

METUCHEN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
Borough Hall
May 4, 2011

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

Chairperson J. Sabatino-Falkenstein called the meeting to order at 8:10PM and asked for approval of the April 6, 2011 minutes. K. Donahue moved that the minutes be approved, and it was seconded by Audrey Gatling.

OLD BUSINESS:

REVISION OF METUCHEN BROCHURE - “A GUIDE TO OPENING A NEW BUSINESS IN METUCHEN, *Accessing Metuchen Government for Business*”

The commission reviewed the brochure put together by Kevin, and it was suggested to include web site URLs and phone numbers to make it more accessible--formatting will be done later. Kevin stated that the 2010 census data will not be available for several months for inclusion in the brochure.

BARCLAY OPEN

Promoting Metuchen at the Barclay Open, held in August, will not be done by the Development Commission.

GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL IN THE B1 & D1

No street side garage doors, which we prefer.

- Push F1 residential.
- Gideon suggests: business, and lower density.
- we should look at the following studies for high density housing:
 - Franklin Square
 - Central Square
 - Redfield Village
- Prefer only owners, not renters.
- 2 – 3 stories as a walkup for ground floor residential.

Gideon suggested that a study be done to determine the places we have at our disposal. We also need to know how much it costs to be a resident of Metuchen and to educate a child in Metuchen.

NEW BUSINESS:

EARTH DAY - 5/7/11

JoAnn will attend Earth Day this Saturday, and a recap will be presented to us at our next meeting for those who can not attend.

BUSINESS SUMMIT MAYOR AND BOROUGH PLANNER:

Ms. Rasumssen reported the on Business Summit with Business Landlords.

In attendance:

Mayor Thomas Vahalla	Stanley Lease
Helene Zahn	Eric Berger
Sheri Rubin	Ernest Docs
Maggie Cook (Metuchen Chamber of Commerce)	

Businesses' Feedback:

1. Too many small businesses are here.
2. Not a business friendly town perception (i.e. government regulations with trying to open a business, and like getting a building permit).
 - Note: a brochure is being made to help bypass this problem for potential business owners. The brochure will also be given to real estate agents.
3. Too much time to open their businesses, and too long to get approvals.

Most people opening new businesses are by unemployed people, and need to open quickly. (Directive 14 will help with that).

Gideon suggested that the Architect do inspections for non-new buildings (renovations) to dramatically speed up the approval process, as inspired by Directive 14, successfully performed in New York city. Laura wanted to know how this approach works in similarly small towns.

We will let the mayor know about it.
4. Business people not in favor of Ground Floor.

Commission's Response to Businesses' Feedback:

Advertising - it was asked how they advertise their properties.

Property List – a good idea, we would like for the Chamber of Commerce to assemble a property listing, with descriptions, so that prospective businesses will know of availabilities.

-Property upkeep and maintenance as well as cleanliness are issues with some unoccupied businesses:

-it was suggested that we pose the question to landlords with vacant properties 'what are their plans to keep up their properties'.

- 'who should be called and whose responsibility it is to enforce the code' to be posed to the Zoning Board, next week.

-Code – does Zoning have suggestions to our code, and can they give us specific recommendations.

-Outside Regulatory firm - it was asked why we have an outside regulatory firm.

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Kevin, seconded by Laura and unanimously carried by all present.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 1 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Gatling