

**City of New Castle Delaware
Regular Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday – February 11, 2014 – 7 p.m.**

Call to order: 6:55 pm

Roll Call:

Councilperson Megginson
Councilperson Cochran
Council President Ratchford
Councilperson Vannucci

Councilperson Petty - absent

Also present:

Donald Reese, Mayor
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshall
Lt. Brahms, Department of Public Safety
William Barthel, City Administrator

Approval of Minutes by Date: Jan. 14, 2014; Jan. 29, 2014; Jan. 30, 2014, and Feb. 4, 2014

Councilperson Cochran motioned and Councilperson Vannucci seconded approval of the minutes without changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carlin reported on the balances of the city's accounts as of January 31, 2014. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$2,670,371.24.

Councilperson Cochran motioned to accept the report and Councilperson Megginson seconded. The council unanimously accepted the report.

Approval of Staff Reports

The staff had no additions to their reports as filed and the council accepted the staff reports as presented.

Grant Review

Councilperson Cochran reviewed the grant receipts for January 2014.

Communications

None

Business from the Floor

None

Business from the Mayor

The Mayor encouraged anyone with interest to attend the Separation Day meeting tomorrow and volunteer to help. The event will be expanded to two days this year. Other towns have been asked to participate with a booth on the Green. It is a Birthday Party for the entire state.

The Mayor received a letter from the Presbyterian Church regarding parking issues on Market and Second Streets. He will forward the letter to City Council for consideration.

Business from the Council President

President Ratchford thanked the city workers for their hard work during the recent snow storms. Citizens were reminded to remove snow from their sidewalk and encouraged to help their neighbors.

The President announced a new race coming to town. The "Attack Addiction 5k" will be on March 1, 2014 and will be similar to the New Castle Run. The organization's mission is to educate students and their families and to support those in recovery.

The President introduced the newly selected Chief of the New Castle Police, Daniel Tjaden. He is the retired Chief of Delaware City Police. He commented that the process was long and very fair and thanked the city for their support. He served for 25 years in the New Castle County Police and is retiring from the Delaware City police force which he formed. He worked with Senator Biden for two years. He will be sworn in as Chief of New Castle Police on Tuesday at 9:00 am.

New Business

First Reading of Ordinance No. 493 to amend Article I of Chapter 90 of the New Castle City Code to establish a licensing process to permit the use and possession of open containers of alcoholic beverages on public property.

President Ratchford explained that this ordinance is intended to allow events similar to the event held in Delaware City's park during last year's River Towns Ride.

City Administrator Barthel read the ordinance.

A public hearing regarding this issue will be scheduled.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-08 A Resolution Approving the Continuance of an Encroachment of a Building Located at 111 The Strand.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-08 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Building Official Bergstrom confirmed that the encroaching stairs were built with the house.

Resolution No. 2014-08 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-09 to approve the appointment of Mr. Daniel Knox to the Municipal Services Commission, as the City Council representative, for the term April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2017.

President Ratchford nominated Daniel Knox, a current member of the commission. The President and City Administrator met with him to discuss the future direction of the city. She asked for other nominations. There were none.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-09 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-09 passed unanimously.

Mr. Knox thanked City Council for the appointment. He has served on the MSC for the last six years. He listed the recent accomplishments of the Municipal Service Commission: opening a new substation in Dobbinsville; resolving the Buttonwood water quality issue; drilling a new well on Frenchtown Road; and launching online bill pay. He noted that electric and water rates are lower than Delmarva Power and Artesian respectively.

Councilperson Cochran and Mayor Reese thanked Mr. Knox for his service.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-10 to declare three (3) City owned properties located at 601 Center Street, 708 Clark Street and 924 Young Street as surplus properties, to then secure appraisals, and approve them for marketing by the City Administrator.

The City Administrator explained that the properties on Clark and Young were foreclosed in sheriff's sale. There is some limited interest. The property on Center Street is a vacant lot owned by the City since 2001 and was identified as surplus. The property costs the city money in terms of maintenance.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-10 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Megginson.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-10 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2014-11 to approve the Mayor's appointments to the Board of Health.

The Mayor nominated Dr. Joanne Viola.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-11 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Megginson.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-11 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-12 to consider Planning Commission recommendations to rename the Ferry Cut-off parking lot "Broad Dike Parking Lot", approve appropriate directional signage, and consider space for electric car charging stations and bicycle parking.

David Bird, Chairperson reported that the idea was brought before the Planning Commission by the Parking Sub-committee that is reviewing the parking situation in the City. The committee is making recommendations that can be implemented as they are identified.

The first item is the recommendation to rename the parking lot on Chestnut Street that used to accommodate recycling containers. The second item is to address the school bus protocol for field trips to the Battery Park. Currently, they try to turn in the circle at the end of Delaware

Street at the wharf. The Parking Sub-committee recommends bus drop off and pick-up be moved to the South Street entrance to Battery Park.

Councilperson Megginson doesn't like the idea of naming the parking lot but agrees that the identified parcel is a good place for parking. He doesn't think it needs to be named for the Broad Dike.

Mayor Reese expressed concern about dropping them on South Street rather than on Second Street behind the George Reed House. President Ratchford explained that the South Street drop off is for groups with a destination in Battery Park. Groups going to the historic houses and the Court House will continue to be dropped off on Second Street behind the Reed House.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-12 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-12 passed with three (3) votes yea (Ratchford, Vannucci, and Cochran) and one (1) vote nay (Megginson).

Comments from the Floor

- David Baldini of 419 South Street asked Council to post resolutions on the city web site prior to meetings to allow more time for consideration by citizens.
- Mike Alfree of 203 Harmony Street expressed concern about truck traffic on Harmony and 2nd Streets. He has recently witnessed several cars going the wrong way on Harmony between 2nd and 3rd Street. He suggested directional signage on Route 9 at Ferry Cut-off to indicate the continuation of Route 9 and relocated the "One Way" signs at 3rd and Harmony.

President Ratchford asked the City Administrator to review the signage.

Lt. Brahms suggested the use sign boards that are sitting in garages to assist with directing traffic and made specific suggestions for sign placement. He also clarified that trucks are permitted on Washington Street for local services and DelDOT has indicated that businesses south of Dobbinsville are considered local. The police will focus on the truck traffic within the City.

Mike Alfree suggested that when a warning is issued a letter should be sent to the business owner asking them to remind the drivers of the correct route.

- Jeff Lang of the New Castle Jaycees reported on Separation Day Committee plans. He showed the web site www.sepdayde.com. The committee is still making plans and encourages all to get involved.

The motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Megginson, seconded by Councilperson Vannucci and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Council met in Executive Session to discuss the FOP contract negotiations and personnel disciplinary action.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel
Clerk of the City of New Castle