students from Montgomery Elementary, enhancing their interaction with local government operations. Additionally, he introduced a new initiative, a podcast that aims to further engage the community, alongside the launch of a new township seal to be used on more formal materials like letterheads and awards.
- **Beth Staab (Montgomery Township Supervisor):** discussed the timing and logistics of voting, highlighting that it's too late to mail in ballots and advising voters to use Montgomery County's dropbox locations, which are securely monitored. She also mentioned upcoming community events, including an electronic recycling event and a tree giveaway, emphasizing the popularity of these events and advising early

attendance. Furthermore, Staab touched on new environmental regulations taking effect, banning single-use bags and Styrofoam takeout containers, and urging local businesses to adapt by offering biodegradable or recyclable alternatives.

**Old Business**

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the BDP, the meeting adjourned at 1:39pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 @ 12:30pm at the Township Administration Building. This meeting will be held in person with a virtual option available.

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