

**Minutes of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee Regular Meeting
October 22, 2020**

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

Chair Nancy Zerbe called the October 22, 2020, regularly scheduled meeting of the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) to order at 7:40 p.m.; the meeting was held virtually due to COVID-19.

Attendance: Suzanne Andrews, Lori Chambers, Richard Miller, Thomas Mullins, Steven Patrick, Nancy Zerbe; Todd Pagel (council liaison); and Chris Cosenza (borough planner)

Public Comment: Matt Meoni attended briefly to inquire about the committee's work in relation to indigenous peoples.

Review of Minutes: The minutes of the December 5, 2019, regular meeting were reviewed; Richard Miller/Nancy Zerbe (M/S/C, unanimous) to approve. The minutes of the February 28, 2020, regular meeting were reviewed; Suzanne Andrews/Steve Patrick (M/S/C, unanimous) to approve. (*Note:* No meetings were held from March through September due to COVID-19.)

Ongoing Business

New Jersey Historic Trust Grant: The borough submitted the grant application for professional assistance with the development of a draft historic preservation ordinance for Metuchen; the deadline had been extended to June 1. Nancy Zerbe obtained a letter of interest from a consultant and shared it with the New Jersey Historic Trust as a supplement to the grant application. (The letter of interest does not constitute a commitment by any party.)

Historic Preservation Element of the Municipal Master Plan: With a final draft of the element nearing completion, the following items were discussed:

- *Section 5.1 Master Plan Elements:* Chris Cosenza continues with revising this section to include analyses of the interactions of historic preservation with all other elements of the municipal master plan.
- *Section 8.0 Action Plan + Agenda:* Chris said we might want to add an action item to encourage the borough council to implement the tax abatement program that is authorized under the borough's designation as "an area in need of rehabilitation." As presented at the time of adoption, this program could be an effective tool to encourage the rehabilitation of Metuchen's older houses.
- *Section 9.0 Appendix:* The multiple lists of buildings previously evaluated as part of past surveys have been compiled into one list that has been moved from the body of the document itself and placed into the Appendix. Data on demolished properties has been compiled and placed in *Section 6.4*. (It was noted, as an aside, that approximately 120 houses have been demolished in the past seven to eight years, 20 in the past three months alone.)
- *Photographs:* Nancy Zerbe, Steve Patrick, and Richard Miller worked together to obtain higher-quality photographs that a.) illustrate a greater variety of architectural styles and geographic locations within the borough; and b.) have a greater relevance to the key points of the element.
- *Review and Feedback:* Chris Cosenza will share the draft element as a Google doc for committee members to review and provide feedback. Committee members agreed to complete their reviews by Thanksgiving.

Historic District Signage: The committee agreed to re-visit this project when work on the historic preservation element is complete.

Public Outreach Video Project: The committee agreed to re-visit this project when work on the historic preservation element is complete.

New Business

No new business was introduced.

Old Business

No old business was discussed.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lori Chambers, HPC secretary

2020 Meeting Schedule

December 3*

*Change to regular schedule