

**Minutes of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee Regular Meeting
July 27, 2023**

**Metuchen Borough Hall
500 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Metuchen, New Jersey**

Chair Nancy Zerbe called the July 27, 2023, regularly scheduled meeting of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) to order at 7:46 p.m. The chair announced that the Borough of Metuchen had posted public notice of the meeting in accordance with New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act.

Attendance: Lori Chambers, Brian Keenan, Bill McDuffie, Lisa Michaloski, Nancy Zerbe; and Tyler Kandel (council liaison) via phone conference

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Review of Minutes: Review of the June 22, 2023, minutes was tabled due to lack of a quorum. The June minutes will be reintroduced at the August 24, 2023, meeting.

Section 106 Review

Edgar Middle School parking lot repaving project: As part of a Section 106 review required under the project's HUD grant, the HPC responded to a request from the borough to comment on the proposed project's effect on historic resources. Nancy Zerbe, having drafted and provided the letter based on the HPC's discussion at the June HPC meeting, shared it with committee members. In that letter, the HPC indicated that the project is not likely to affect historic properties that are listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Preservation Basics

Nancy Zerbe introduced an idea to share at each meeting a few basic tenets of historic preservation and of members' areas of expertise. To begin the series, Nancy shared the following:

Levels of historic designation: Historic designations can be made at the local, state, and national levels. A national designation provides a degree of protection only from federal takings. Historic designation on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places provides a degree of protection from state, county, or municipal actions. Municipal designation under a local historic preservation ordinance is the only tool for providing protection from private undertakings.

Roles of a historic preservation commission: Historic preservation commissions (or comparable organizations) are organized at all levels of government. In New Jersey, historic preservation commissions and ordinances are authorized and regulated under the state's Municipal Land Use Law. Among the responsibilities of a local commission in the state:

- Maintaining a survey of historic properties within the municipality
- Evaluating / recommending properties that are most important to preserve / designate
- Reviewing applications / permits and issuing or recommending certificates of appropriateness
- Advising the local planning board and zoning board on development applications affecting locally designated historic properties

- Providing general information and educational opportunities to the community

New Jersey Historic Trust Grant

Grant administration: Nancy Zerbe shared the following updates on the grant funding our draft historic preservation ordinance:

- Quarterly report information provided by the HPC to Linda Koskoski, borough project manager, on July 11, 2023
- Copy of borough council's resolution to hire Barton Ross and signed contract to retain his services provided by the HPC to Linda on July 24, 2023

Review of specific topics in draft ordinance: Members discussed ways to make the draft ordinance less cumbersome for users, including changes to content and language of specific topics with an eye toward user-friendliness; Nancy will review other towns' ordinances for guidance. Members also discussed ways the committee can assist borough employees with the workload of administering an ordinance.

Public Outreach: Promoting Historic Preservation

Committee members provided updates on efforts to foster public appreciation of Metuchen's historic resources and build public support for our historic preservation efforts, including these initiatives:

Historic District Signs: Members reviewed and discussed eight sketches created by Steve Patrick for signs marking the Middlesex Avenue-Woodwild Park Historic District; members selected #1 for pricing. Tyler Kandel will ask Melissa Perilstein to price out the selected design.

Constituency Building: Members agreed to reach out to interested friends and neighbors with invitations to attend our next meeting as a first step in educating members of the public.

Other Business

Brian Keenan volunteered to organize digital invitations to our meetings going forward.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Lori Chambers, HPC Secretary

2023 Meetings

Aug 24
Sept 28
Oct 26
Nov 30