

Town of Sheffield Economic Development Committee. Minutes of 11/19/09 meeting with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Attendees: Tom Matuszko and Sarah LaValley of BRPC; Jim Kelly, Kevin Schmitz and Rene Wood.

The committee met with BRPC to discuss assistance under BRPC's Technical Assistance program for:

- Development of a "How to Do Business in Sheffield" brochure
- Setting up an Informal Project Review process which applicants can use prior to filing special permit applications or other documents

Following an overview of BRPC, T. Matuszko asked the question: "What problem are you trying to solve with the "How to do business in Sheffield" brochure?"

K. Schmitz commented on people not knowing who to ask or what to ask. R. Wood added misinformation, lack of realistic expectations and time frames and blaming the board or town for delays, extra costs. It was not envisioned to cover single family dwellings but could address the issue of home occupations and home-based businesses.

J. Kelly discussed a simple flowchart or checklist with the advantage that it could be given to the applicant as well as those hired by an applicant.

The group recognized that such a brochure would never be able to answer each individual's specific questions but would be designed to provide guidance on the general topics.

The addition of timeframes in the brochure was discussed; how to make it clear and concise without making it so no one could follow it. (i.e. a permitting timeframe diagram)

J. Kelly raised the idea of a PR brochure "Introduction to Sheffield" telling about Sheffield, its culture, other businesses, schools etc. All thought this was an excellent idea; conversation to be continued.

The how to brochure was seen as being available primarily from the Building Inspector, but also from the various permitting boards as well as on the Town's web site.

Discussion ensued about necessity to get the various boards and building inspector involved and on board, as well as testing it with the building inspector organization in the county. Felt it definitely needed to be "field tested".

While the group focused mainly on the first point; the second point – informal review process – was discussed briefly with BRPC providing a sample review process developed as part of Lee's 43D expediting permitting process. This process would have to be tailored to Sheffield so the provided sample was just for ideas and not suggested as the process to follow.

T. Matuszko and S. LaValley will be back to the Economic Development Committee with their ideas and suggestions on the how-to brochure. The informal review process will be discussed in more depth at a later time.

Next regular committee meeting: Tuesday December 8th at 5PM; 2nd floor conference room. Kevin Schmitz will be acting chair.

Respectfully submitted by Rene Wood