

The New Castle City's Planning Commission Meeting took place on January 26, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.

Members Present: David Bird, Chair*
Bill Simpson, Co-Chair
Joe DiAngelo
Dorsey Fiske
Dr. Jack Norsworthy

Members Absent: Christine Masiello
George Freebery

Staff Present: Marian Hull, URS, City Planner

City Personnel: Jeff Bergstrom, Building Inspector

Mr. Simpson called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Roll call was taken.

*Mr. Bird participated via phone.

Approval of Minutes – Mr. DiAngelo made a motion to accept the 1/5/09 minutes as presented. Dr. Norsworthy seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

21-014.00-396 – 300 West 7th Street -- Commission members received a comment letter from URS at this meeting. Ms. Hull noted they have 13 comments, most of which are administrative that need to be added to the plan for the record. Some of the more substantive issues include the shared driveway, parking access, will there be a homeowner's association, and provisions to make sure access for emergency vehicles isn't blocked. She added that the city's Public Services Department and Goodwill Fire Co. should look at the plan. Other comments included the width and radius of the driveway, entrance permit for the driveway, number of parking spaces per unit, and landscaping. Mr. Carmen Casper, civil engineer with Howard Roberts, Inc., presented the sub-division plan on behalf of the owner. Their plan is to create seven, single-family townhouse lots with parking in the rear. The lower level will house only the garage due to the flood plain. The living areas will be approximately 5-6 feet above the flood level. No utilities will be located on the lower level. Mr. Casper addressed numerous questions from Commission members. The footprint is 20 X 32; square footage is 1,280 living area and the garage is 640 square foot. There is the possibility of making the units larger. *(Additional discussion and questions/answers followed.)*

Dr. Norsworthy moved to approve the subdivision pending the URS conditions are satisfied. Mr. DiAngelo seconded the motion. Roll call vote followed.

Dr. Norsworthy – Yes, pending URS conditions are met.

Mr. DiAngelo – Yes, it goes along with the new zoning and it fits what the City would want.

Ms. Fiske – Yes, pending information that is received.

Mr. Simpson – Yes, pending URS conditions are satisfied. These residences fit in with the area.

Mr. Bird – Abstained because he did not receive the subdivision plans in a timely manner.

The motion to approve the subdivision passed 4-0 with one abstention.

Budget Review – There is nothing to report at this meeting.

General Discussion – Mr. Bird referred to a decision made in Kent County (Planning Commission) involving the roles and responsibilities of planning commissions. He proposed that we invite the city solicitor to our next meeting to review our duties as a planning commission. Ms. Fiske added that she has been trying to make contact with

Doug Tuttle of the Department of Urban Planning at the University of Delaware and have him speak with us along with the city solicitor. The Commission is in favor of such a presentation.

WILMAPCO – Mr. Simpson reported that the Commission received copies of a letter from WILMAPCO (distributed to Commission members this evening) from the Mayor's Office. The letter concerns funding for projects that we would like to see completed. Deadline for completed project requests is 2/20/09. (*Discussion about several projects in the draft Comprehensive Plan [Route 273 and the bypass] followed.*) It is felt that a short-term project will have a better chance for approval. It was also noted that this area may be designated a National Park site that will create additional traffic. Ms. Hull suggested intersection improvements such as Route 9 and Sixth Street that are designed to discourage the traffic flow downtown.

A member of the audience asked when the draft plan will be available for public viewing. Ms. Hull hopes to finish work tonight on a draft of the comprehensive plan for City Council and have that draft on their February Council agenda, receive their approval of that draft for distribution and review, and begin the public review process which includes a public meeting and a public hearing. (*The goals outlined in the comprehensive plan were discussed.*)

Dr. Norsworthy made a motion that we recommend Goal #3 of the draft comprehensive plan as a good strategy and also mention the Hare's Corner intersection (regarding recommendations of the TRIP report). Ms. Fiske seconded the motion. Roll call was taken.

Dr. Norsworthy – Yes.

Ms. Fiske – Yes. She would like the Mayor to mention the bypass in his response.

Mr. DiAngelo -- Yes. He referenced a traffic congestion study citing Route 273 as third out of 25 in the state for traffic jams.

Mr. Simpson – Yes. We can individually go to the Mayor with ideas/suggestions. We need to take the study (TRIP report, June 2007) back to the Mayor also.

The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Comprehensive Plan Update – Ms. Hull reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan and map that was updated and distributed to Commission members prior to this meeting. This update includes most of the comments from the Planning Commission at our last meeting, plus comments from Councilwoman Churchill. (*Extensive discussion, questions and answers about the draft comprehensive plan and map followed.*) Once we get to the public viewing portion we need to have copies available for residents to read. The draft plan will also be put on the City website for review and public comment.

Dr. Norsworthy made a motion to submit the draft comprehensive plan as corrected with our final comments to Council for their review and await their comments. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken.

Dr. Norsworthy – Yes.

Mr. DiAngelo – Yes.

Ms. Fiske – Yes.

Mr. Simpson – Yes.

The motion passes by unanimous vote.

Adjournment – **It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Next Meeting -- Our next meeting is scheduled for 2/23/09 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner
Stenographer

