

MINUTES
New Castle City Planning Commission
Parking Study Sub-Committee Meeting
October 23, 2014 – 4 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: Dr. Joanne Viola, Chair
Andrew Hayes
Gail Seitz
Albert Vannucci
Tom Whitehead

Members Absent: Lt. Adam Brams
Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO
Jonathan Justice
Richard Robinson, Chief, Good Will Fire Co.
Jim Vincent

Dr. Viola called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the amended 5/22/14 minutes. Motion approved.

Communications (from residents and committee members) – Dr. Viola reviewed a marketing analysis prepared by Alice Jarvis for the City of New Castle. Copies have been provided to City Council and the Trustees of the New Castle Common (TNCC). The analysis reviews goals, strategies and products (Separation Day, reasons why people visit the City), current state of affairs, media, and weaknesses such as event parking.

Phase 1 Plan -- Councilman Vannucci informed that an engineer has been contacted about drainage on Third Street (City property). He is talking to a contractor about blacktop on Chestnut Street for the potential of parking on the street. There have been meetings through the summer with City officials and the City Planner to discuss concerns. City Administrator Barthel has been working with Trustee (TNCC) Chris Castagno. No timetable has been established.

Parking Utilization Study Plan – Ms. Seitz reviewed the vehicle count performed during the summer on Delaware Street from 6th Street to the wharf, Second Street, Market Street, and Third Street on both sides. Counts took place on Thursdays and Saturdays for five weeks, from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. Counts of out-of-state vehicles versus in-state vehicles was optional. Ms. Dunigan will be providing a data analysis and summary to the group. National Park Service ambassadors and City police volunteers assisted other volunteers with the study. Discussion followed on additional information to enhance future studies.

Parking Street Inventory – Mr. Vincent prepared a Delaware Street residential and commercial/ municipal vehicles census that Dr. Viola said needs to be expanded on to include different times. Mr. Hayes suggested the need to establish the usage in order to determine the demand.

Parking Directional Signage – Ms. Seitz reported that some of the new signage is now being erected in the City. The design was prepared by Mitchell Associates and shown to the group. All signs are aluminum with reflecting keys and identifiers (arrows, lots, etc.)

Several ongoing projects (South Street construction, lamp post painting) in the City have delayed signs being erected. Councilman Vannucci said the City will lose several parking spaces near the fire house as a result of a new sidewalk and other street improvements made by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT).

Curb painting and signage – The City has made progress on recommendations addressing snow removal, emergency vehicle access on Market Street, vehicles during church service hours parked down to Harmony Street. Confusing signage has been removed and will be replaced with “no parking from here to the corner” signs, thus allowing the City to enforce violations, and curbs have been painted. Parking on both sides of Market Street will remain. Roger Clark asked about the status of evaluating existing handicapped parking. Councilman Vannucci said letters are being sent to those with handicapped parking (City wide) asking them to renew those spots. Appropriate signage and painting will be applied. A current physician’s statement and form from the Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles (must be picked up) is needed to qualify. Documents are to be presented to the City. According to Councilman Vannucci the City is considering a renewal process every 2-3 years to keep handicapped spaces up to date.

Mr. Whitehead commended Ms. Seitz, Councilman Vannucci and others on their work on maps and signs in the City.

Separation Day Resident Entry Permit – *Council passed a resolution to try this process on a trial basis. The main goal is to help residents with access to the City during Friday night activities and activities on Saturday.*

Dr. Viola reported on the two-day event. It was helpful and well received by residents, business owners, City police and fire police. Planning and getting information out in advance then having the cooperation of residents was key to its success. Permits were requested by 436 residents. The bulk of permits were from The Strand, Dalby Alley, Second Street, Third Street, Delaware Street, Fourth Street, East Fourth Street and Harmony Street. Dr. Viola has a list of residents who received the permits. Councilman Vannucci spoke with the City Police Chief during the summer to refine the permit process for future events that would include closure of some streets. There was interest from the audience in continuing this process for another year. Dr. Viola said the Parking Sub-committee can be involved with continuing the process, but thinks the Separation Day Committee should take the lead.

New Business

- Event parking beyond the historic district – Marketing analysis prepared by Alice Jarvis contained suggestions for using Battery Park.
- The TNCC is considering the Bellanca site for a regional parking area to support Penn Farm, Little League (adjoins Bellanca), and Bellanca. That site would be available as a remote site for other events. Speaking as a private citizen, Dorsey Fiske (TNCC Trustee) said it would be good for the Parking Sub-committee and TNCC to work together on this matter. Ms. Fiske wondered if the City has considered approaching the owners of the Brosius-Eliason about purchasing the site for parking citing its central location.

Parking Study Sub-Committee Meeting
October 23, 2014

Mr. Hayes made a motion for the Parking Sub-committee (of the Planning Commission) to work with the TNCC on exploring the regional parking site potential at the Bellanca property. Councilman Vannucci seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Councilman Vannucci would like to see a member of the TNCC join the Parking Sub-committee. Dr. Viola will discuss his suggestion with the Planning Commission.

Resident Permit Recommendation – The sub-committee is not ready to take action until it is determined where parking will be and what impact it will have on various streets in the City.

Mr. Clark (audience) said the name of this committee is confusing to some residents. They are not aware of its association with the Planning Commission. The *New Castle Weekly* refers to the group as the Parking Sub-committee, but does not reference the Planning Commission. Dr. Viola said clarification would be addressed.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer

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