

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle
Special Workshop Meeting: Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday – May 4, 2010 – 6:30 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: City Administrator Cathryn Thomas

Agenda

1. Discussion concerning the Banks Building and a proposal to transfer ownership to the Trustees of the New Castle Common, including discussion of the current zoning for the parcel where the building is located.

President Barthel said it is his opinion that Council needs to act to do something about the building in a timely manner. According to the City Charter, the City must approach the Trustees of New Castle Common and MSC simultaneously. He reiterated his opinion that the Trustees are the City's best option and he proposes selling it to them.

Councilperson Petty said it is her view that the City should retain ownership of the building so that it can provide a steady income to the City. The building does not have to be renovated all at once. She brought Council's attention to Ordinance No. 353, which details procedures to be followed. She read the ordinance.

President Barthel said an ordinance can't trump the Charter, the ordinance details procedure if the Council goes onto the open market.

Administrator Thomas said the last time Council looked at this matter she only found one individual willing to appraise the building. The cost at that time for an appraisal was \$5,000.

President Barthel proposed writing a letter to the Trustees and MSC indicating Council's interest in ridding itself of the Banks building.

Councilperson Megginson said the City Council needs to do something with the building and it doesn't have the money. The City has some expenses coming up.

Councilperson Cochran asked if the proposed National Park would be interested.

Administrator Thomas said the National Park Service is not interested in owning buildings.

Councilperson Gaworski said that by the time the City finds the funds the building will be collapsed—it could be 50 years.

Councilperson Petty said the building is not in that bad of shape and is not going to fall down. This building when it is repaired will bring the City revenue. She explained she cannot understand giving it away.

President Barthel said the letter should go to the Trustees and MSC, and in the meantime Councilperson Petty or someone else can see if there are grants available for the City to do the work.

President Barthel said it appears everyone on Council is in agreement with the exception of Councilperson Petty so he will put the letter together.

2. Discussion concerning a proposal to place parking meters at the southwest end of Third Street where the delineated parking spaces are in Battery Park.

President Barthel said it was not his intention to get money from residents, but instead as a way to get some revenue from other people who come into town. He said it should not impact City people at all.

Councilperson Cochran shared some research collected on other communities that have parking meters. He found Bethany Beach collects \$875,000 from meters. Meters range in cost from \$3,000 to \$5,000. He also got figures from Lewes, which brings in a \$252,000 and \$67,000 from fines.

Councilperson Petty asked who would man the meters.

Councilperson Cochran said the numbers presented were the total brought in, the City would have to pay to have someone to man the meters. He suggested also having meters at the tennis courts and down Third Street and on Delaware Street from the Strand down. It would bring revenue in for the City and keep people out who throw things on the ground.

Len Saari, Commodore of the New Castle Sailing Club, brought the Council's attention to the sailing club which uses parking on Third Street when its members are sailing for two- to three-hour sails. The six spots reserved for the club do not handle the number of members on the weekends. He suggested possibilities would be to provide passes for members or longer times at the meters.

Councilperson Gaworski asked who was going to collect the fees and enforce. He said it would take about six people.

President Barthel said the City is already employing part-time bike police so the City could assign some of the duties to them.

Councilperson Gaworski said the meters would be at risk of someone using pipe cutters to steal the meters at night.

Administrator Thomas pointed out the City Council will need to talk with the Trustees regarding any meters in Battery Park.

Councilperson Megginson said he does not like the idea of individual meters.

Council decided to get additional information and investigate the idea further.

3. Discussion concerning a proposal to adopt a “Carry-In/Carry-Out” policy for Battery Park, resulting in the elimination of trash receptacles in the Park.

President Barthel said the City Council received a request from the Battery Park Commission because there have been problems with trash overflowing in the park.

Administrator Thomas said the State has had the policy in effect in every park since the 1990s. The State did a lot of education ahead of time when it first started. The State official said the City should expect that initially some people will leave trash in the park or hide it, etc., rather than carrying it out. But ultimately people will adhere to the policy. The State does have small-bag dispensers. The County has switched over some of its smaller parks but has not done it with the larger parks.

Administrator Thomas said the decision to change the policy in Battery Park would be up to the Trustees.

The City Council concurred with moving ahead with it and to look at it in all City parks.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Dickinson
New Castle City Clerk