

The New Castle City's Planning Commission Meeting took place on November 26, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.

Members Present: Dr. Jack Norsworthy, Chair
Jim Steele, Co-Chair
George Freebery
Joe DiAngelo
Bill Simpson
Elliott Tatum

Member Absent: David Bird

Staff Present: Douglas Lloyd, City Planner

City Personnel: Mayor John Klingmeyer

Dr. Norsworthy called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Approval of Minutes – Mr. DiAngelo made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; Mr. Steele seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

Budget Review – Dr. Norsworthy reported that there have been no charges paid out of our budget to date. An inquiry about URS billings against the budget followed. Dr. Norsworthy will check with Ms. Thomas and Mr. Lloyd will follow up with URS to ensure bills are being submitted.

Planning Checklist Review – Dr. Norsworthy informed that he has emailed the checklist to Ms. Thomas and had not received any response. He followed up with a phone call and learned she has not received the email. He asked Mr. Lloyd to email her a copy of the checklist. It is important to receive feedback from Ms. Thomas before utilizing the checklist.

General Discussion

PLUS Meeting – Mr. Lloyd reported that he, Cathie Thomas, David Bird and Matt Christopher met with the State's PLUS Committee recently. We have not yet received a written response from the State; the typical response time is 20 days. We cannot finalize our proposal until we receive the response from PLUS. (*URS has begun to prepare the revised proposal based on going through the checklist from the 2003 plan and isolated areas we feel need to be addressed and/or upgraded. The final version will incorporate the State's comments.*) Mr. Inden of the State Planning Office suggested that we consider a matrix format for action items, prioritize items, and break them down into a timeframe from most urgent to less urgent items. DELDOT's representative commented that there have not been any regulatory changes that would affect the City but talked about changes to the capital plan. He also stated that the Route 9 bypass situation needed to be addressed on existing roads. Mr. Steele added that a traffic study began today on Route 9. DNREC talked about groundwater management and recharge areas. We need to begin thinking about protecting sources of our groundwater. Ms. Thomas mentioned that she expects the City to adopt an ordinance by early 2008 that will address protection of the water quality.

Drainage and storm water management was discussed. The State is upgrading their regulations and expects to have it in place by early 2009. It would be a new storm water approval process for sub-divisions. It was suggested that the City add the storm water drainage approvals and regulations to the City checklist. The Department of Agriculture representative did not think there was interest in agricultural preservation within the City until the Quigley farm was pointed out. He looked into regulations concerning agriculture preservation programs and reported to Ms. Thomas that the farm is not eligible because the program is more inclined to protect farms in farming districts. The last State agency was the State Housing Authority who suggested we look at a document on their website entitled, "A Guide to Writing Your Housing Element," which addresses what civically a comprehensive plan should include. Mr. Lloyd has looked at the document and feels it is helpful. Mr. Steele asked whether a letter had been submitted from the City requesting an extension. Mr. Lloyd was uncertain but added that Mr. Inden did not feel an extension would be a problem. Dr. Norsworthy will follow up with Ms. Thomas. *(Discussion followed concerning the format of the matrix.)* Mayor Klingmeyer expressed concern about incorporating economic, recreation, traffic and socialization elements into the plan. *(Lengthy discussion followed.)*

Mr. Steele noted that they are doing a good job on Washington Street replacing the storm sewer and installing handicap access up 12th Street to 11th Street. He added that it was learned that the existing storm sewer does not have a bottom in them; water goes into the ground. Mr. Lloyd added that DNREC is promoting facilities that allow infiltration of water over a broader area. *(Discussion about open ditches followed.)*

The distribution of meeting agendas and minutes is still an issue and Dr. Norsworthy will speak with Ms. Thomas about the process that is used for dissemination of materials. He will also check on the status of business cards for Commission members.

Mr. Lloyd announced his retirement effective March 2008. He is making the announcement known to allow for a smooth transition with this Commission and the comprehensive plan update process.

Adjournment – **Mr. Simpson made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Steele seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Next Meeting -- Our next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner
Stenographer