

METUCHEN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
Borough Hall
April 6, 2011

Attendees: J. Sabatino-Falkenstein—Chairperson: D. Rasmussen—Council Liaison; K. Donahue, G. Gelber, M. Govender, L. Griffith, A. Gatling, L. Hendricks-Wong, J. Rabinowitz

Chairperson Sabatino-Falkenstein called the meeting to order at 8PM and asked for approval of the March 3, 2011 minutes. Jon Rabinowitz moved that the minutes be approved and it was seconded by Audrey Gatling.

OLD BUSINESS:

Council liaison Dorothy Rasmussen gave an update of “A Taste of Metuchen.” The commission had talked about doing something along the lines of “restaurant week or restaurant night” and having it done in conjunction with “Junebug.” However, it was reported, the Chamber of Commerce expressed interest in keeping “Junebug” as a separate event. The Chamber is sponsoring a Wednesday and Thursday Prix Fixe restaurant week for the month of April, so plans for a Development Commission sponsored Restaurant Week are now on hold. Jon Rabinowitz and Laura Griffith met with Constantine at the Metuchen Inn to get some ideas as Constantine had been involved in Princeton with something like this. The idea of having a progressive restaurant night with perhaps two tracks, one for casual dining and one for fine dining was discussed. This would be like having a progressive dinner where one moves from one place to the other, with different courses being served at different restaurants. Right now this is just in the discussion stage.

OPEN HOUSE METUCHEN:

Council liaison Dorothy Rasmussen spoke about meeting with the landlords in town to run the “Open House Metuchen” idea through with them. Showcasing what is available in town to prospective business owners is essential to this theme. Jon Rabinowitz presented us with “Assessing Metuchen Government for Business.” We will look this over as it will be distributed to prospective “buyers.” After any changes are made by us, they are to be sent back to Jon.

We discussed the number of stores leaving town and thought it appropriate to talk to landlords to see why they’re leaving. At the same time, it’s necessary to find out what incoming businesses would work.

M. Govender introduced the idea about getting restaurant information to Raritan Center. Gideon Gelber suggested we put together a brochure to be distributed to places like Raritan Center and Metro Park businesses to try and drum up restaurant business here in town. Clients could be taken to restaurants here as we have much to offer. Ms. Rasmussen suggested that this is a chamber issue but she will first talk with Councilwoman Sheri Rubin about this.

MARKET DAY METUCHEN:

Gideon Gelber and Sheri Rubin researched potential clients and put together a survey that determines who goes to the farmers market. Gideon is happy to report that this year 6 vendors will be coming and that Market Day will be held on the corner of Pearl and New Street by the Parking Authority building which has electricity.

REVISION OF METUCHEN BROCHURE:

Kevin's update tells us that we are still waiting for a full report of the census data. It was also suggested we look at the Edison brochure about their town.

NEW BUSINESS:

MEETING WITH MAYOR AND BOROUGH PLANNER:

Ms. Rasmussen said that Sheri Rubin met with Jim Constantine and Mayor Vahalla and gave both information on heights. They requested a graphic, which Gideon Gelber has volunteered to do.

GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL IN THE B1 & D1

The mayor has requested the Development Commission to consider ground floor residential buildings in this district. Right now the current spaces are mixed use. Mayor Valhalla wants us to consider low rise residential units with entrances close to the sidewalk.

In addition, M. Govender mentioned the Barclay Open in August in which many people will be coming through town on the way to the Plainfield Country Club. He suggested we think about how we could get prospective customers aware of restaurants in Metuchen so they could eat in our town.

Due to illness, I had to leave the meeting at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Hendricks-Wong