



Main Street Mount Holly

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Is a Business Improvement District a Possibility in Mount Holly's Future?

This spring Main Street Mount Holly, in partnership with Mount Holly Township, was awarded a Challenge Grant from the State of New Jersey to study the feasibility of having a Business Improvement District, or BID, in Mount Holly. BIDS are a way to assist in the management of downtown and other smaller business districts. BIDs allow businesses to organize and address both short and long-term revitalization issues. It is also a way to raise funds for activities that supplement typical municipal services while allowing businesses to manage their own future.

BIDs can also market the area for shopping or dining opportunities while highlighting some of the special qualities which could increase the town's role as a visitor destination. These services can work with programs that currently serve Mount Holly, including Main Street Mount Holly, Mill Race Village Merchant Association, the Greater Mount Holly Business and Professional Association, and Urban Enterprise Zone. Economic development is a complicated business that takes a long-term commitment and requires many different perspectives. By bringing these voices together, Mount Holly hopes to concentrate resources and coordinate programs.

An important aspect of a program like this requires a financial contribution from business and property owners to its operation once it's needs have been determined. Some may see this as a tax, but this is not directed by the Township. Main Street Mount Holly would coordinate the program and the BID's voting members, the local business and property owners, would determine how the money would be spent within the community. It's more like a pool of funds to improve local business as determined by the contributors. If successful, all commercial properties would have a say on how the funds are spent.

The BID operates within a budget funded by property and business owners and approved by its own Board to implement a strategy that manages activities promoting the businesses and buildings of the town. Funds collected by its members do not go to the township, but to a fund designated for the stated activities of the BID. Some members may believe that funding should only go to programs and not to administrative or staffing costs. Though this may prove a challenge when operating the BID, it is allowable and to be determined by the BID Board and its members.

If Mount Holly is interested in pursuing this strategy, individual businesses would determine the role of the BID; owners and operators of businesses would serve on the Board of Directors and work with existing organizations to address commercial activity and the township's economic development. Main Street Mount Holly, the facilitators of this process, has asked other local organizations and departments to participate. Together, these groups can lead the discussion.

Main Street Mount Holly along with Mount Holly Township will be hosting an introductory meeting on June 24 at the Burlington County College Mount Holly Center starting at 6 pm. All business and property owners are invited to attend.