BOROUGH OF MORRIS PLAINS

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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MISSION

To develop partnerships and foster an environment that will create a thriving downtown, and a strong business economy in the Borough of Morris Plains.
2021 Accomplishments

**DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK**
- Created the first-ever business directory
- Streamlined zoning approvals through revised Minor Site Plan ordinance
- Supported permanent outdoor dining ordinance
- Began evaluating permitted uses in all non-residential zones

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**
- Met with small business owners to hear concerns, offer support, share small business loan and grant info
- Networked with realtors and property owners to market our downtown to small business owners
- Reached out to small business owners directly about opening up shop in Morris Plains

**MAKE IMPROVEMENTS**
- Implemented shared parking permits for small business employees
- Identified property maintenance concerns and worked with zoning officer to encourage “spruce ups”

**MARKET MORRIS PLAINS**
- Launched the first-ever Small Business Saturday Event to promote holiday shopping
- Shared holiday sale flyers on Borough weekly email
- Recruited microbrewery to a MP location TBA!
2021 Key Learnings

• The Business Development Committee needs to recruit additional active members from among residents, business owners and Borough committees in order to achieve goals.

• Business Owners were excited to get involved in the BDC efforts – they welcomed the partnership and interest expressed by the Borough and want more

• Partnerships with the Zoning Officer and the Planning Board have been essential in creating an environment to attract prospective businesses

• A dedicated non-government fundraising and event planning organization is needed to achieve the committee’s vision.
2022 Goals

Expand Committee Membership
With BDC members limited to three Council members, the Committee can have minimal impact toward achieving its mission.

In 2022, the BDC seeks to recruit members with expertise in nonprofit development and management, urban planning, commercial real estate, and community art.

➢ Volunteers who create a non-profit entity can help bring the committee’s vision to life through fundraising, event planning, marketing, and more.
2022 Goals

Strengthen Relationships with Business Owners

- Grow our local business contacts and email list
- Continue to share small business loan and grant information
- Conduct surveys and meetings with small business owners to identify local concerns and opportunities
- Share Outdoor Dining Ordinance information and other relevant zoning issues
- Announce business openings on Borough email, website and social media
2022 Goals

Attract New Businesses

- Continue to develop and maintain a list of available commercial properties in the Borough – share with local Chambers of Commerce and small business organizations
- Carefully evaluate the draft zoning ordinance to ensure we are welcoming modern, vibrant business types as permitted uses in all appropriate business and commercial zones
- Monitor business inquiries in the Borough to analyze trends
- Reach out to listing agents for prominent vacancies to encourage active marketing
- Network with Morris County Chamber of Commerce, Morris County Economic Development Corporation, and industry business associations to identify business owners who are looking for a location
2022 Goals

Create a Welcoming Business Environment

- Work with professionals, the Planning Board, Public Safety, Traffic Committee and NJ Transit to develop a parking plan
- Partner with GO! Morris Plains, and Borough committees to implement pedestrian/bike improvements, with a focus on visible crosswalks and signs
- Partner with Beautification, All Season’s Garden Club, DPW, Code Enforcement, local arts groups to identify ways to make our business zones more attractive
- Work with Borough Grant Writer to identify and apply for grant opportunities to support these strategies
2022 Goals

Market Morris Plains

- Draft content and explore cost to create a professional-quality flyer promoting Morris Plains as a great place to open a business
- Discuss how/where we can enhance existing town-wide events to incorporate a small business component
- Work with existing event committees to explore ways to expand opportunities for attracting shoppers and visitors to the downtown