

**METUCHEN PARKING AUTHORITY**  
**MARCH 6, 2012 MINUTES**

Notice of this meeting of March 6, 2012 was given by posting the location, time and date of the meeting on the bulletin board in Borough Hall, delivering copies to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger and filing a copy with the Borough Clerk. This has been done to comply with the Open Public Meeting Act known as Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of New Jersey.

**PRESENT:**

Commissioners: Sean Massey, John DeFoe, Richard Dyas and Anthony Campisi

Borough Council Liaison: J.J. Muldoon

Chamber Liaison:

Legal Counsel: James Graziano, Esq.

Executive Director: Thomas Crownover

Also present were Dan Topping of the Select Committee and planner, James Constantine

**Goals:**

Mr. DeFoe chaired the meeting and set forth the goals as:

1. To receive the report of the Select Committee on Potential Development of the Pearl Street Lot;
2. Adopt a resolution and take Pearl lot development to the next step, to authorize the Chairman to brief the Chamber of Commerce, schedule a public meeting and to appoint a subcommittee of the Authority to meet in discussions with Woodmont Properties, LLC and Avalon Bay Communities, Inc.

Open session should avoid discussion of specifics, proposals, financials of developers, and Otteau's calculations. Mr. Graziano asked Mr. Constantine's help in presenting the concepts to the public. Mr. Constantine noted the 2010 zoning which was unanimously adopted.

The Goals of rezoning included:

1. Maximize financial return to taxpayers;
2. Require a reasonably-sized town green; ½ acre (aprox. 22,000 sq. ft) which is 100' X 200';
3. Relationship to Main St and the District; the idea of the square or town green would link the District to Main St. – greater height above 4 stories would require steel and greater investment by developer but would allow mixed heights and greatly improve appearance;
4. Reassessment of market changes; – drive more business to Main Street; Discussion of density in units per acre does not communicate useful information - It is the height of buildings that should be the focus. We don't want the Deck to be the tallest building. Mr. Dyas said that Franklin Square was made easier to accomplish when people considered what existed there before development. He also noted that very few school age children live there. Mr. Muldoon asked Mr. Constantine if the gen Y and older

former home owners would likely move to rental housing. Mr. Constantine recommended a public tour of housing similar to what might be built in Pearl. Princeton, Lodi and Montclair were mentioned as possibilities. Fiscal Impact of development will be strong in light of Franklin Square's ratables. Mr. Constantine discussed fiscal impact and said that urban metrics don't seem believable to people. In West Windsor and Princeton the controversy is strong. Mr. DeFoe asked how rental units would appear compared to owned homes. Mr. Constantine answered Mr. Massey's inquiry about form discussing the public space surrounded by retail. Mr. Muldoon asked Mr. Constantine for an updated vision of the development. On the massing front, 100 to 150 homes of condo size units originally anticipated, does not change much with greater number but smaller rental homes. Main Street should benefit from additional households. The master plan calls for redevelopment and it has been extended for several years. 2007 smart growth grant led to the District. Transit village designation did not come until after the Whitman administration. Station area improvements were made in 1998. Mr. Graziano noted that the master plan anticipated smaller childless households near the train station. The focus was to keep development downtown and protect single family neighborhoods. Mr. Campisi hears complaints about too many rental units. Development resistance turns into acceptance once completed and the benefits become obvious. The upscale quality of what might be built will allay any fears of rental units. The battle over the number of school children is made difficult because childless households are outside of peoples' experience. Mr. Graziano noted that the choice is between building nothing and building rental units. Main Street has improved, becoming the community living room with sidewalk tables. Mr. Campisi said that business owners on Main Street would naturally be in favor of adding 350 residents downtown. Mr. Dyas recommended an elevator speech be composed to describe what would be built. Mr. Massey suggested that working through the vision of what is wanted on the property is important by reengaging the community on issues like pop-up retail, flexing space, live/work space. Mr. Graziano was pessimistic about developers investing in graphic presentations of possible development. Mr. Campisi asked for maintenance examples of properties similar to what is being proposed 10 years after completion. Both of the two recommended developers are in for the long haul and will maintain the value of their properties. Mr. Muldoon agreed with Sean Massey about the next step. An April meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and also a public forum are planned. This would help achieve an updated vision based on market realities and public input. Mr. Graziano noted that explanation of the financial benefits to the town and the lack of school children and the high end upscale nature of apartments that are possible can result in acceptance. Mr. Constantine noted that the size of the public space is especially sensitive, symbolic and the link between the District and Main Street. Mr. Dyas anticipated an easy sell if a proper foundation is communicated. Mr. Massey looks to the public for the uses of the public space. Let the people touch the public space was Mr. Constantine's comment. Having developers or Mr. Otteau present at public meetings was a possibility. Mr. Campisi voiced a fear that he hears that this development will change the nature of Metuchen for the worse. People are afraid of change and what it will become in 20 years. Mr. Muldoon responded that only a parking lot framed by the railroad tracks will change for the better. Metuchen neighborhoods will not change. Most people have trouble imagining what it might look like. How would a public forum be any different than it was in 2007? Mr. Massey

argued for the necessity of public input. Mr. Constantine said that a site walk would be valuable so that people see what is here. Recalibration of expectations was Mr. Constantine's approach to such forums. The public space, ground floor space and height are design standards. Readoption is likely. COAH was mentioned and should be determined with the help of Ms. Bishop.

Mr. Dyas moved resolution 2012-19 authorizing the Chairman to meet with the Chamber of Commerce; to arrange a public meeting and to appoint a subcommittee to discuss Pearl Street development with Woodmont Properties, Inc. and Avalon Bay Communities, Inc. The motion was seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

Thereafter, resolution 2012-20 was moved by Mr. Dyas to commence an executive session not open to the public regarding contract negotiations and seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously. A closed session ensued.

Regular open session returned and upon motion by Mr. Massey and second by Mr. Dyas to adjourn, with unanimous approval the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Crownover