JOINT MEETING OF METUCHEN PARKING AUTHORITY AND ACCESSABILITY COMMITTEE JANUARY 28, 2016 MINUTES.

Councilman Ron Grayzel welcomed the attendees, Ms. Sheri-Rose Rubin, Accessibility Committee Chairperson and introduced Jon Jahr, engineer with Maser Consulting.

Chairman Roseman recited the open public meetings language: "Notice of this meeting was given by providing the location, time and date of the meeting by posting same on the bulletin board in Borough hall, delivering copies to the Home News Tribune, and filing a copy with the Metuchen Borough Clerk."

Chairman Roseman and Commissioners Massey and Defoe were present for this meeting.

Mr. Jahr talked about the history leading to this meeting. The Parking Authority's lots were described as deficient in the number of accessible spaces provided. Balancing accessible space with other community interests is needed. Copies of Mr. Jahr's December 18, 2015 report were distributed. There may be locations where a greater than required number may be desirable. Metuchen is committed to meeting accessibility needs. The response will be community driven through outreach. Main Street Metuchen was identified as needing accessible parking. This will benefit the entire community, young and old. A target number of accessible spaces could be tweaked up or down depending on community needs. NJ Transit has numbers on how many handicap riders use their services. Improvements should be done one step at a time over a course of years, rather than trying to accomplish everything at once. Department of Justice enforces federal requirements. Snow and ice should not be allowed to interfere with accessible spaces. Mr. Jahr complimented the snow removal efforts in Metuchen with the January 23 blizzard.

Solutions and funding sources needed to be determined and identified. Federal guidelines encourage planning for accessibility. Having a reasonable plan carries a lot of weight with federal authorities. Downtown businesses and transportation hubs should follow parking lots. The sidewalks were criticized for lack of safety by an attendee with "drop foot syndrome." She asked if there was a model for this. Tree roots lifting up sidewalks are a hazard. Many communities have a pavement management report providing assessments of needed repairs. Sidewalk management reports do the same thing. Such a report for Metuchen is desirable. Encouraging homeowners to maintain their own sidewalks would be helpful. At some point, the Borough needs to address the problems after parking lots and transportation hubs are completed.

The size of the audience turnout was questioned. Greater public input was viewed as desirable. Mr. Jahr anticipates that others will join in the process during the several years that this process will take. Train station issues were raised. Metuchen may be able to get more funding sources than NJ Transit. It was noted that an elevator was provided by Transit at Edison.

Increased community involvement was again questioned. A communication project was expected to engender town-wide support. Putting an accessible space in front of Brewed

Awakening would not be appropriate. Mr. Jahr thought that Metuchen's communication protocol and the Borough website were adequate to the task of informing the community.

Commissioner Massey asked about design challenges prompting Mr. Jahr to discuss physical limitations like sidewalk size. Cutting into sidewalks for accessibility needs was described. Van accessible spaces were discussed. The process was said to be an art rather than an exact science. Mr. Jahr said that accessible spaces would be considered block by block but balanced by an overview of the downtown area. An attendee voiced the opinion that Metuchen was 25 years behind its obligation to provide accessible spaces on Main Street. Putting such spaces on Main Street was urged to be done immediately. Mr. Jahr suggested June 1, 2016 was a reasonable time to design for those spaces. Another attendee said that people who used these spaces are also customers of downtown businesses.

Mr. Roseman committed the support of the Parking Authority in this effort. He noted that the downtown area contained 50 spaces and it was only a question of how quickly it could be done.

Mr. Jahr commented that bicycling was part of the discussion and connecting Metuchen with the surrounding community of Edison was part of the considerations. Mr. Roseman raised the problem of NJ Transit riders being dropped off and picked up at the station and whether a plan of improvement could be addressed. Mr. Jahr observed that everyone's needs have to be considered and we should not just focus on any single issue. Mr. Jahr saw the solution to morning congestion at the train station was eliminating parking on the south side of the station.

Mr. DeFoe asked if it was appropriate to ask handicapped commuters about their limitations and where they wished to park. Ms. Rubin advised that such questions could only be asked after providing a permit. The sale could not be conditioned upon their status.

A time frame for the plan was urged. Mr. Grayzel thanked Mr. Jahr for his presentation and concluded the event.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Thomas Crownover