



BURLINGTON COUNTY
Chamber of Commerce
The Voice of Business

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Economic Development Committee

Minutes

February 26, 2013

Attendees: Fred Aiken, Hector Baez, Josh Brown, Shari Buyse, Dan Caldwell, Becky Corbin, Jaimie Geddes, John Gillespie, Jim Guerin, Sheila Harris-Adams, Kristi Howell-Ikeda, Brian Kamp, Frank Keith, Jay Kruse, Frank Locantore, Katie Miller, Terry Mulligan, John Pagenkopf, Mark Remsa, Darlene Scocca, Joe Skwara, Barbara Urban, Michael Willmann

2013 Objectives - Promote & Manage Buy Local Campaign, Engage Municipalities, Workforce Development and Identify what makes us a valued economic development resource for businesses & municipalities.

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- 1. Welcome & Introductions** – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jay Kruse at 8:06 and introductions were made. Jay then thanked Mark Remsa for bringing us the county’s updates and the newest information regarding the Buy Local Program.

 - 2. Speaker:** Mark Remsa, Director, Burlington County Improvement Authority discussed a few major interesting facts regarding the county at this time:
 - Tax rate – Burlington County still has the lowest tax rate in the State.
 - Government Contract Cuts – Mark reported that Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL) is the largest employer in the State and at this time there are an estimated 4,800 civilian workers employed at the base and was not sure how deep the cuts were going to affect those numbers but he is positive that it will affect those numbers. He also reported that the biggest and most serious issue is seeing how much of the cuts will affect the 4,100 employed at the Moorestown/Mt. Laurel branch of Lockheed Martin (Maritime Systems and Sensor Plant) and how the ripple effect will play out on the county.
 - Industrial Sectors – Mark reported that industrial sectors are actually growing in the county under the “Healthcare” title with big investments in wellness since the baby boomers are coming of age and the two areas seeing the growth is Moorestown and Bordentown.
 - Finance – Mark also reported that finance is growing and that Burlington County ranks high in the finance sector for the State.
 - Logistics – Moving in an upward direction.
 - Professional Services – Mark explained that this is due to the increase in small businesses which at this time is on the rise.

Buy Local Campaign –Mark reported that he and Kristi along with Freeholder Director Joe Donnelly and three municipalities (Mount Holly, Maple Shade and Bordentown) were working closely to set the grounds for the program. The 3 municipalities listed, already have a similar program set up and have the expertise to share to make the County Buy Local successful. He explained that there would be four (4) phases to the campaign:

- Phase I – Getting the interest and the information to the businesses and communities to get them connected with the Bridge Commission, Freeholders and/or Chamber.
- Phase II – The gift card program. Maple Shade already has a very successful program at this time. With their experience and the Chamber managing it, the program can move forward.
- Phase III – Reward System – This would be offered to local businesses.
- Economic Gardening / Assistance for Small Business – Starting with Joan Divor at the County Library and Gary Rago, Director of the Small Business Development Center at Rutgers in Camden, information will be available to the public “Economic Gardening”. This will provide the market data for the small businesses in the State so that they can make better business decisions and can grow and employ more employees. Although New Jersey has a program entitled Choose New Jersey, it seems to more known and directed to the north part of the State. Kristi added that the Library and the Chamber were preparing to send out an email announcing the Reference USA, which will be a 90-minute discussion on how to get and use references.

Other information discussed:

- Real Estate: New statics show that space per worker has shrunk since automation as reduced in size leaving many available spaces that need to be absorbed into the County. Mark said that their website www.burlingtoncountybridgecommission.org, (click on the home page banner and go to economic development tab) has a lot more information available.
- Two sore spots in New Jersey – Camden and Trenton
- Hotel Hotspots – Mark reported that Burlington County was #3 in the State for hotel occupancy (Newark and Atlantic City being 1st and 2nd) and that the four areas with the most hotel selections were: Route73 Mount Laurel area; Route38/Interstate 295 Mount Laurel, Route 541 Westampton and Turnpike entrance Bordentown. Both Shari and Katie agreed that the county had too many hotels.
- Florence – With the growth of Burlington County Coat Factory expansion and Subaru’s warehouse project (largest construction of a build-to-suit in the State of NJ) of 526,050 Sq., Ft for a parts and distribution center in Florence it is only a matter of time that hotels, restaurants and support services will follow.
- Joint Land Use – Mark reported that the Joint Base is very much opposed to decreasing their “noise and accident” zones by building up around their perimeters. They stressed the importance of keeping the agriculture properties surrounding the base and not allowing a massive building growth to happen. At this time,

development regarding the gates has stalled, especially in Wrightstown, but it is continuing to market it.

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3. Old Business

- i. Report on Cinnaminson and Mount Holly Engagement – Kristi announced that obviously they have engaged with us since both Josh & Frank joined us today. Josh reported that Mount Holly started a Buy Local Campaign about a year ago and was investing funds into marketing and advertising. He reported that at this time there was a hold in the downtown redevelopment phase. The old Miller Ford building is down but still has some environmental issues. Mount Holly’s biggest obstacle at this time is crime and The Gardens. Events: March 2 - St. Patty Day Parade; May 18 – Military Appreciation Day with car show. Frank reported that Cinnaminson is working on getting a Local Business Association group up and running; to proceed with Economic Development and Land Use as well as construction. Their biggest obstacle right now is changing the way that they are perceived “not business friendly”. Jay added that it is very important to get the municipalities involved in the Chamber. Kristi reported that the Chamber has been offering a membership to each of the 40 municipalities over the last 5 years and out of the 40 only 15 of them have taken the offer and that out of the 15 only 1 of them participated with the Chamber in attending Government Affairs Committee meetings
 - a. Dan suggested a summit of all the municipalities and Kristi added that there is no funding in the municipalities to host this and she does not believe that she (the Chamber) would be able to obtain sponsorships that would cover the cost for this type of an event. Mark suggested that a guide brochure be prepared for the municipalities to follow that would describe “best management practices” that would also focus on economic development and distribute them to the municipalities first before contemplating a summit.
- ii. Work Development – Kristi reported that the Chamber, BCIT and BCC were working together to educate employers in the area that they can get well trained students as interns and would be hosting a May 1 Internship Fair in this effort. She asked members of the Committee to volunteer to be part of the Council to help prepare and promote this event.

5. New Business

- a. Spring Summit - Kristi asked for ideas of towns that have vital activity going on at this time such as Florence and Cinnaminson; businesses that would be interesting to hear from and hot

industries that you would like to see a part of the summit, be emailed to her by next Tuesday, so that she can start planning the summit for May.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

These minutes were prepared by Barbara Urban

Next Meeting – March 26, 2013

KHI 2-28-13

JSK 3-5-13