

METUCHEN ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES from December 1st, 2021

Borough Council Liaison: Sheri-Rose Rubin

Present:

Members:

Jennifer Asprocolas, Michael Geschlecht, Rena Kallman, Sheri Rose Rubin, Wesley Brooks, Robin Brown, Todd Pagel, Cathy Ostermueller (Senior Center Liasian), Pat Kay Audra Sbarra (Chair),

Absent: Dave Kallman

Public in attendance: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

Project Updates/Recruitment for 2022

- Sheri noted that she has participated in several long-term projects in the borough surrounding an organization called Sustainable Jersey.
- This project involves towns to take a look at their committees and comparing demographics in the town.
- It was noted that while not all information could be gathered, a recommendation was made to over hall/restructure the commissions and be a more inclusive place for all.
- The above said the group will take a different approach and redo its current charter. The mayor has proposed having some of the members staying on as an advisory group and open the seats to new official members (term appointed) fill in the three-year seats as the current members terms expire over the next two years.

- Robin asked on how it would be best to recruit new members. Sheri noted social media as well as flyers/emails and announcements in different town groups would be used to do this.
 - Pat noted that many people in town do not necessarily know what an accessibility does and may make it difficult to find volunteers though this is an issue across the community.
 - It is possible that the committee will propose a name change in the future.
 - Audra noted that Metuchen is much more than the residents. There are many people in town from teachers/administrators to business owners and occupational therapists to join and provide a different perspective to the group. Increased social media presence will help significantly with this.
 - Rena raised question as to how accessibility will be accommodated with the new Forum Theater. At this point, it is too soon for public comment on the next phase, but the group will have a voice when the time comes.
 - Todd noted concern that it may be difficult to get new people in a group if voices are not heard. While social media is a good platform to express a thought, it is also important to keep a physical presence as well to make the borough a more inclusive place for all.
 - Robin noted the committee's many accomplishments from the accessible playground, to curve cuts, Community Conversations Shout Out for Inclusion and parking spaces though there needs to be a specific project or projects for the future.
 - Audra also noted that members need to have specific tasks to complete and know exactly when the deadline is.
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- Mike noted that the front door to the library does not work. After speaking with the staff, the door manufacturer was emailed though it has still not yet been fixed. The door coming in from the outside does not work.

- Robin noted that it may be best to have a meeting with DPW to discuss the specific reason as to why the door is not working.
- A meeting will occur with DPW and Library staff tomorrow to discuss this further.
- Todd proposed that a potential name change may be the “Accessibility and Aging Commission” going forward though this will need to be approved by the group.
- Robin echoed that an important focus in town is aging in place in terms of staying in town and something all will have to deal with.
- If the group also has an advisory board, it will have to reflect both entities.

Next meeting is Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 8:00 PM on Zoom. The advisory group will be formed and new members will be appointed.