

**City of New Castle Delaware  
City Council Regular Meeting  
201 Delaware Street – New Castle  
Tuesday, September 13, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**

**Call to order:** 7:00 p.m. a.m.

**Roll Call:**

Councilperson Megginson  
Council President Ratchford

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshal  
Jamie Rogers, Chief of Police

President Ratchford asked for a moment of silence in memory of Councilperson Albert J. Vannucci who passed away on Thursday, August 25, 2016.

President Ratchford opened the meeting noting that there were several changes to the agenda. Councilperson Di Mondì was on vacation, and Councilperson Petty would be delayed, as she was working at the polls for the primary. There was no quorum, as such nothing could be approved, but Council did go ahead with the reports and discussion portions of the agenda.

**Report from the City Administrator:**

- Along with George O’Neal, met with Delaware Solid Waste. DSWA has been monitoring the debris brought in to be recycled. During a three month period the City had five incidents where trash was mixed in with the recycling. Public Works will be alert for trash mixed with recycling during pick-up. Any recycle container with trash mingled in will not be picked up as recycle. These containers will be tagged, and will need to be put out as trash.
- Attended New Castle County comprehensive Emergency Plan and Continuity of Operations briefing with the office of the Emergency Management office. The County has offered to partner with the City to fund a continuity of operations study. This study creates a plan for getting city services up and running in the event of a natural disaster, or some other catastrophic event.
- Working with Chief Rogers had a speed sign installed for Dobbinsville. Sen. Poore and Rep. Mulrooney offices helped facilitate getting the sign. This sign will show drivers how fast they are going, and will hopefully help calm traffic in the area.
- Worked with Councilperson Megginson regarding truck signage in the Chestnut Street area. The City will put up a No Truck sign to reduce truck traffic in the area.
- On Sept 22 at 11 at 4th & Delaware Streets there will be a plaque dedication for Patrolman Thorn. Patrolman Thorn died in the line of duty on October 22, 1926. His sacrifice had been forgotten until recently.

- The Pier is on schedule to be completed by 12/25/2016, which was the initial projected completion date.

Chief Rogers reviewed the highlights of his report for the month of August.

### **Business from the Council President:**

President Ratchford stated that the City Charter provides that if there is a vacancy on Council the existing Council members will appoint someone to fill that vacancy until the next election. There will be a special meeting to appoint a new Council member, and she encouraged anyone interested in serving to contact a Council member or the City office.

- President Ratchford announced upcoming vacancies on the Tree Advisory Commission and the Board of Elections, and encouraged anyone interested in being considered to contact the City office.
- Attended two Park Service meetings; one was a planning meeting to discuss the Sheriffs' House and how it would be used; they will be report on their findings.
- Welcomed the Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Connor. He was impressed with the collaboration in the City. The benefits of the National Park go beyond just tourism, in terms of the ability of preserving our buildings, and the ability to attract and retain businesses and residents.
- President Ratchford addressed concerns regarding the increase of visitors to the City. A press release was posted in the paper and on the website, there is greater enforcement of park hours, more trash pick-ups and more trash cans have been placed. The seasonal police have been extended. The City is looking at many options to address the concerns of the residents. Suggestions regarding loitering, noise violations and curfew are difficult to enforce. The City is talking to Park Mobile and other companies that can help with residential parking concerns, and they have been talking to other communities that use these services.
- Chief Rogers reported he talked to Chesapeake City and Yorktown Va. regarding permit parking. He said both towns had difficulty with enforcement. Yorktown VA. is a National Park, but they only have about 100 residents, with a much larger Park Service workforce.
- President Ratchford said she feels the City has adapted well to this phenomenon. It is something being felt all over the world.

### **Discussion**

President Ratchford opened the floor to discussion of a Stop Sign at Delaware and 5th Street. The City received a suggestion to place a Stop sign at this intersection, there has been a cross walk painted at the location.

Chief Rogers said he had contacted New Castle County and they have been no report from schools of children crossing that intersection. If there are school children crossing at that intersection the school should inform the County, and they will post a crossing guard.

Councilperson Megginson said he monitored the intersection for several days, and there were several groups of children that crossed the intersection in addition to residents going to the Post Office. He noted that in most cases oncoming cars had stopped and let the people cross. He said he did not feel a stop sign was necessary. He felt the cross walks have helped the situation.

Gillian Barthe thanked Council for putting in the crosswalk, but said she did not feel it was enough. She related that a large vehicle had been parked in the cross walk, and that is a danger. If there was a stop sign the vehicles would not be able to park in the crosswalk. In addition there are numerous people driving while playing Pokémon.

Dorsey Fiske: expressed concern regarding the children walking from area schools, they should be able to access the library.

Councilperson Megginson noted that the children he saw were there for after school waiting for their parents.

Wendy Dewhurst, W. 5th Street. Ms. Dewhurst said she was 19 and just learning to drive, and is in favor of a stop sign, it would make the intersection safer for cars, trucks and a novice driver.

#### **Comments from the Floor:**

Karen Whalen Delaware Street: Residents' concerns need to be considered. Ms. Whalen wants to have a meeting to give their input regarding the Pokémon Go. The residents need to be heard. Ms. Whalen read a statement. "This group was formed in response to the recent Pokémon Go activity in the City for the purpose of assessing and defining the impact due to the influx of the players, and whether the impacts have a net positive or negative effect. Through canvassing businesses, various organizations and residents we were able to come up with a comprehensive understanding of the actual impacts. The net impact is negative, littering and trash in the park, cigarette butts, large and small groups of people loitering at all hours of the day and night. There are people trespassing and doing damage to property. Cars are speeding up and down Delaware Street and stopping in the road. There are numerous other impacts including noise. The residents would like to have a Public Meeting.

Keith Adams Rosemont House Delaware Street: Mr. Adams presented a petition, the header read, "We the undersigned formally request that the New Castle City Council President call a special public meeting of the Council to discuss proposals for handling the influx of Pokémon Go players in the City of New Castle. Crowd control, such as enforcing laws regarding littering, loitering, assembling, safety on sidewalks and streets, illegal parking exceeding noise after 11 p.m. trespassing, using Pokémon app while driving or hang around, and a call to patrol Delaware Street and Battery park after midnight." Mr. Adams presented a petition with 100 signatures.

President Ratchford started that the Police cannot be everywhere all the time.

Jamie Rogers asked residents to call 911 when they have a problem. The patrol cars are out; the police have written over 160 tickets. He also reminded residents that they only have two marked cars. There are other police vehicles that are unmarked. Residents should call in the problems, if there is a complaint of criminal mischief, and then police can stop people on the street.

Resident requested that the game be banned in town, and that a letter go to the game maker to remove it from New Castle. President Ratchford said there is not a lot we can do legally. Chief Rogers said we cannot ban people from the City.

Judy Baldini of South Street commended the police. Limited parking controls a crowd, set times; control what is happening for the residents. What can the City do to relieve this problem? Use the resources we do have, don't just say what you cannot do.

Kathy Muster Delaware Street, said she is temporarily renting. Ms. Muster asked if the bike police can write a ticket. Chief Rogers said they do have the ability to write tickets. Ms. Muster said the police could write tickets for all the cars driving while playing the game.

The Chief said the force is doing what they can every day; we have a volunteer police, if anyone is interested in volunteering. President Ratchford said there was a post on Facebook where someone posted a picture of their ticket from the City for texting while driving.

Dave Baldini: South Street-The Police are doing a good job, there are no signs for upcoming events. We are distracted by this, and we have to work on what makes New Castle great. What can we do to help you help the residents?

Dorsey Fiske said there are more games coming, and asked if a parade & assembly was required for these people.

Wendy Dewhurst read a letter she wrote to the August 24th issue, of *The Weekly*

Terri Gormley 2nd Street - Ms. Gormley said she knows how strongly the residents feel about this game and that the residents are bearing the brunt of this game. She asked residents to remember the Police and City Council are bound by the law.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24.

Respectively Submitted,

Kimberly Burgmuller