METUCHEN ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES from October 27, 2021

Borough Council Liaison: Sheri-Rose Rubin

Present:

Members:

Jennifer Asprocolas, Michael Geschlecht, Rena Kallman, Dave Kallman, Wesley Brooks, Robin Brown, , Cathy Ostermueller ( Senior Center Liasian), Audra Sbarra (Chair),

.

Absent: Todd Pagel, Pat Kay

Public in attendance: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

* Sheri noted that it may be time to change the mission of the committee in terms of accessibility in the borough.
* It is proposed to figure out whether the committee has an overall purpose moving forward. It is possible that some members can also merge with the Human relations commission or disbanding the group all together.
* Robin noted that the committee will need a new liaison to the Human Relations Commission.
* Jen thanked Sheri for all of her and the group’s hard work, but noted that the focus of the group must change to continue.
* Rena noted that it took a long time for the committee to form and that the town still needs a voice for new locations such as the arts center and thus it is very important to exist as a sounding board. In other words, look at the role of the group differently in terms of having a voice.
* Robin noted the important projects done by the group such as SOFI awards and the accessible playground and that some of the projects should continue. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, the committee will look at how to continue with some of the projects.
* Rena offered to continue to assist with the Shout Out for Inclusion (SOFI) if it were to continue.
* Michael noted that the switch of the front door in the library is broken and needs to be fixed and has been broken since the summer. He also noted that many businesses are supportive of the group’s effort and it is crucial to figure out the focus of the group.
* Audra noted that there has been a lack of dialogue between members in between meetings and in order to have a voice the committee must work as a group. The conversation series this year was a success though the group will need to reinvent itself.
* Audra also noted that many members terms are expiring this year and the need to change is also based on the needs of the community.
* It may be necessary to do a needs assessment for the borough but how exactly this would be done is unclear.
* Sheri noted that through the community conversations, it is tough to find a specific community of people interested in helping with disabilities.
* Robin noted this issue is systemic beyond the borough of Metuchen.
* The challenge is finding projects to hold attention.
* Dave noted it may be a good idea to keep an inventory as to each member’s purpose.

**Last Meeting will be Wednesday December 1st, 2021 at 8:00 PM via Zoom**