

# MONROE 2030 ACTION TEAM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Fall 2016)

*What is the Monroe 2030 Action Team?*

The Monroe 2030 Action Team is a group of community volunteers that want to change the conversation about economic development in Monroe County. Our economy is not doing well and we are not creating new career and business opportunities for current residents and future generations. We hope to get community leaders and Monroe County residents engaged and excited about the prospects of creating more jobs and more business opportunities here at home.

*Why now?*

Monroe's economic challenges are no secret, and we've had lots of studies and reports on what to do. Yet, not much has happened and we continue to be stuck in the same old situation. We hope to spark some new approaches. We are not trying to re-invent the wheel. Instead, we are trying to capitalize on some good ideas that are already on the table. We are primarily focused on small scale changes that can improve the County's economic development climate over the next few years, but we hope that this initial work will generate new directions for the economy over the long term.

*Who's in charge of the Monroe 2030 Action Team?*

We do not intend to create a new organization, and no one person is in charge. We are a group of volunteers who all come from the business or education sectors, but have also volunteered on community organization for many years. We have an Executive Committee of eleven local people, and also have three working groups that each engages 15-20 other volunteers. We have received no public funding and are not seeking any such funds in the future.

*What's the challenge facing Monroe County?*

We believe that Monroe needs a more aggressive stance to support and promote economic development. At present, it is a challenge to start or grow a business in Monroe County. Many regulatory obstacles are in place, and the wider community is not particularly supportive. Thus, it should be no surprise that we are doing a poor job in terms of promoting new business start-ups, creating good jobs for local residents, and in attracting talented people to our region. Over the long term, this is a recipe for economic decline.

*What are the Monroe 2030 Action Teams priorities?*

Our group has opted to focus on three priority areas that are among the most pressing economic challenges facing our county. First, we need to do a better job of supporting entrepreneurs who want to start or grow businesses in Monroe. Second, we need to better develop local talent, especially in our key industry sectors like manufacturing, health care, and tourism. Finally, our local governments need to be more business-friendly. Our current rules and regulations are too complex and fragmented. Monroe County is a great place to live and raise a family, but it's not a great place to do business. We want to change that equation, so that Monroe is a good place to live, learn, play and **work!**

### *How is this effort different?*

Monroe County has had economic development strategies in the past, but they have not generated major changes. We are trying a different approach. First off, we are taking the initiative ourselves instead of relying on government agencies to do the work. Second, we are seeking to build momentum via early wins and progress. We've chosen priority areas where we believe that we can make progress in the next 1-2 years, and where a small group of community volunteers can make a difference. These small scale wins will hopefully lead to more significant long term changes in our economic development priorities. Finally, we are accountable. We are tracking our progress and will regularly report on how we're doing. We don't expect to be 100% successful, but we will be accountable and transparent in our work.

### *What's Next?*

Each of our working groups is pushing a series of action items, which you can find in our Monroe 2030 Action Team report at the Monroe County website. These materials can be found at <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/2030Action/Pages/default.aspx>. This will be our focus for the coming year, and we will regularly share updates on our progress. We welcome your participation in this effort.