

**City of New Castle Delaware  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street, New Castle  
Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 7 p.m.**

**Call to order: 7:00 pm**

**Roll Call:**

Councilperson Megginson  
Council President Ratchford  
Councilperson Petty  
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator  
Donald Reese, Mayor  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor  
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshall  
Daniel Tjaden, Chief of Police

**Approval of Minutes by Date:** 9/4/14 Special Meeting, 9/9/14 Regular Monthly Meeting, 9/11/14 Special Meeting, and 10/2/14 Special Meeting.

Councilperson Petty motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded approval of the minutes without changes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Carlin reported on the balances of the city's accounts as of September 30, 2014. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$3,906,045.57.

Councilperson Megginson motioned to accept the report and Councilperson Vannucci seconded. The council unanimously accepted the report.

**Approval of Staff Reports**

Police Chief Tjaden reported that the Drug Take Back conducted at BJs on September 27<sup>th</sup> was successful netting 88 pounds of unwanted prescription drugs. The New Castle Police Department has been awarded a Federal grant for the purchase of 11 new laptop computers. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, a Hayride will pick up kids in different neighborhoods throughout the City. The police made an arrest resulting in the seizure of 13 bags of heroin, some marijuana and bullets. A burglary investigation resulted in an arrest and recovery of the stolen property.

Councilperson Megginson motioned to accept the report and Councilperson Petty seconded. The council unanimously accepted the report.

### **Council Communications**

Councilperson Megginson provided an update on the Washington and South Street construction project punch lists. A handicap ramp needs to be repositioned to align with the one across the street and one crosswalk needs to be painted.

Councilperson Megginson walked the newly completed Broad Dike trail with Public Works supervisor George O'Neal and found it to be a nice walk with great views. The Bull Hill boat ramp and railings are substantial and expected to be able to withstand strong storms.

While in the Bull Hill neighborhood, he received verbal complaints about the height of the weeds on public land behind the houses. Councilperson Megginson advised the residents that it is Trustee not City land. The people trying to sell property feel the high weeds have a negative impact on potential buyer interest. Councilperson Megginson stated that the Trustees are in violation of the City ordinance that requires that the weeds be cut at least three times per year and be no higher than eight inches. He believes that the City should either enforce or remove the ordinance.

Councilperson Vannucci has also received complaints about the height of the weeds and believes they need to be cut on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and in Dobbinsville.

### **Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)**

None

### **Business from the Mayor**

The Mayor met with Mr. Bergstrom to make sure his house is not in floodplain and encouraged everyone to contact him to determine the status of their house.

The City received five free crepe myrtle trees for Arbor Day.

Mayor Reese acknowledged the coast-to-coast ride of a city resident's daughter to benefit the Michael J Fox Parkinson's Foundation. Donations are still being accepted.

The Mayor is looking forward to the removal of the road construction signs for South and Washington Streets.

### **Business from the City Council President**

President Ratchford congratulated the committee and volunteers on the success of the River Towns Ride & Festival.

### **Old Business**

**Vote on Ordinance 499** FEMA Floodplain Ordinance to revise and restate Chapter 130 of the City Code.

The Motion to approve Ordinance 499 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford announced that a public hearing was held this evening just prior to the regular monthly City Council meeting. The ordinance was read during the September City Council meeting and is posted on the City web site.

Ordinance 499 passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

#### **WILMAPCO presentation of 2040 Regional Transportation Plan Update.**

President Ratchford introduced Dave Gula, Principal Planner for WILMAPCO. He presented a summary of the regional transportation plan which is updated every four years.

WILMAPCO is the regional planning agency for transportation. The organization works with communities, the federal government and DelDOT. The WILMAPCO Council has representatives from both Delaware and Maryland.

The current plan expires March 2015 and a new plan will be adopted. Mr. Gula reviewed the proposed goals and objectives for 2040, progress tracked through 2014 and challenges for the region. WILMAPCO reviews various scenarios for growth in land use and the impact on transportation. The forecast for New Castle capital improvement funding indicates an expected decrease.

Mr. Gula encouraged everyone to follow WILMAPCO's progress as they develop and publish the next four year plan.

President Ratchford thanked WILMAPCO for assistance provided to the City. She asked for clarification of unfunded vs. constrained projects. "Constrained" projects are funded and impact federal air quality requirements.

#### **Request from New Castle Historical Society to close a portion of Delaware Street for Spirit of Christmas, on Saturday, December 13, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

The request was withdrawn by the New Castle Historical Society.

#### **Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-54, to deem certain portions of South Street, between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, across from the Tennis Courts as no parking zones.**

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-54 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

Councilperson Megginson commented that the intersection of South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets can only accommodate one car and Goodwill Fire Company has difficulty getting equipment through.

Chief Tjaden agrees with restricting parking in the area for safety.

Valerie Windle asked about the impact on parking for the residents on South Street.

The City Administrator commented that increased parking is in progress for the area of the tennis courts.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-54 passed unanimously.

### **Comments from the Floor**

Students from the University of Delaware introduced themselves. They came to listen for a public policy class.

Alice Jarvis, 15 The Strand – Ms. Jarvis is concerned about the impact of the need for flood insurance to residents whose homes have just been added to the floodplain. She commented that the rates can't be raised more than 15% per year. Her concern is that these people may not know that they need the insurance and is hoping the City can contact homeowners to alert them. Mr. Bergstrom reported that everyone got a letter if their property's status will change. Certified letters are going out. President Ratchford asked the press to make the information known and the City Administrator to make sure the information is posted on the City web site and included in the next newsletter.

Dorsey Fiske, East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – Ms. Fiske encouraged the City to get concepts on how to protect the entire City coastline from a coastal engineering firm. She asked if the council has reviewed the New Castle Marketing Analysis provided by Alice Jarvis. President Ratchford replied that she had reviewed with Ms. Jarvis. Ms. Fiske asked if the requirement to post public meetings applies to the parking subcommittee and response was that they are posted.

**The motion to adjourn** was made by Councilperson Petty, seconded by Councilperson Vannucci and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 8 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel  
Clerk of the City of New Castle