

**Minutes of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee Regular Meeting  
June 22, 2023**

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

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Chair Nancy Zerbe called the June 22, 2023, regularly scheduled meeting of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) to order at 7:37 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:** Suzanne Andrews, Lori Chambers, Brian Keenan, Alex Malvone, Bill McDuffie, Steve Patrick, Nancy Zerbe; and Tyler Kandel (council liaison)

**Public Comment:** No members of the public were present.

**Review of Minutes:** The minutes of the May 4, 2023, special meeting with Mayor Jonathan Busch were reviewed; Brian Keenan/Alex Malvone (M/S/C, unanimous) to approve. The minutes of the May 18, 2023, regular meeting were reviewed; Brian Keenan/Alex Malvone (M/S/C, unanimous) to approve.

**Consultation with Borough Project Manager**

Linda Koskoski attended the meeting in her capacity as borough project manager to discuss issues relevant to the HPC, as follows:

*Edgar Middle School parking lot repaving project:* As part of a Section 106 review required under the project's HUD grant, Linda inquired if the HPC could provide a letter attesting that the project will not disturb any known historic resources. Having earlier consulted with the state's historic preservation office, Nancy Zerbe proposed appropriate content and offered to draft the letter; Suzanne Andrews/Brian Keenan (M/S/C) to approve.

*NJHT grant updates:* Linda reported that on May 31 the NJHT finance subcommittee recommended an extension of our grant deadlines; the recommendation now goes to the full committee. If the extension is approved, work/spending will be extended to February 2024, and administrative tasks to February 2025. Linda advised that some grant funds remain unspent; she will follow up with Nancy on the specific dollar amount.

**Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance**

Tyler Kandel confirmed that the HPC can continue to revise the draft ordinance through to its final version, as the borough council has discussed the draft ordinance only as a general concept. To that end, Nancy will email the current draft ordinance to committee members for review, comments, and questions with the goal of achieving a final, more user-friendly version.

**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:* Steve Patrick presented examples of signs marking historic districts and raised questions about parameters for our own signs. Tyler advised that the HPC should develop our own

design/proposal that he can share with Melissa Perilstein for her advice. Steve volunteered to create some sketches for the committee's consideration.

*Facebook:* Lori Chambers presented an editorial plan for promoting the Woodwild Park–Middlesex Avenue Historic District via a series of Facebook posts. The HPC agreed to approve in advance three Phase I (general) posts with Nancy's review of Lori's text.

*FAQs/Talking Points:* Brian Keenan presented a list of questions Metuchen residents are likely to ask about the proposed ordinance. Committee members suggested ways to address the questions and took the opportunity to clarify their own understanding of the ordinance. Brian, with the assistance of the HPC, will continue to build out the preliminary list into FAQs and talking points.

*Constituency Building:* Committee members discussed the need to build a community of pro-preservation allies and supporters, starting with interested friends and neighbors. Nancy presented a compilation of potential supporters who have commented on historic preservation issues on Facebook. Nancy has begun reaching out to representatives of peer towns that have successfully introduced ordinances in their community, including a colleague from Maplewood, for insights and suggestions.

### **Other Business**

Nancy provided a brief update on the public readings of the proposed Expanded Metuchen Arts District Redevelopment Plan.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Lori Chambers, HPC Secretary

### **2023 Meetings**

July 27  
Aug 24  
Sept 28  
Oct 26  
Nov 30