

Upper Township Economic Development Advisory Commission (UTEDAC)
Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. With the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance.

The Sunshine Meeting Announcement was read by Chairperson Susan Adelizzi Schmidt.

Attendees:

Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt (Chair)
Beverly Fedorko Ott
Jack Griffin - absent
Maura McCray
John Coggins
Joanne Gill
Andy Shawl

Members of the surrounding Exit 20 business community and the general public were invited to the meeting to express their feedback with regard to creating a full interchange at Exit 20.

At the meeting, members of the Commission introduced themselves to the community members who joined us for our meeting. Susan made an opening statement explaining the purpose of the Committee – and how we got to where we are today – briefly walking through the steps we’ve taken so far. Describing the survey – how we came up with a list of the top 10 priorities – and then how we narrowed our initiatives down to four and brought them forth for consideration by the Township Committee.

Susan noted that an online survey was conducted and responded to by approximately 300 people. The responses indicated an overwhelming positive response in support of a full interchange at Exit 20 on the Garden State Parkway. Casual conversations have taken place – and formal support has been received from the Upper Township Committee, Sea Isle City and by Senator Van Drew issuing a letter to the NJTA supporting the initiative.

Susan noted that the UTEDAC is an advisory committee only and we do not create policy and have no formal power in the township. We can really benefit from the support of the community and the surrounding businesses. Tonight, we want to hear your thoughts on Exit 20 completion.

The meeting was attended by 27 members of the community including Deputy Mayor and Committeeman Ed Barr.

A sign in sheet and a copy of the petition were circulated throughout the audience to sign.

Chairperson opened the floor to the public for their views – following are the names of those who chose to speak and a synopsis of their thoughts:

Alice Smith – Upper Township resident all her life. Loves Upper Township, works in Somers Point and says traffic is getting harder – speed limit on Route 9 makes people going to work frustrated – because it is a residential area and a long way to go to get on the Parkway. This is a great idea – especially in the summertime – traffic backs up on Rt 9 just south of the intersection of Route 50 – it would make it safer for busses kids – and pedestrians.

Andrew Shawl – asked about a toll – if it costs an additional toll would you still be in favor?

Brad Sullicki – Seaville resident – always uses the Parkway going north – agrees – it needs to be done – Roosevelt Boulevard gets backed up and there have been some horrible accidents. If Exit 20 was done it would alleviate the problem – all for it.

Aaron Macera – Seaville resident – a full interchange at Exit 20 would be good in multiple ways – it would help some of the local business – alleviate speeding traffic up and down Route 9 – there is no negative if you create more ways to access a higher use road. It is a positive – toll would be fine.

Charles Norkis of Seaville has been in the area a long time – says 20 years ago this was proposed but the toll was the issue – it became ameliorated no toll to go south and you pay the toll – there is no negative and the businesses in Seaville area would be helped. Enhance more stores and its important – would pay the toll no problem. Rt 9 serious accidents and volume of traffic makes it hard – Parkway is inherently a safer road. Roosevelt Boulevard rush hour is horrible – and problematic – if you save one life it is worth doing. Safer way to go north and south.

George Dudzek – lives in Osprey Point – everyone here is in favor of the interchange – what has to happen to make this a reality?

In response to Mr. Dudzek's question Andrew explained that we are trying to provide opportunities to the residents to support the effort. Turnpike Authority is supposed to let us know what they hope to do with the interchange very shortly. They are in the planning phase and hopefully they will support our efforts and that of Sea Isle City who want to have a full interchange there as well.

If there is a capacity issue the South Jersey Transportation Planning Agency would take care of making the necessary changes to the Route 9 and Route 50

intersection – and we want to take our thoughts and yours to the Turnpike Authority to influence their decision making.

Critical mass is important – chamber of commerce – the township committee and the business community – we have to create critical mass – speak out – make sure that officials see we need to get this done.

Ed Barr – Deputy Mayor – resident of Upper Township for 30 years – family has had a business in Seaville for 50 years. Marmora is getting congested – it is time for this project. It is great for commerce and public safety but a focal point of getting people out in the need of evacuation – with those factors in mind it is critical to do it. It is time we get full access both north and south especially in the summertime on certain days it backs up all the way up to Custard Hut – and it needs to get done. Your input is critical and get involved – seize the moment.

Tom Henry – lives on Route 9 South – he says he is an old-timer – more that 50 years going to do away with the traffic lights on the parkway – when Katrina happened Congress passed legislation for every state to build exit corridors – if we wait for our legislators – nothing will get done – Mullica Hill bypass is approved – we can't get 55 done but nobody complained when Ocean City expressway was built – we need to go to Congress and we need emergency access to get out as an emergency corridor the federal government can tell the Turnpike Authority to do it now.

Dr. Ali Gharavao (sp?) – he has lived here for more than 30 years very much in favor – issues of safety and congestion – and excess speed are real. People traveling Route 9 north go exceedingly fast while on the shoulder of the road people are walking their dogs and jogging – it is dangerous. He suggests using website for people to sign in and lend their support to the petition.

Natalie Neiss– from Petersburg – family has been here for a long time – wonders if traffic studies have been done to ensure that this project doesn't cause more congestion on the Parkway.

Chairperson made closing remarks to the public:

- If you want to be in contact with us – you are welcome to reach out through the Township Clerk for contact information.
- Thank you all for taking the time to be here... please take a petition and circulate it, make sure you get it back to us.
- Volunteers are welcome...and we could use your support by telling people about the need for a full exchange at Exit 20 and encourage people to sign the petition.
- Push people now – if we can't get it done now we will have missed the boat.

Joe Martino – volunteers his property for signage.

Parting announcement – there is a sustainable energy meeting direct install May 7th – more information is available on the Upper Township Business Association Facebook page.

Public meeting adjourned, and Advisory Commission went to our normal meeting.

Gary Rash – joined us for the meeting. Beverly to email him the petition.

John Coggins felt that the public safety factor is important. Bottle neck that jams up is a real danger if an ambulance is trying to access the road in an emergency.

Perhaps we need to redo the magnet and make sure the message and icon says what we want it to say “Say Yes – to Exit20.com” – it is currently on the Upper Township Business Association Page. Perhaps we could ask Ted Greenberg to do a video spot – SNJ would cover it also.

We need to arrange a meeting with the Turnpike Authority. Find out what the protocol is for arranging the meeting – needs to be felt out – what needs to be done – Andrew will talk with some people – Beverly will reach out to Anne Strauss Wieder of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Agency and report back with her suggestions. We need to address this with Louis Joyce SJTPA and Jennifer Marandino to get it on their plan – and Len Desidario is Chairman of SJTPA and Jim Rutala- John Coggins will discuss with them.

There will be a Message on the Township’s Facebook page encouraging people to sign the petition, a copy of which will be available at City Hall. Susan will send a copy of the petition to all of us – and we will circulate it and make a deadline to be returned by June 1, 2018.

Andrew will go through the list of items we have and will give us a list of topics. Get three quotes solicit 3 vendors – purchase requisition to prove that we did it correctly – Susan will continue to shepherd the project.

Andrew advises that on May 10th there is a meeting of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Agency and on May 16th Citizens Advisory Committee for the regional bicycle path will meet at 1-3 p.m. at the Community Center.

Minutes of the April 3, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved. Motion to approve made by Andrew and seconded by Joanne. Approved minutes will be forwarded to the Township Clerk for filing – and inclusion on the Township’s website.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Next meeting is Tuesday June 5th @ 7p.m.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by
Beverly Fedorko Ott, Secretary
Upper Township Economic Development Advisory Commission

Beverly Fedorko Ott