

MINUTES
New Castle City Planning Commission
Parking Study Sub-Committee Meeting
February 20, 2014 – 4 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: Dr. Joanne Viola, Chair
Jonathan Justice
Gail Seitz
Jim Vincent
Tom Whitehead

Members Absent: Lt. Adam Brams
Andrew Hayes
Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO
Albert Vannucci

Dr. Viola called the meeting to order.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/23/14 meeting. Motion approved.

Communications – None.

OLD BUSINESS

A resolution was passed renaming the Broad Dyke City Parking Area. No action plan until the City looks further at budgeting and permitting considerations.

School bus drop-off – Per City Council, no resolution is needed. The subject falls under ‘protocol’ for school visits to the City. An action plan was discussed.

New Business

Dr. Viola presented two proposals for discussion.

Residential permits and parking issues – Select streets and parking lots to be evaluated for resident-only parking were presented for discussion. An outline and draft map were used as guides.

Resident-only lots – Timing proposals with appropriate signage will need to be discussed. Lots for consideration: Chestnut Street lot, Dalby Alley lot, and Cherry Street lot. A portion of land between 1 The Strand and 2 The Strand belongs to Battery Park (owned by Trustees of the New Castle Common) (Trustees) and could be considered a resident-only lot in the evening.

Some of the streets to consider for residents only on one or both sides –

- East and West Fifth Street is a narrow street. Post office, church and library are on the street.
- Fourth Street – Except for museums, parking could be residents-only except from Foundry to Delaware Streets northbound because of an existing business.
- West Third Street from Delaware Street – Currently residents-only parking on one side.

- Harmony and Chestnut Streets – Mixed use in area; there is parking on both sides.
- Second Street from Bull Hill to Harmony Street.
- Mixed use, visitor/residential parking on Delaware Street – Resident parking only on some streets timed for the evening and visitor/day parking only for lots accessed off Delaware Street for overflow parking and consider as mixed use.

Other streets briefly discussed were Williams Street, Shaw Alley and Second Street. Mr. Whitehead said for a residents-only parking program to work residents with off-street parking should not be granted on-street parking permit. A ‘walk about’ is needed to determine what to include in the proposal.

Trustees need to be consulted before going before the Planning Commission for Second and Chestnut lot, Dalby Alley lot, and the lot behind the post office.

Residential parking permits – The survey revealed residents’ concerns with parking in the downtown area when large events take place in the City, with the National Park Service (NPS) in town, and with residents having available parking. *(A summary of issues and examples of what other municipalities have published was provided to committee members.)* Ms. Seitz noted that approvals to change the name of the parking lot at Second and Chestnut Street to the Fort Casimir parking lot has been granted by the Planning Commission and City Council and signage is being made.

WILMAPCO provided information on eight residential permitting systems. The committee already received information about Chesapeake City, MD and Cape May, NJ. Ms. Seitz provided information on permitting systems used in the communities of Alexandria, VA, Corvallis, OR, and St. Charles, IL.

Issues to consider are time limits, how to deal with non-profit entities in the City (museums, churches), administrative fees, guests, and enforcement. Mr. Vincent said that apartment tenants and bed and breakfast businesses need to be included in the discussion.

Mr. Vincent believes that the NPS will need more than the three (3) handicapped parking places currently in place. He and Mr. Whitehead will draft language dealing with mixed-use parking for residents/visitors/commercial for Delaware Street, including Market and Second Streets. Mr. Whitehead suggested reminding residents to be courteous with one another. Committee members agree but aren’t sure if monthly utility bills is the instrument to use. Mr. Whitehead was invited to prepare language and have it reviewed by City Council before publishing.

Concerning mixed-use on Delaware Street and in the Fort Casimir lot, the group agreed to table more discussion at this time.

Snow removal is presenting problems. Handicap spots are being used for plowed snow. Patrons of churches on Market Street and Second Street are having difficulty finding parking and through traffic is difficult because of plowed snow in parking areas.

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Marianne Caven, West Third Street, questioned if the NPS has plans for parking outside the downtown area, i.e., shuttles outside the historic district. Dr. Viola said that no provision for any such parking is planned from the NPS.

The City has applied for some small funding (Federal Land Access Program) for signage and bike racks. Shovel-ready projects are required for additional funding.

The group agreed to focus on Delaware Street and the historic area. Messrs. Vincent and Whitehead are tasked to lead that effort.

Next meeting will be 3/20/14, 4 p.m. There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer

(Stenographer not present at meeting; minutes prepared from recording.)