

**City of New Castle Delaware  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street, New Castle  
Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at 7 p.m.**

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

**Roll Call:**

Councilperson Megginson  
Councilperson Cochran  
Council President Ratchford  
Councilperson Petty  
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

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

**Approval of Minutes by Date:** 11/11/2014 Regular Meeting

Councilperson Vannucci motioned and Councilperson Petty 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 November 30, 2014. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$3,343,672.60.

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

**Business from the City Administrator**

City Administrator Barthel reported that the City continues to work aggressively to foreclose on abandoned properties and those with delinquent taxes. Two properties were sold at the New Castle County Sheriff's Sale earlier today.

**Approval of Staff Reports**

Chief Tjaden reported that an arrest was made for the murder that recently occurred in the City. They have overwhelming evidence and all persons that were in the car are charge with 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder. They are also charged with three additional murders that occurred in Wilmington.

Officer Tina Shughart is leading the effort to collect toys and is continuing to make plans for the Christmas party that will be part of the Spirit of Christmas on Saturday, December 13.

Councilperson Megginson motioned and Councilperson Petty seconded approval of the staff reports as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Grant Review**

Councilperson Cochran reported on grant receipts for the month of November.

### **Council Communications**

Councilperson Vannucci reported that the police department will adopt twelve families for Christmas. Anyone that would like to suggest a family should contact Pat Coulbourn at the Police Department.

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, Councilperson Petty met with the Trustees of Buttonwood United Methodist Church to discuss their concerns about the lack of parking due to new house construction and the movement of dirt. The church is requesting permission to use city-owned property for parking.

Councilperson Petty reported that a fallen tree in a drainage ditch is stopping water from flowing and asks that the City remove it.

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

None

### **Business from the Mayor**

The City will celebrate the Spirit of Christmas this Saturday. Fourteen houses will be open for tours. There is a cost for the Ball and Teas but everything else is free. It will be a great day to show off the town.

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

President Ratchford asked Superintendent Russ Smith to speak about an article in today's *News Journal* about changing the First State National Moment to a National Historical Park. The new designation is intended to showcase Delaware's colonial heritage and role in the signing of the Constitution. In addition to the sites currently included in the National Monument, the Old Swedes Church, the John Dickinson Plantation, Ryves Holt House in Lewes and Fort Christina National Historic Landmark would be added. The major difference is that national monuments are designated by the President and national historical parks are selected by Congress making funding more likely.

President Ratchford encouraged attendance and participation at the HAC Review Committee meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Those that can't attend are urged to provide input.

The Goodwill Fire Company is conducting the first annual CPR class. The class is full but will be held annually. President Ratchford thanked resident Valarie Windle for her suggestion.

### **Diane Laird, State Coordinator for Downtown Delaware presented an overview of the Main Street Program.**

Main Street is a national program to encourage and support the economic development of small towns. Downtown Delaware is a resource center of the Delaware Economic Development Office and leads the State's Main Street program.

The Main Street program believes active planning allows the town to guide the future and shape the downtown. Program participation gives access to the resources of the national organization.

There are two levels of participation in the Main Street program. In Delaware, seven Delaware towns are Designated Main Street Towns. There are also Commercial District Affiliates which is New Castle's level of participation. Downtown Delaware also works directly with business owners.

Ms. Laird explained the Main Street Four Point Approach which includes committees to focus on Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring. The Historic New Castle Alliance is following the Main Street approach on a small scale with one committee. She reviewed the Historic New Castle Alliance's mission, vision and market-based strategies that were developed during strategic planning sessions. The group is building momentum and developing the organization structure to become a designated Main Street community and Ms. Laird believes the organization will soon meet the program requirements.

Ms. Laird reviewed the assistance provided by Downtown Delaware to the commercial district affiliates.

President Ratchford asked about Georgetown that has a Chamber of Commerce as well as other economic development organizations. Ms. Laird talked about the entities involved in economic development in Georgetown which is not a Main Street community.

President Ratchford stated that New Castle has two gateways and the downtown on Delaware Street and asked how do we collaborate? Ms. Laird explained that as a Main Street program, the City would designate the included geographic area and prioritize those areas.

Russ Smith of the First State National Park inquired about strategic planning for Main Street programs. Ms. Laird reported that the Historic New Castle Alliance completed a strategic plan a couple of years ago that resulted in a revised mission, vision and market-based strategies. She recommends revisiting the document every three to five years for relevancy.

Laura Fontana of the HNCA asked how the various organizations including the City government integrate their strategic planning to collaborate. Ms. Laird replied that there should be representatives of the City's organizations on the HNCA Board of Directors that make sure it works together and represents the City broadly.

### **Old Business**

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-56** on agreement with Crown Castle Cellular Tower

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-56 was made by Councilperson Petty and seconded by Councilperson Megginson.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

City Administrator Barthel briefly described the negotiation process.

Resolution No. 2014-56 passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-57**, a Resolution to authorize the City Administrator to enter into an intergovernmental agreement for use of firing range facilities.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-57 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Chief Tjaden described the reason for the need for a firing range for regular firearms requalification of the New Castle police officers and the benefits of this agreement with another municipality.

Resolution No. 2014-57 passed unanimously.

### **Discussion and decision regarding 2015 Summer Camp repeating partnership with New Castle County Camp program.**

City Administrator Barthel reported that the program provided by New Castle County ran smoothly last year and expects the same this year. Councilperson Cochran agrees.

Councilperson Petty doesn't see the advantage of partnering with the County instead of continuing the City-run camp program. She believes the City ran a successful camp for many years.

President Ratchford stated that the County program saved \$17,000 last year and the County has a Parks & Recreation Department that runs the program.

Councilperson Petty stated that the City has operated its own Parks and Recreation for years. She compared the programs noting that the County program is only four days and that there were no field trips provided last year. The same meals provided by the County were also provided during the years that the City ran the camp. Councilperson Petty is not aware of anyone requesting a reduction in costs but believes lower costs can be negotiated.

Councilperson Vannucci believes it is better to have the experienced people of the County operate the camp to reduce the potential liability of working with kids.

Councilperson Petty believes that she is responsible for the summer camp for kids and should have been advised that the City wanted to consider partnering with the County and to reduce the cost.

Councilperson Cochran motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded to have the City partner with the County to again provide a summer camp for kids in 2015.

The motion passed with Councilpersons Megginson, Cochran, and Vannucci and President Ratchford voting for approval of the motion and Councilperson Petty opposing.

**First reading of Ordinance 500;** an Ordinance to revise and restate Chapter 74: The Tree Commission and Chapter 210: Street Trees, of the City Code.

City Administrator Barthel and President Ratchford took turns reading the revised ordinance.

**Discussion and decision regarding Trustee Appropriations.**

President Ratchford reported that the Trustees deadline for applications for funding for 2015 is December 31st. This year, the Trustees provided funding for payments of the storm water project loan of about \$197,000.

This year, President Ratchford recommends requesting approximately \$150,000 for the final three remaining payments of the loan for the storm water drainage improvements and \$50,000 to fund improvements to meet ADA sidewalk accessibility requirements. The President asked for any other suggestions from Council.

Councilperson Cochran expressed agreement with the proposal.

Councilperson Cochran motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded submission of an application to the Trustees for funding of the final three payments of the loan for storm water improvements and \$50,000 for ADA compliance projects. The motion passed unanimously.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-58,** a Resolution giving the City Administrator authority to dispose of City owned floating Dock(s).

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Mr. Bergstrom reported that the DRBA will simultaneously pull the pilings when they pick up the floating docks.

Councilperson Megginson reported that he and Mr. Bergstrom inspected the dock and determined that the planking needs to be replaced and that is best to give them back to the DRBA.

President Ratchford pointed out the floating docks were provided by the DRBA.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-58 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

Resolution No. 2014-58 passed unanimously.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2014-59**, providing a lump-sum pension benefit to one retiree of the City of New Castle.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-59 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-59 passed with Councilperson Petty abstaining.

### **Comments from the Floor**

Marty Wright of 123 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street asked for a response from each member of Council about what they think of the Main Street program as presented by Ms. Laird and it's relation to New Castle as well as how they view the HNCA.

Councilperson Cochran expressed support for the Main Street program and believes they should have starting supporting the organization's efforts a few years back.

Councilperson Megginson stated that the City has to look further at its obligations but believes that New Castle can work with the HNCA on the Main Street program.

Councilperson Petty agreed that the City needs to look into the program for New Castle.

Councilperson Vannucci voiced agreement with the rest of Council.

President Ratchford believes that Main Street is a good program that has benefited the City.

The City needs to explore how it can support economic vitality through further discussions.

The President applauds HNCA's application to convert to a 501©3 organization which will qualify the organization for many additional grants.

**The motion to adjourn** was made by Councilperson Cochran, seconded by Councilperson Petty and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 8:38 pm.

City Council met in Executive Session to discuss personnel issues and a potential litigation matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel  
Clerk of the City of New Castle