

**Planning Commission Meeting for New Castle City took place on
May 24, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.**

Members Present: David Bird, Chair
Joe DiAngelo
Dorsey Fiske

Members Absent: Florence Smith
Bill Simpson, Co-Chair
Vera Worthy
Dr. Jack Norsworthy

City Personnel: Mayor John F. Klingmeyer

City Planner: Marian Hull, URS
Ryan Mawhinney, URS

Mr. Bird called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Roll call was taken. No quorum was present.

Status of Zoning Ordinance Update

Ms. Hull reviewed the package of proposed zoning amendments that were distributed to Commission members. A Joint Planning Commission/City Council Work Session will take place on 6/3/10 at 6:45 p.m. in the public library. The public is invited. A presentation is planned to help attendees digest key issues. They did not address changes to permitted uses in the general commercial district or the amendments to the zoning amendment review process. The latter has been discussed at a former Planning Commission meeting and another work session.

The presentation focuses on the Town Center 1 (Ferry Cut-Off) and Town Center 2 (7th & South Street) and Environmental Protection Overlay District. There was brief discussion about the titles assigned to the two (Town Center) projects. Ms. Hull noted the titles used are suggestions and can be re-titled.

Permitted uses are identical for both districts at this time. This is something we may want to look into. At the public workshop there wasn't much support for entertainment center uses in the Ferry Cut-Off area. Ms. Hull is recommending that automobile serving uses such as gas stations, auto repair, drive-through windows be prohibited in both districts. If such a business currently exists in one of these districts it would be grandfathered in. The reason for this recommendation is because we are trying to create more pedestrian, walkable types of places and automobile servicing businesses would be in conflict. Compromise issues were then discussed.

A great deal of discussion took place by all attendees. Some of the "District" topics discussed were facilitating redevelopment, uses, development standards, building design (height, parking), differences between districts (lot size, front setback, building footprint, building height), design standards (primary entrance, windows, roofs, façade articulation, parking, streetscape).

The second portion of the presentation addressed the proposed Environmental Protection Overlay District (EPOD).

The draft language is intended to work with federal and state regulations and existing City floodplain regulations. Ms. Hull said several other ordinances from Delaware and Maryland were reviewed to pull out relevant issues and ways that they work.

Topics discussed by attendees included areas to be protected and regulated, floodplains and floodways, riparian buffer areas, clearing and reforestation, and other EPOD regulations involving wetlands and drainageways.

She added there is more work to do on EPOD than the Town Center Districts. In order to facilitate quickly it may be necessary to separate the two. She also suggested that it would be a good idea for DNREC to review these plans to make sure we have interpreted properly.

Ms. Hull concluded that this presentation will be revised to reflect input from tonight's discussion and the revised version will be used at the 6/3/10 joint workshop session. The information received at the workshop will be incorporated into the draft information she will provide at the June Planning Commission Meeting.

Parking issues throughout the City were discussed that included ideas about locations for public parking for both residents and visitors.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes will be addressed at the June meeting.

Budget Review – Mr. Bird informed he would like to get technical equipment for presentations (screen, projector) for this building (Old Town Hall). He added including a capital improvement program which would be the next step after revision of the zoning ordinance. A quote would be needed. He provided a copy of a version of a capital improvement program process that he received at the American Planning Association Conference. He asked if it is feasible to have a community workshop where people can sit down and brainstorm about a certain area that may not be City-owned and use that as a springboard for TRAC developers. He offered the City's waterfront area as a possible subject to look at. (*Further discussion about the waterfront followed.*) Mr. Bird would like to provide preliminary figures at the budget hearing on 6/1/10 when the Planning Commission's budget will be addressed. Mayor Klingmeyer said our planning ordinance is outdated and he would like to get information for model ordinances to modernize our version and concentrate more on problems associated with planning.

Commission Member Comments – Ms. Fiske learned from a friend recently that the Wilmington Garden Club is donating a large sum of money to a worthy project outside of Delaware. She questioned her friend why those monies couldn't be directed to the City of New Castle. She also informed there is a movement to make the Delaware River a natural recreation waterway. She will get the information to Mayor Klingmeyer.

Mr. D'Angelo asked if something can't be done about the attendance of members of the Planning Commission. The Mayor said there are currently two vacancies and reappointments to be addressed. Mr. Bird recognizes the problem. (*Discussion followed.*)

New Business -- Mayor Klingmeyer said that Lewes (Delaware) is being designated as a 'Cool City'. He asked Ms. Hull if she is familiar with the designation. She is not.

Next Meeting – The next meeting is scheduled for 6/28/10 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner

Debbie Turner
Stenographer