

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
February 23, 2015 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: Mike Quaranta, Chair
David Baldini
David Bird
Joseph DiAngelo
Jonathan Justice
Josephine Moore
Florence Smith

Members Absent: Daniel Bungy
Vera Worthy

Also present: Debbie Turner, Stenographer

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the 1/26/15 minutes as distributed. The motion was approved.

Budget Status – Budget information distributed to commissioners before the meeting. Proposal for the next fiscal year (7/1/15-6/30/16) will be due in the near future. Mr. Quaranta welcomes input from commissioners. Ms. Moore asked what happens with any remaining balance. Mr. Bird said unused funds are returned to the general fund.

Minor Sub-division Review – Postponed pending work being done by Debbie Pfeil, City Planner, and the City.

Demographics Update – Mr. Quaranta is speaking with Ed Ratledge of the University of Delaware about presenting to this group. Topics would include demographic trends in the City and surrounding area. Any information commissioners want to focus on should be forwarded to Mr. Ratledge soon. Mr. Quaranta indicated there is a lot of interest in this presentation.

Ms. Pfeil will be coordinating representatives from DelDOT and WILMAPCO to attend the March meeting of the Planning Commission.

Tourism – A proposal for a visitor experience concept plan to the City was distributed. Mr. Russell Smith prepared the proposal and reviewed with the group. The focus of the proposal is to create a 'New Castle experience', noting that visitors to the City of New Castle are "on their own." He is working with four key stakeholders -- The New Castle Historical Society, Delaware Historical Society, National Park Service, and the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs to help coordinate efforts. Discussion included incorporating other City organizations/resources (New Castle Community Partnership, Senior Center, library), interpreters, guided tours (volunteer and on call), employment benefits, visitor center, impact to City residents, funding (grants, etc.), linking with other locations in the

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Delaware National Park Service, dining and lodging. Mr. Smith is working with the Parking Sub-committee to address parking concerns. Mr. Baldini sees the proposal as a tool to bring several elements (City dock and Kalmar Nyckel, Battery Park, National Park) together. The City's greatest draw is its history. Mr. Smith referred to New Castle as 'livable history.'

Progress on the proposal can be included in the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

City Administrator Bill Barthel and City Council President Linda Ratchford have received a copy of the proposal. Mr. Baldini and Ms. Smith volunteered to join discussions with the Mr. Smith, stakeholders, and others. Mr. Quaranta will share Mr. Smith's proposal with the City Council and the City Planner.

Commissioner's Comments/New Business

Mr. Baldini – Wanted to confirm that Ms. Pfeil will follow up on status items at the March meeting.

Mr. Bird – Announced he would be stepping down as the City's representative on WILMAPCO's Public Advisory Council. He will continue to serve until a replacement is named. Anyone interested should contact Mr. Barthel. Mr. Bird said it is good for the City to have a connection with WILMAPCO.

Comments from the Public – None.

The Planning Commission's next meeting is 3/23/15. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.