

METUCHEN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Borough Hall  
August 5, 2009

Attendees: P. Cammarano-Council Liaison; J. Altman-Chairman; K. Donahue-Vice-Chairman; J. Constantine- Borough Planner; J. Sabatino-Falkenstein; A. Musmanno; L. Griffith; L. Hendricks-Wong; R. Leibfried; L. Roseman.

Chairman J. Altman called the meeting to order at 8 PM.

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

Borough Planner J. Constantine provided the members of the Development Commission with a presentation of “The District At Metuchen”. P. Cammarano reported new developments with regards to the Council and Mayor. J. Constantine then preceded to field questions and begin the presentation.

**The District At Metuchen**

J. Constantine opened the presentation by discussing the major themes of the September 2006 Downtown Development Workshop held in Metuchen. The major themes were as follows: improve the connection between Main Street and D-1 District; reinforce and extend downtown, promote a wider range of special features and continue to link public places such as the Greenway. K. Donahue asked about the heights of the buildings that are being proposed for the Renaissance Project. J. Constantine responded that many of the buildings would be in the forty foot range.

J. Constantine spoke about how the vision of the project has changed and improved due to the strong public participation that has taken place from members of the community. He also spoke about “managing expectations” within the community. L. Griffith asked about the time frame of the project. J. Constantine stated approximately 4 years. He consistently spoke about managing the expectations of community members and practicing patience while the actual building of the structures is taking place. K. Donahue asked Mr. Constantine about the inclusion of a grocery store within the development. J. Constantine responded that many small, high level grocery stores have expressed interest in possibly providing the community with a high level of professional service.

J. Constantine went on to discuss the “town center” vision as well as how the developer has modified plans and been willing to make changes after strong public participation and ideas have asked them for specific changes and modifications to existing plans. Development Commission member J. Scanlon was applauded by the Borough Planner for past public participation and thoughts and ideas regarding the Renaissance Project. J. Sabatino-Falkenstein asked if the Pearl St. lot would be in accordance with the Renaissance Project. J. Constantine feels that both developments should be done simultaneously. K. Donahue raised the question of whether or not parking spaces would be clearly marked. J. Constantine replied that there will be parking, but the goal will be to not look like a standard parking lot. The Developer and Borough are going to great lengths to ensure the appearance will remain authentic and the standard notion of a parking lot will be avoided.

J. Constantine and Councilman P. Cammarano went on to report new developments regarding the Greenway. The Borough of Metuchen has received a grant to extend the Middlesex Greenway. J. Constantine reported to the members that the Environmental Commission has been discussing various ideas of how the Borough can promote agriculture within the community. A. Musmanno stated that Plainsboro as an example of a community that is promoting sustainable agriculture. P. Cammarano state the Environmental Commission has come up with many good ideas for the Borough of Metuchen. K. Donahue and J. Sabatino-Falkenstein spoke about the possibility of community gardens. J. Constantine promoted many “green” ideas for the development and asked for community input and ideas regarding agriculture and community gardens.

J. Constantine spoke about “Branding the Community.” A DOT study of the project found that it will assist in relieving traffic and encourage the town to become more green. J. Constantine stated the smart signals, pedestrian shelters and as series of median shelters will all help easing traffic. J. Constantine consistently thanked the public for the input and tremendous ideas that came about during public participation workshops.

J. Constantine spoke about historically building heights on Main St. were higher than they are at the current time and the sidewalks for Renaissance are cost effective. He stated that there are only two areas in town that would be possible for a four story building. Mr. Constantine also said that one of the goals of the Project was to keep Main St. and Middlesex Ave. at a three story maximum. P. Cammarano then spoke about Franklin Square and parking as a good example of how Renaissance can pattern parking issues in the future development. K. Donahue was encouraged that if the DOT goes along with the interchange, it would negate truck activity near the project.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

J. Sabatino-Falkenstein asked about the Halsey St. parking development. L. Roseman said that tentative plans were drawn but not finalized. L. Roseman continued to say that “downtown living” is continuing to gain in popularity in Metuchen. K. Donahue asked about the purchasing of parking spaces and P. Cammarano stated that the issue has not been resolved at the present time. K. Donahue spoke about asking NJ Transit for assistance in cleaning the train platform for commuters and residents. J. Constantine also talked about promoting our train station and changing the area so that Main. St. would be visible from the train to help in attracting commuters to our downtown. P. Cammarano reported that the Council is continuing to work on the Cryan's site with the help of J. Constantine J. Sabatino-Falkenstein asked about the McDonough site and J. Constantine replied that it is projected for retail and apartments at the present time. P. Cammarano reported for the Council that the Greenway Project looks it is officially getting underway. J. Constantine concluded the presentation with asking the community and members of the Commission for “green” ideas for the Renaissance Project.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be the first Wednesday of September at 8PM in Borough Hall.

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made by K. Donahue, seconded by A. Musmanno and unanimously carried by all present.

Respectfully submitted,

Reed Leibfried