

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
February 25, 2013 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: David Bird, Chair
Joe DiAngelo
Dorsey Fiske
Jonathan Justice
Josephine Moore
Florence Smith

Members Absent: Susan Marinelli
Vera Worthy

Also Present: Marian Hull, City Planner

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bird at 6:35 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared.

Review of a proposal (wharf study) received from Duffield Associates to perform detailed engineering, permitting, and other related tasks for the revitalization plan for the City riverfront including a recommendation to be forwarded to City Council – The notice for this item was not posted on the City website or administration building. The Commission will not discuss this matter at this time. The proposal expires before the March Planning Commission meeting, and another date will need to be scheduled. Mr. Bird will check to see if the proposal can be emailed/mailed to Commissioners.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the 1/28/13 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Report on Parking Study

Dr. Joanne Viola reported the Parking Subcommittee met on 2/19/13. They are in the process of analyzing data from over 300 surveys. The committee is doing personal outreach with all businesses on Delaware Street, churches and museums to get their responses. WILMAPCO will tally survey questions and the subcommittee plans to provide a draft report with recommendations on certain issues in time for the March or April Planning Commission meeting.

Work Session on Neighborhood Plan – Ms. Hull used an updated aerial City map to better define boundaries of various neighborhoods that was discussed at the January meeting as well as areas not yet defined. She is looking to possibly combine smaller neighborhoods, but needs input from residents. Issues identified as concerns include sidewalks, adequate traffic lights, lighting, increase in railroad traffic, and enforcement of speed limits, especially near schools.

“Historic New Castle” Sign Placement – Linda Ratchford, Project Leader for the New Castle Way Finding Grant Program and Jean Norvell presented on the placement of directional signage to Historic New Castle. Ms. Norvell has been working with DelDOT

to get recommendations on placement of the signs (30"X60"). Proposed locations were detailed. Signs will be fabricated and installed by DelDOT. They are on the DelDOT right of way, are bigger and more legible. The cost of the signs (\$2,000) will be paid through the grant. Current signage is poor and causes confusion. The signs are "special" signs that must be purchased with private funds (community grant funds). They will be brown which is the color designating historic locations. DelDOT is waiting for final permission to begin the work. Ms. Norvell will check with DelDOT about maintenance of the brown signs, per an inquiry by Mr. Bird. Sign pollution was a concern and discussed. Some green signs will be also be replaced during this process. City Council asked that the group present to this body for a decision. They are prepared to authorize DelDOT to begin the work once the Planning Commission gives approval.

A motion was presented by Mr. Justice to approve the recommended locations of the signs DelDOT has recommended. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Ms. Ratchford raised the issue of truck traffic that was discussed in a prior meeting. Drew Hayes sent a recommendation to DelDOT and they are expected to report back soon.

New Business – Ms. Hull informed the audience that the City has been awarded technical assistance from the EPA to look at issues such as zoning changes and developing an environmental protection overlay in zoning. Both issues are part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Details were provided about the process, including public workshops. Ms. Fiske reiterated that sea level rise be a part of discussions. Work is expected to begin after City elections in April. It is a good opportunity for the public to get involved.

A meeting on remediation for the dikes will take place on 2/26/13 at 6 p.m. in Old Town Hall. *(Lengthy discussion followed.)*

William Simpson has submitted his resignation from the Planning Commission citing work commitments.

Budget – No report.

Next Meeting & Adjournment – The next meeting is scheduled for 3/25/13 at 6:30 p.m. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner
Stenographer