

Upper Mount Bethel Township Economic Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: June 26th, 2025

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Upper Mount Bethel Township Building
387 Ye Olde Highway
Mount Bethel, PA 18343

PRESENT: Stavros Barbounis
Geoff Deen
Bill Hall
Anthony DeFranco
Martin Pinter

ABSENT: Ray Higgins
Scott Cole

GUESTS
IN ATTENDANCE: Supervisor Jonathan Erler, Ron Angle, Tara Mezzanotte

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by committee Vice-Chair Bill Hall
Pledge of Allegiance

Administrative Actions

- **Agenda Approval:** The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved.
 - **Meeting Minutes:** February and March minutes were tabled; April minutes were approved.
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Public Comment Highlights

Tree Services & Storm Preparedness

- A resident advocated for diversifying tree service contractors across township zones to improve storm response and reduce costs.
- Proposal to bid out tree maintenance by geographic sections to ensure coverage and efficiency.

- Suggested setting a standard rate (\$1,500/day) for contractors and rotating work among local providers.

Farming & Economic Development

- Concerns raised about local farmers not selling within the township while seeking township support.
 - Discussion on the role of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) in promoting local agriculture.
 - Proposal to list local farms on the township website and encourage participation in Lehigh County's fall open house.
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Farmers Market Initiative

- Parks & Rec planning a weekly farmers market starting July 27.
 - Open to farmers, artisans, and local businesses.
 - Emphasis on volunteer coordination, advertising, and vendor commitment 30 days prior to each event.
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Website & Communications

- EDC section of the township website is under development.
 - Plans to include business directories, logos, links, and legal notices.
 - Discussion on restructuring site hierarchy and improving content visibility.
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Environmental & Development Concerns

Wild & Scenic River Designation

- Debate over federal jurisdiction and its impact on local development.
- Concerns about misinformation and lack of clarity from external agencies.
- Emphasis on maintaining local control over land use decisions.

Data Center Development

- Ongoing negotiations and community concerns about transparency and impact.
 - Proposal to hold structured meetings with limited public commentary to maintain focus.
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Comprehensive Plan & Strategic Planning

Plan Revision & Analysis

- Initiative to revise the township's comprehensive plan using AI-assisted analysis.
- Goal: Compare old vs. new plans, highlight differences, and assess alignment with current demographics and community needs.
- Plan to present findings at the July 24 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Survey Strategy

- Proposal to use SurveyMonkey for monthly community feedback.
 - Focus on open space, development preferences, and tax implications.
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Final Notes & Adjournment

- Emphasis on maintaining order and purpose in future meetings.
 - Acknowledgment of the need for better collaboration across committees.
 - Meeting adjourned with plans to reconvene on July 24.
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