



Economic Development Initiatives

Catawissa Borough
Council Meeting
February 8th, 2021

Updated 10/21/2020



Purpose: To inform residents about Economic Development initiatives in the Borough.

Catawissa Opportunities



Catawissa has unique opportunities for growth and to attract businesses:

- Location along Susquehanna River; tie-in with regional outdoor recreation efforts.
- Considerable vehicular traffic; major gateway to Knoebel's.
- Close to I-80, Geisinger and Bloomsburg University.
- Proud history; celebrating 250th Anniversary in 2024.
- Historic buildings: Quaker Meeting House, Opera House, Train Station.
- Three parks, significant green space, very livable community!

Economic Development



- The Borough's Economic Development Plan was approved in February 2020.
- Based on numerous focus group sessions, online/mail survey to all residents.
- Developed/written by Penn Strategies.
- All Borough efforts tie-in with this plan.
- Also ties in with regional tourism and economic development initiatives.

Plan Priority Issue:

Main Street Needs a Facelift



- \$1.4 Million Grants submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development and PennDOT as part of their Multimodal Grant Programs.
- Grants will match each other; no matching funds required from the Borough.
- Supported by our State Legislators.
- From Susquehanna River to Opera House.

Plan Priority Issue:

Main Street Needs a Facelift



- Includes green space, decorative crosswalks and lighting, benches, water fountain at Five Points intersection.
- Plan designed by Peters Engineers of Berwick.
- Façade Improvement Grant Program developed and implemented when streetscaping funding is approved.
- Potential Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act to encourage development of properties on Main Street.

Plan Priority Issue: Main Street Needs a Facelift



- **LERTA Act of 1977.**
 - Exempts from real property taxation the assessed valuation of improvements to properties.
 - Improvements or new construction.
 - Does not exempt properties from taxes, only the increased assessed valuation.
 - Can be up to 10 years.
 - All taxing authorities must approve: Borough, School District, County. Discussed with all. Working on proposal for review by County & School District.

Plan Priority Issue: Enhance Parks & Recreation



- \$250,000 Grant submitted to the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) for development of Eyer Park/Susquehanna Riverfront.
- Potential 15% match; looking for other sources for match. \$30,000 budgeted in Eyer Fund in 2021 for match.
- Includes kayak launch/dock, kayak rack, pavilion, footpath.
- Ties in with regional tourism & outdoor recreation efforts; bring tourists to Catawissa.

Plan Priority Issue:
Enhance Parks & Recreation



- Additional growth in Eyer Park in years to come (Additional grants).
- Regular replacement of playground equipment (CARA & Wolfgang Parks).
- Repair bandshell in Wolfgang Park.
- Programming (Classes & Concerts) in the Community Center.
- Considering additional community events (lead up to 250th Anniversary in 2024).
- Beginning planning for 250th Anniversary Celebration in 2021.

Plan Priority Issue:
Identity & Branding



- Identity, image and “brand” are extremely important to attracting new businesses.
- New logos approved in 2020 for the Borough, Community Center and Summer Breeze Series. Phasing in use over coming years.
- New online presence (Website, Facebook, Twitter, etc) in 2022 utilizing new logo and branding.

Plan Priority Issue:
Fighting Crime & Drugs



- 24/7 Protection, huge draw for potential businesses, residents.
- Fifth FT Officer hired in 2020.
- Experienced Chief and Corporal, excellent young officers.

Plan Priority Issue:
Create New Housing Stock



- On hold; work first on other priority issues.
- Discussions with Community Strategies Group in Bloomsburg.
- In the future, potential use of the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program by developers for building market rate housing.

Plan Priority Issue:
**Create Economic Development
Authority**



- On hold; not sure if this is practical in a community our size.
- An Authority is a legal entity/special form of government. Another option would be a nonprofit like a Downtown Association.
- Working to form committee to assist with community development activities.

Economic Development



“If you build it, they will come.”

Working on putting in place infrastructure and supportive programs first, before working to recruit new businesses. They will come if we have everything necessary in place!