

BEDFORD INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION

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The Bedford Industrial and Commercial Association was born in the late fall of 2002, as a direct result of the business community needing a single voice to stand together politically. The Bedford Township Board had passed three commercial property Ordinances, which left virtually every business in Bedford Township in a “legal, non-conforming status”, meaning that they could stay in operation but had no ability to rebuild as they were in case of a disaster. The Ordinances had no regard for the plight of existing business, made it very expensive for a new business to start, and discouraged commercial growth of any kind in Bedford Township.

When our membership came forward to complain about the unfairness of these Ordinances, at first, we were not very well received. We were vilified as “greedy businesspeople”, and that making money was all we were about. Opponents to our cause painted the picture as us against “the citizens”, which is absurd considering that the vast majority of us live in Bedford Township, and that most of us have been “citizens” of this community far longer than those who criticized us for complaining.

When the Township Board realized that we were serious about this issue, and that our concerns were valid, they began to work with us to alleviate the situation. A productive dialogue began about the ordinances and at this time the Landscaping and Lighting Ordinances have been rewritten in a manner that accomplishes the goal of reasonable control, but in a manner that is far more practical to work with. The Architectural Ordinance is now in the process of being reworked to achieve the same result. While we are grateful that the Board was ultimately willing to work with us, it remains important to remember that without a stance by our membership this community would be saddled with unreasonable ordinances that would have ultimately been challenged in court, at the expense of our taxpayers.

Our residential growth in Bedford Township has been phenomenal, and residential growth creates the need for goods and services, which ultimately requires more commercial development. Residential development puts a strain on our infrastructure that commercial development helps to offset. When 300 new homes are built in our community, if you believe the average of 4.3 people per household, it translates into approximately 690 children. In the case of Bedford, that may well require another school building to be built. When our commercial tax base increases, first of all it pays a higher tax rate than residential, which helps support the local infrastructure and helps to keep residential real estate taxes lower. Second, non homestead property pays an additional tax that helps the schools to operate. Last but certainly not least, increased sales tax dollars that are spent in Bedford Township (not Toledo Ohio) support Bedford Public Schools. Yes, we live conveniently close to Toledo, but that doesn’t mean that we live in Ohio. Our Membership believes that we have an obligation to support the State, and help the school district in which we live.

Our Association stands for everything that is good about Bedford. Our Members have contributed literally millions of dollars toward projects that benefit our entire community. Our beautiful Bedford Community Stadium was largely funded by members of BICA. The new Francis Family YMCA has already had over 1.8 million dollars pledged by members of our organization. The Heart of Hope and 3B Baseball are just a couple of others that our business community has supported willingly since their inception. The vast majority of our members live in our community, and many of them for their entire lives. BICA Members CARE about the Bedford Community!