

**MEETING MINUTES**

**TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN  
Economic Development Commission**

**MARCH 16, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

• ROLL CALL

Lee Eagles	_____X_____
Mitch Bernstein	_____X_____
Michael DeCicco	_____X_____
Bob Lange	_____X_____
William Laudien	_____X_____
Anthony Scuzorzo	___Absent___
Anthony Pellegrino	___Absent___
Ken Boulderstone	_____X_____

**FLAG SALUTE**

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT** – PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROPERLY PROVIDED BY SENDING COPIES OF THE NOTICE OF MEETING TO TWO NEWSPAPERS, THE ASBURY PARK PRESS AND THE PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY. THE NOTICE WAS POSTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE TOWNSHIP CLERK AND ON THE BULLETIN BOARD OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes: January 12, 2022**

Chairman Eagles made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, from the January 12, 2022, meeting. Seconded by Mitch Bernstein.

• ROLL CALL

Lee Eagles	_____X_____
Mitch Bernstein	_____X_____
Michael DeCicco	_____X_____
Bob Lange	_____X_____
William Laudien	_____X_____
Anthony Scuzorzo	___Absent___
Anthony Pellegrino	___Absent___

Ken Baulderstone \_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting was officially turned over to Chairperson Eagles.

### 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Eagles welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chairman Eagles began by introducing the first portion of the meeting and turned the meeting over to Mitch Bernstein to introduce the guest for the first portion.

Mitch Bernstein introduced the guest at the meeting, Sandra Lazzaro, the Division Director of Ocean County Business Development and Ocean County Tourism. Mitch Bernstein explained that Ms. Lazzaro was asked to join the meeting today so the commission could both convey to Sandra what the commission's goals are for the township and to see if she has any recommendations from what she has seen other municipalities successfully do.

Chairman Eagles discussed that, after last month's meeting and the discussion of the different people the town wanted to seek advice from, a portion of the commission was able to meet with the Mayor of Point Pleasant Beach to discuss some of the things they have done in his borough to successfully boost the economy.

Bill Laudien discussed what the commission was able to take away from that meeting with the Mayor of Pt. Pleasant Beach. Bill Laudien continued by saying that one of the things the town did very well was assess their strengths and weaknesses in order to tailor their efforts.

Mike DeCicco inquired as to whether the improvements in the town are a "one shot" deal or a continuing process.

Bill Laudien discussed that it is clear to him that this is going to be an on-going process. The way Pt. Pleasant Beach has been handling it is by identifying areas within the town that need attention, and then taking the time to fix that area, but not at the exclusion of other aspects of the town. Bill Laudien used the example of behavior on the boardwalk as an example. He said the town identified the problem, and then spent the money to heighten security to resolve the problem.

Chairman Eagles answered that a proposed budget would be part of the plan that is presented to the Township Committee.

### 2. EDC Marketing and Brand Plan – Review and Discussion

Chairman Eagles then introduced the next part of the meeting where the commission will discuss the proposed marketing, and rebranding, plan for the Township of Ocean that they will then bring to the committee. Chairman offered Sandra Lazzaro the option to provide her opinions on the marketing plan wherever she sees fit.

Sandra Lazzaro said she intended to keep the meeting mostly informative for herself so that she could take notes on the commission's plans to be able to provide as much help as she can. She continued by providing an overview of what she does in her division. Sandra Lazzaro continued saying that she anticipates a record-breaking year for tourism this summer.

Chairman Eagles discussed the proposed plan by first discussing the background of how the commission got to the current plan. He mentioned that in 2019 the commission identified some properties on Route 9 which were deemed “distressed properties”.

The commission tried to introduce businesses to the site, but it seemed that whoever they introduced felt as though there was competition with the surrounding areas and their populations. This is when the commission started to realize there was a problem here in Waretown that needed to be addressed.

Chairman Eagles discussed that the commission began their analysis, for the marketing plan, with what the town can be using to its’ advantage. Chairman Eagles continued stating that the town really has not capitalized on the town’s waterfront. The town has seven full-service marinas all located on Barnegat Bay, and they are located on the intercoastal waterway channel at the intersection of the Oyster Creek channel. The marinas in Waretown are distinct from those in the surrounding areas.

Chairman Eagles continued discussing the town’s proximity to the waterfront and suggested branding the town in such a way to change the image. Chairman Eagles proposed adding “By the Bay” to the signs that list Waretown.

Further, Chairman Eagles proposed generating a quarterly newspaper that is volunteer driven, and business funded. Chairman Eagles said this would be a good way to reach residents who don’t have digital capabilities at home. Suggested names, for the quarterly paper, are “Waretown by the Bay Buzz” or Waretown by the Bay Beat”. Chairman Eagles said that Pt. Pleasant Beach had a lot of success with something similar to this in their town.

Mitch Bernstein discussed that Waretown “By the Bay” isn’t really something too different from what the town already brands itself as. He discussed how this would be complimentary to the slogan found on the township website, “Smooth Sailing”.

Sandra Lazzaro inquired as to whether there was a business improvement district in town.

Mitch Bernstein answered that the town does not have a B.I.D.

Bill Laudien added that the township also does not have a chamber of commerce.

Sandra Lazzaro recommended that someone from the Economic Development Commission apply to be on the Ocean County Tourism Advisory Council. Additionally, Sandra Lazzaro invited a member(s) of the Economic Development Commission to attend the next meeting for the Ocean County Tourism Advisory Committee on April 11<sup>th</sup> where Jeff Vasser, the Director of Tourism for the state of New Jersey will in attendance.

Chairman Eagles then turned to what is considered the “action” part of the marketing plan. Chairman Eagles mentioned improving, and expanding, the bay front facilities and activities.

Chairman Eagles discussed that the goal of the commission would be to create more traffic for the town businesses through the improvements suggested.

Ken Boulderstone discussed that he discovered some information from the 2020 Census which might be relevant to the town: between 2010 to 2020 the town has only grown by 503 people and the summer population tends to be about 16,000 people. Ken Boulderstone believes that the minimal growth of the population, over the last 10 years, might not appeal to new businesses.

Mitch Bernstein does not believe that the minimal growth of the population is overly concerning because that was never a driving factor, or aspect, of the rebrand. The focus of the rebrand was on our assets: the marinas, our low taxes, and our transportation.

Mitch Bernstein continued that the goal, once the town has the 16,000 people here in the summer, is to offer them restaurants and a nicer looking township, in addition to the waterfront.

Chairman Eagles mentioned the way Pt. Pleasant Beach went about cleaning up some of downtown was through registration fees. Businesses were not willing to pay the fees for empty buildings, so they were sold to local developers who were interested in having businesses in town. Chairman Eagles discussed that there are some similar properties in town where local developers might be interested.

Chairman Eagles proposed the idea of enacting an ordinance where everyone who has an identified problem on their property is asked to make the property look presentable.

Mitch Bernstein discussed that our ordinances are residentially driven, not commercial. Mitch Bernstein said the issue here is property owned by the commercial owners if they are not required to upkeep it.

Mitch Bernstein continued by discussing how the commission will go through grant applications moving forward. The Economic Development Commission will provide information to the Township Clerk's office in preparation for grant applications when needed.

Mike DeCicco inquired as to whether the county could assist the town with any grants.

Sandra Lazzaro answered that there are a lot of grants which are available to the municipalities.

Ken Boulderstone discussed that Ocean County has been very good to the town recently with additional funding through the Senior Services grant. Ken Boulderstone said the town will be able to use that to conduct various classes, such as, yoga classes.

Sandra Lazzaro suggested getting into contact with Anthony Vaz, Mayor of Seaside Heights, to discuss how Seaside Heights handles distressed properties.

Chairman Eagles discussed that, along with all of the new efforts by the commission to rebrand the waterfront, the commission and town can now talk about successful projects, like Tradewinds, that will further improve the demographics.

Bill Laudien suggested the slogan be “Waretown ‘On the Bay’”, not “Waretown ‘By the Bay.’” Bill Laudien also discussed how the influx of people to Waretown, in the summer months, is a great natural resource.

Bob Lange discussed how he feels that there is another problem here with dredging. Bob Lange feels that the bigger boats, who come into town and spend more money, are going to leave us soon as a result. He continued to say that as a result of not being able to dredge these boats cannot get in and out of the harbor. Bob Lange then inquired as to whether there was any grant money available for dredging.

Diane Ambrosio discussed that there is not any grant money available for dredging currently. She continued to explain that the only thing the DEP will currently let the town do, in relation to dredging, is create a living shoreline. However, it is very expensive to implement.

Bill Laudien discussed that the newspaper needs to be eye catching, and the rest of the commission agreed.

Bill Laudien discussed the beautification part of the marketing plan and mentioned how you can’t get to the bay without driving through a residential neighborhood.

Bob Lange discussed that there is not enough storage here in town for the number of boats, and people who are here in the summer. He continued stating that part of the appeal for many people who buy homes within Waretown is that they are capable of storing their boats on their properties.

Bob Lange suggested that it might be beneficial to speak to the Marine Trade about dredging, and to be in contact with them in general.

### 3. Open Discussion among Member for the Good of the Committee

#### Motion to Open for Public Comment:

Mitch Bernstein made a motion to open meeting to the public. Seconded by Bob Lange.

All in Favor: \_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_ Opposed \_\_\_NONE\_\_\_

No public at meeting.

#### Motion to Close Public Comment:

Mitch Bernstein made a motion to close to the public. Seconded by Lee Eagles.

All in Favor: \_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_ Opposed \_\_\_NONE\_\_\_

Motion to Adjourn

Mitch Bernstein made a motion to Adjourn. Seconded by Bob Lange.

All in Favor: \_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_ Opposed \_\_\_\_NONE\_\_\_\_

Signed and Submitted:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane B. Ambrosio, Municipal Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date