

Bergen County Economic Development Corporation | 2014
Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, February 26, 2013 9:06 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Vincent J. Vicari, Gregory Dunlap, Blake Goodman, William C. Hanson, Tracy S. Zur, Adam M. Pasternack, Robert L. Peacock, Howard B. Weinberg, Steven Weinstein, Weinstein

STAFF: Maggie Peters Peters, Susan Battle, Tara Means Means, Robert S. Garrison, Daniel Park

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: William J. Boylan, Kathleen A. Donovan, Matthew J. Dikovics, Michael Gallo, Toni Veraldi Graziano, John P. Libretti, James R. Napolitano, Edward J. Trawinski,

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:06 A.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Howard Weinberg to approve the minutes of 12/11/13 meeting, seconded by Vincent J. Vicari.

Minutes are approved.

FINANCES:

Steven Weinstein explained that the unrestricted fund increased by \$8,700 dollars for the year, and that a fee was taken from the restricted fund for the work that was done for all festivals and events. Steven Weinstein mentioned that Maggie Peters has been keeping the account at the \$50,000 mark since we started and that was positive.

Steven Weinstein explained that all together there is about \$80,000; \$49,000 in operating and unrestricted account and \$31,000 in restricted. Steven Weinstein said that the books and records have been audited and that the financial statement should be here sometime next week, and following that Steven Weinstein will prepare the 990 and the N.J. form which should be in the next couple of weeks once he gets the final statement. Steven Weinstein mentioned that every year since he has been working with Maggie Peters, they have been filing the 990 way before the deadline of May 15th; they have been filing it in February early March. Steven Weinstein explained that this year there was an issue with the IRS, who claimed that they did not received it in December and requested a copy of the return, which Steven Weinstein sent. Steven Weinstein explained that since the copies were sent in December, this is the date that the IRS is now claiming they were filed. Because of this, Steven Weinstein is now in the process of proving that it was filed earlier and is hoping to get a response in 6-8 weeks. Maggie Peters informed the Board that if we don't get an answer from them or they still claim they can't find it or the documentation isn't enough it will cost the BCEDC \$4,500. Steven Weinstein said he had spoken with a representative about a week and half ago and was advised to follow up with the correspondence in proof and that is where we stand as of today.

APPROVAL OF FINANCES:

Motion by William C. Hanson and Robert Peacock.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

NEW BUSINESS OUTREACH:

Maggie Peters informed the Board that in terms of new business letters we have sent 3,300 thru February to new business's registering within Bergen County.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW:

The vacancy rates for August are 13.2%; less than Q4 2012 and we are up in inventory slightly. Maggie Peters said as far as absorption we are in the negative two years in a row. Howard Weinberg mentioned that we are losing more space, not leasing more. Maggie Peters informed the Board that the average asking rate for office is \$24.62 and the Industrial flex vacancy rate is 6.7%. Maggie Peters stated that Bergen County has one of the largest industrial inventories within the 21 counties so we have the most space. The vacancy rate for industrial is 6.7% and the unemployment rate for December 2013 was 5.5% unemployed (*about 26,400 people*) which Maggie Peters stated is the lowest it has been since 2008.

THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT REPORT (ROI):

Maggie Peters discussed different sections of the ROI. The Job Creation Index (JCI) measures new jobs created in Bergen County. Estimated jobs gained is 1,233+/-, estimated jobs retained is 2,284+/- and (1,300) estimated jobs lost. Blake Goodman raised the question on how this information is tracked. Maggie Peters answered through state application for incentives, local newspapers and companies BCEDC works with.

Maggie Peters discussed the BCEDC referrals and assistance, explaining that site selection is the #1 assistance request that people BCEDC provided: totaling 64 occasions, 37 referrals to SBDC, and 25 to municipal economic development, etc. Maggie Peters explained the average amount of companies BCEDC assisted in 2013 was 2.4 companies per week with 3.7 assistance occasions per week in 2013. Assistance occasions are multiple assists per company.

Maggie Peters stated there is a lot of development activity in Fort Lee a River Edge re-development site is underway and phase II of the Westmont Station is supposed to occur shortly, which Maggie Peters informed the Board is the biggest transit village project in the state. Fair Lawn's promenade is almost done, which Maggie Peters said is a large former brownfield site in Fair Lawn.

Howard Weinberg asked who would be going into the promenade and Maggie Peters answered such as Qdoba Mexican Grill and TKL among others. Steven Weinstein also mentioned that Starbucks and a pizza restaurant would also be going in.

Maggie Peters also mentioned that located in Edgewater, there is a 23 acre Brownfield being developed which is now under construction. She also said a former brownfield site in Garfield,

the former C-Mor Shade Property will also be a re-development, but there has been no construction as of yet.

Maggie Peters informed that The International Crossroads in Mahwah was approved. She also informed the board that Teterboro Landing, a 54 acre retail site is under construction but seems to have stalled a bit; speculating that it may be due to the harsh weather, but as far as we know is still under way and moving forward.

Maggie Peters also stated that Wegman's in Montvale is currently under review with no approval from the county as of yet, but Maggie Peters is confident that will come through within the next year. Maggie Peters informed the board of other projects in Fair Lawn: Landmark at Radburn, The Heaven at Edgewater, which is an industrial building being converted to a hotel and spa at 505,000 sq. ft.

There is also Lifetime Athletic in Montvale, a 231,000 sq. ft. fitness center complete with 3 pools. Maggie Peters mentioned that she and Tara Means were invited to the grand opening and that it is a beautiful and massive facility.

There is also an expected re-development in Northvale of an existing supermarket site, which is a 121,000 sq. ft. and Maggie Peters feels this will be a great change for them.

BCEDC HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

Maggie Peters reviews recent accomplishments over the past year made by BCEDC:

Branding: Complete rebranding since 2011. BCEDC has a new logo, defined mission and established services at no additional cost to the county or BCEDC.

Listening to Business Initiative: 16 companies/representing 30,600+ jobs

Website: fully populated, launched and diligently maintained full-service website www.co.bergen.nj.us/bcedc. Always current Project of the Month, Restaurant of the Month posted by weekly highlighting new investment within the county. Added in 2013 was a newsletter sign-up field as well as an information request field.

Marketing: Quarterly Newsletter, Social media property of the week, Community profile, Community profiles by municipality, Programs & Services for the Business Community Guide, 2 ads in prominent publications, speaker's bureau.

Tourism: BCEDC is the leading organization in the county effort to develop a tourism initiative including a fully populated website launched Q1 2013 that includes a partnership with North Jersey Media to feature a Restaurant of the month as well as current information on upcoming activities within the county. A Tourism ambassador (volunteer) and advisory council was established to continue to keep efforts ongoing.

Brownfield Redevelopment & Marketing Program: Phase I complete: Municipal outreach and data collection Phase II (underway): compile collected data into a searchable database Phase III (planned): market sites to real estate development community.

Compilation of Demographic & Market Data: Fortune 500 companies, Population, Income, Education, Largest employers, Companies by largest industries found within the county, municipal demographics for all 70 municipalities and much more.

Job Fair: BCEDC continues to partner twice a year with the Bergen County Executive's Office, Bergen Community College, Bergen County One-Stop Career Center, Bergen County WIB, The Bergen Record and the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL) in hosting the Bergen County Job Fair and Career Resource Event totaling over 300 Employers and 5,000 +/- Job seekers over 2 years/3 job fairs.

The next Job Fair will be on Wednesday, March 19th, 2014 at Bergen Community College.

Publishing an Annual Return on Investment Report (ROI): 2013 will be our 2nd

**Assisted 283 companies by providing directly or indirectly 30 different resources

a. 2.4 new companies per week in 2013

b. 3.7 assistance occasions per week in 2013 with site selection being our most utilized service

Establishment of the following Programs:

- Lease expiration follow-up (Bergen, Rockland, Orange) - **Retention & Attraction**
- New business outreach letters to all recently registered businesses within the county - **Retention**
- 'Listening to Business' - proactive business outreach top 20 largest employers - **Retention**
 - a. Gathering feedback by asking targeted questions regarding expansion plans, product creation/expansion/innovation, workforce needs, investment into the future, strengths & weaknesses of doing business, positive/negative legislation (enacted/planned)
 - b. Allows BCEDC staff to inform on economic development programs & services that companies may be eligible for but may not otherwise be aware of.
 - c. Creates continuous line of feedback between company and EDC.
- Brownfield Redevelopment - **Creation & Attraction**
 - a. Identification & marketing of larger brownfield sites for development (over 3 acres)

LISTENING TO BUSINESS INITIATIVE:

Maggie Peters stated listening to business initiative is pretty much complete and she has stopped contracting the county's largest employers. Maggie Peters said even though she was hoping to get at least 16-25, she was only able to get 16 due to lack of response, but would continue to reach out again in about a year. Gregory Dunlap asked what did lack of response mean. Maggie Peters said it was a number of things; such as they don't have time to talk or can't find the right person to talk or they just didn't respond at all. Adam Pasternack asked, what some of the things discussed in an LBI visit were? Maggie Peters responded that the questionnaire is comprehensive and includes many facets of the company therefore, she always

sends in a questionnaire ahead of time for preparation. Questions include: identification of potentially adverse legislation being considered that could affect the company or industry, job growth, facility expansion, product innovation, workforce needs and new products planned.

Maggie Peters stated that in regard to the brownfield redevelopment and marketing program, staff has identified sites through the Phase I portion i.e. sending information to municipality and talking to mayors and now it has come down to staffing. Maggie Peters stated they are now trying to get it into a database and Maggie Peters is confident it will get done. Maggie Peters said that demographic and market data is a very popular request and she is still keeping track of things people are asking for.

APPROVAL OF RETURN ON INVESTMENT REPORT (ROI):

Motion by William Hanson and seconded by Robert Peacock.

SUPER BOWL

Maggie Peters states as discussed at the last board meeting, BCEDC had a signed contract with Civic Duty Partners representing the City of Hackensack for Super Bowl related events. The City informed Civic Duty Partners 2 weeks prior to the super bowl that they were no longer interested in having an event. I promptly reimbursed or returned \$500.00.

Tara Means states that she attended the Meadowlands Tourism Advisory Council Meeting last week and it was unanimous that the East Rutherford Tailgate party held on Super Bowl Sunday was a huge success with over 7,000 people in attendance.

Hotels in New Jersey and New York reported moderate performance results during Super Bowl weekend compared to other past host Super Bowl cities, according to data from STR Analytics:

- Bergen/East Rutherford hotels reported 61.2% occupancy (a 69.4% increase over last year);
- Times Square Area hotels reported the highest occupancy (+17.5 percent to 79.8 percent); and Uptown/Midtown East hotels reported 74.8-percent occupancy (+23.6 percent). In comparison, New Orleans, Louisiana, occupancy reached 99.5 percent during Super Bowl weekend in 2013.
- Average daily rate was the clear winner for the weekend as rates approached \$400.00. Bergen/East Rutherford hotels increased 129.6 percent in ADR to \$248.85. Times Square area hotels rose 102.0 percent to US\$379.84, and Uptown/Midtown East increased 54.1 percent to US \$382.66.
- Bergen/East Rutherford hotels reported the largest revenue-per-available-room gain during the weekend, jumping 289.1 percent to \$152.34, followed by Times Square Area (+137.4 percent to US\$302.96) and Uptown/Midtown East (+90.3 percent to US\$286.39).

Source: STR Analytics

IRISH CONSULATE

Irish Consulate requested a meeting through the County Executive's office to discuss economic development opportunities and ways we can work together. The meeting took place on 2/19 and a productive discussion was had regarding Bergen County companies and their presence in Ireland.

OTHER BUSINESS

Meadowlink: Maggie Peters met with Bergen County's Transportation Management Association (TMA) to discuss their role which is to alleviate traffic congestion. This conversation resulted in BCEDC meeting with the planning department staff to provide Meadowlink with information on recently approved projects in southern Bergen County.

Maggie Peters also stated she has been asked to meet with Mahwah's mayor and council president by Councilman Robert Hermanson, to find ways BCEDC can help them with their economic development efforts as they are very into data centers. Maggie Peters also stated that she has a meeting scheduled on February 27, 2014 with Express Scripts, who have plans for the site in Franklin Lakes. Maggie Peters stated tried to gets an update on that meeting but was not able to so she will discuss at the next board meeting.

Maggie Peters discussed the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects BCEDC is working on and the funding through a 2002 county bond for rail network specifically. Maggie Peters stated she has worked mostly with Fair Lawn, but there are other municipalities that have shown interest e.g. River Edge, Glen Rock and Ridgewood.

Maggie Peters gave an update on the potential Ridgewood TOD project, since it is the 2nd most active project and informed that the village is working with the BCIA but may require additional funding for a study.

DATABASE UPDATES:

Maggie Peters informs that Board that BCEDC's leads database is being updated to help us improve our ability to quantify our assistance efforts. As our number of assistance occasions and individual company assistance grows we need to improve our ability to extract and analyze the data.

Brownfields database:

The database application consists of two parts. We are currently working on the 1st part – Build a Microsoft Access interface that allows you to review, update and search brownfield sites using town, part of site name, and acreage range. The 2nd part is to map all sites on a GIS site to allow visual review of site location with respect to other planning and environmental features.

MARKETING REPORT:

NEWSLETTER:

Tara Means stated that the newsletter continues to have a featured property that office/industrial/flex and this is done quarterly, to which Maggie Peters commented that the response for this has been great. Tara Means informed the Board that distribution is now over 2,500 and asked the Board if they would like a specific property featured to please send to her by April 1, 2014.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Tara Means stated that we are still maintaining the website and will start a tourism initiative with social media, along with a social media "property of the week," which will feature an office or industrial site every Monday; which Tara Means explained is fairly new.

JOB FAIR:

The 4th job fair will be held March 19th, with 40 employers registered so far. Our hope is to get 100 employers and around 1,500-2,000 job seekers.

TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD:

Tara Means stated that they are currently compiling past heritage tourism assessment grants with the department of historic affairs to see if we need to apply for a more up to date assessment or choose another project other than an assessment. There are \$5,000 grants available through the State of NJ for Heritage Tourism that Bergen County has never applied for even though many other counties have. If we find we do not need to update the county's Heritage assessment we will likely move forward with a Strategic Plan.

NORTH JERSEY MEDIA/BERGEN RECORD: (201) VISITOR

Tara Means stated that as she mentioned in the last meeting that we were approached to be partner in the publication of a new magazine entitled (201) Visitor provided that we help with distribution. We have currently compiled a list of all major hotels in Bergen County and have reached out to them to get a proper contact person to approach for distribution to hotel guests as well as a location at concierge for the magazine at their Hotel.

If BCEDC can secure a few major hotels we will then move forward with discussing content for the Magazine.

COMPANY ASSISTANCE:

Maggie Peters informed the board that in 2013 they assisted 283 companies total. Maggie Peters also continues to follow up on leases that are expiring using information from CoStar. Maggie Peters explained that many times she will call and the information will be wrong, but she continues to do it just to make the effort and tell them about opportunities within Bergen County.

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MOTION TO ADJOURN:

William C. Hanson, seconded by Robert L. Peacock.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

May 14th, 2014

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.