

**Metuchen Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
June 1, 2011**

**Attendees:** JoAnn Sabatino-Falkenstein, Jon Rabinowitz, Gideon Gelber, Kevin Donahue, Laura Griffith, Jack Altman, Audrey Gatling, Bonnie Silverman, Council Liaison Dorothy Rasmussen and Councilman Jay Muldoon. **Not in attendance:** Munsamy Govender, Lynn Hendricks-Wong

Meeting called to order at 8:09pm by Chairwoman Sabatino-Falkenstein. Minutes for the May meeting were reviewed and minor changes were suggested, minutes were then approved.

JoAnn attended the Environmental Commission meeting and reviewed the agenda. Display of Sports Plex was reviewed. Solar Technology will reduce their electric bill.

Greenway is being cleaned for an opening next year.

Bonnie Silverman announced her resignation from the Development Commission due to her heavy schedule.

Jon is working on the *Opening of Business in Metuchen* brochure and he will forward a copy to each member when updates are finished for any additional comments.

Gideon mentioned that if you want to tear down a building in Metuchen, the checklist is not available until you apply for a permit. The building Permit process is cumbersome and needs revision. This is what the business owners mean when they say it's tough to open a business in Metuchen.

Kevin stated that the municipal ordinances need to be revised to streamline the process. Laura asked if the process is boro ordinances or individual departmental standards?

Councilman Muldoon says we have a list of steps that are carved out by Ordinance. Council Liaison Rasmussen suggested that maybe we need to retrain the personnel in the boro offices.

JoAnn suggested that the checklists should be made readily available.

Audrey asked if the email addresses for the boro be incorporated into the brochure? Jon says that should be up to the departmental personnel. Gideon suggested business cards.

JoAnn and Gideon attended the council meeting where an ordinance for Ground Floor Residences was discussed. The ordinance was passed around for member review.

Boro Planner Jim Constantine was invited to tonight's meeting but was unavailable to attend.

Discussion on the Ground Floor Ordinance:

Gideon brought up 3 issues in connection with rental apartments.

1. Building conversion to create rental apartments
2. Economics - rental vs. condo
3. Longterm maintenance

The rationale is that more residents equals more business to downtown.

Mayor Vahalla joined the meeting at 9:00pm

Councilman Muldoon asked if we could focus this on new construction and Jim Constantine said no, we can't restrict this to only new construction. Design standards would address this.

The Mayor stated that they would have to go to the the Technical Review Committee for approval.

Jon - if we reconsider building, how is parking affected. Mayor - Bike shop, for example, is grandfathered in.

Have to go to planning board for approval. Assignments are made with the Parking Authority for spaces in the Pearl Street lot (ex. What's the Scoop)

Additional standards for ground floor apartments resulted in a lengthy discussion centered around Parking, Live/Work, New Construction, Rentals, and Property Maintenance.

Laura asked if the Development Commission could make a recommendation regarding Property Maintenance? Jon - property maintenance is a separate issue not for this Ordinance.

Laura would like to look into Property Maintenance to be added to the Ordinance and recommends that we address Rental Property Maintenance.

JoAnn mentioned that ZipCar is interested in doing business at the Metuchen Train Station and is waiting for information from ZipCar. This timeshare auto concept is good for business.

More discussion regarding the Ordinance to follow at future meetings.

Gideon made a motion to adjourn - seconded by Laura.

Meeting adjourned at 10pm.

Next Development Commission Meeting will be Wednesday, July 6, 2011 at 8pm, Boro Hall.

Respectfully submitted by  
Jack Altman