

PARKING COMMITTEE REPORT

THE CITY OF NEW CASTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 27, 2015

MICHAEL QUARANTA, CHAIR

Current members of the Parking Committee

LT ADAM BRAMS, POLICE DEPT.

ANDREW HAYES

JOHNATHAN JUSTICE

CHRIS ROBINSON, GOODWILL FIRE CO.

GAIL SEITZ

JAMES VINCENT

ALBERT VANNUCCI

JOANNE VIOLA, CHAIR

THOMAS WHITEHEAD

HEATHER DUNIGAN, WILMAPCO

New Castle City Office

KIM BURGMULLER

DEBORAH TURNER

STATED MEETING TIME, THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL 6 PM

Parking Committee Report to the City of New Castle Planning Commission

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PARKING COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE CITY OF NEW CASTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Introduction:

Goal Statement

To recommend parking solutions for the City of New Castle which will optimize the existing parking, be cost effective, and meet residential, business and special event needs while preserving the character of New Castle's Historic District. Solutions must consider the expected increase in tourism to the City, due to the First State Historic National Park.

Appendix A. Parking Subcommittee Goals and Guiding Principles, November 2012

Executive Summary

An initial survey of the City's residents and businesses indicated that areas of greatest concern for parking are at the access points to Battery Park and on Delaware Street from the wharf to 3rd Street. This report provides a comprehensive description of available public parking, capacity and usage in those areas; and way finding and signage improvements in that area and nearby. It includes proposed parking expansion recommendations, based on the anticipated increase in visitors to New Castle, as well as the status of a resident permit process.

2. Current Available Parking Inventory/Capacity

Capacity data for the Historic District was obtained by volunteers who counted actual spaces and noted signage in 2012. The data for Delaware Street, from 5th Street to the Wharf and one block on E and W 3rd Streets and E 2nd Street was verified and updated early in 2015.

A survey of the current available parking capacity and utilization in the areas of greatest concern and recommendations for new parking lots, with high and low impact potential, are described below. A preliminary proposal was submitted to The Planning Commission in March 2014. Note that all of the potential parking lot sites are either owned by the City or Trustees of the New Castle Common. Private land space with potential does exist, but was not considered. \

Delaware Street from Third Street to wharf

Existing parking available: 78 vehicle spaces; 8 - handicapped spaces; 2 - special use spaces

Existing unloading areas:

1 – Identified by signage at corner of Delaware and Second Streets.

4 – used without signage; in front of Terry House, and Town Hall, Corners
between Court House and Town Hall, at the David Finney Inn

Existing open areas with high impact benefit

- South of M&T Bank rear lot with walking access to Delaware Street
 - Close to businesses, town center and restrooms
- Property east side tennis courts, between 3rd and 4th Streets
 - Close to Battery Park, residences, and tennis courts
- Below South Street to Sailing Club area, in addition to current paved and striped parking area
 - Close to park and Dyke walking paths

Remote sites for mixed use within a 10 minute walk: Broad Dyke at the Old Ferry Cut off, Fort Casimir at the foot of Chestnut Street and Bull Hill (Broad Dyke Path Access)

Appendix B. WILMAPCO map of walking distance

3. Parking Usage Inventory

Fifteen volunteers recruited from the National Park Ambassadors, the New Castle Police VIPS and summer patrol officers, and other interested residents counted actual vehicles parked on Thursdays and Saturdays hourly from 10 AM through 7PM for 5 weeks in the summer of 2014. The data was submitted to WILMAPCO for analysis

For 2014 the data show, that **on average** between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm for the streets counted, parking is at optimal or below capacity. However, there are **peak times** in the City, when parking usage is over capacity. It should also be noted that except for Delaware Street and Market Street, the other counted streets are residential streets accommodating visitors.

Appendix C. City of New Castle Parking Usage Inventory Summary

There are plans to count parked cars during the summer of 2015 and beyond. In 2015 the Battery Park Lot and the 3rd Street Lot (currently the City's only two visitor lots) will be added to the counts.

A Delaware Street Mixed Use Parking Study is in progress, to define more precisely, the residential, commercial use of available parking during peak hours in the business district. Results of this are not complete at this time and will be reported later.

4. Way finding and signage improvement

This project, which included directional signage to existing parking areas and map signage for visitors, was funded by a New Castle County grant obtained by the Historic New Castle Alliance (now New Castle Community Partnership). Most signage was developed and installed in 2014. Some additional signs can be added as needed.

Appendix D. Way Finding Map

The City was provided with information about other signage issues needing remediation, such as out dated handicap signs, signs with confusing or ambiguous wording, and curbs that required re-painting. Much of this work was remedied by City employees.

5. Proposed Parking Expansion

Based on potential for high impact due to space and location for accommodation of mixed use Phase 1 recommendations were reviewed by City Council for consideration and further evaluation.

Appendix E. Resolution 2014-28

6. New Castle Visitor Data

An increase in tourism due to the First State National Park will have an impact on parking needs.

Currently, only the museums in the City track visitor data. The New Castle Courthouse Museum, part of the National Park, has provided visitor data from 2011 (12,980) to 2014 (17,077). A very high-level estimate for future visitors to the National Park in New Castle, is based on the number of visitors to two other small historic parks (40,000). These data were provided by Russell Smith, Superintendent, First State National Park, through 2014. *Appendix F. City of New Castle Visitor Data*

7. Major Event Parking

Event permit applications for the City and Battery Park use, currently include information about private lots in historic area that are potentially available for parking. Also listed below, are the remote lots outside the historic district that are commonly used by the major visitor event sponsors.

Parking Spaces, by arrangement of Event Sponsors

Private lots (in Historic Area)

New Castle Senior Center

Sailing Club restricted

New Castle Methodist Church (Off of W 5th St)

St Peters Church (E 5th) and School (Harmony St)

Remote lots (outside Historic Area)

New Castle Elementary School

Carrie Downie Elementary School

Baptist Church (E Basin Rd)

Bellanca Airfield Regional Parking (RT 273) proposed

8. Resident Permits

Current parking usage average levels do not support the need for comprehensive parking permit implementation at this time. Some areas on Delaware and West 3rd Streets experience weekend overcapacity likely due to short term visitors. Administrative and enforcement cost/ benefits for metered kiosk or permits will need to be studied. The proposed expansion of available parking, with appropriate signage and time limits is suggested to relieve the current capacity issue.

Following a recommendation of the National Park Service Transportation Review, resident response to a permit process for the historic district was evaluated for Separation Day 2014. A proposal for a temporary resident entry permit to be offered to residents within the historic district and displayed, during the two day street closures was submitted to City Council and was approved.

Appendix G. Resolution 2014-29

The entry permit process was well received by residents and found helpful by the traffic control personnel. Over 400 permits were issued. Most residents (>50%) who elected to obtain a permit, live within 2 blocks of the Court House.

A more permanent hang tag entry resident permit for the historic district is being developed by the City. Implementation is expected prior to Separation Day 2015. This process is again voluntary, 2 entry tags may be issued per household with appropriate identification of residency. There will be no cost to residents. The entry tags can be used for all city events in which there may be street closures or traffic control. These events may include: Tall Ships on the Delaware, anticipated in late June 2015, Bike races, and Runs, the New Castle Antique Show, Art on the Green, Spirit of Christmas.

The response and effectiveness of this process for residents and traffic control will continue to be monitored.

9. Future Considerations

While there is currently no defined plan for implementation of a resident parking permit or visitor kiosk parking system, visitors to the historic district are very likely to increase. A need to further regulate parking will become apparent. At that time, a comprehensive cost/ benefit analysis should be done. Factors to be investigated for a kiosk type system include: installation and maintenance costs, enforcement costs, possible part time vs full time operation schedule for "pinch point" locations such as W 3rdSt lots (for instance week end only vs free on weekdays). If the cost/ benefit becomes advantageous. A pay to park system could be implemented as a pilot program.

The resident permit process could also be expanded in the future for the down town business district to include appropriate signage with time limits to manage visitor, Delaware Street employees and resident parking. In the March 2014 proposal, specific suggestions for signage and time limits for the down town area were included and are listed below:

(Note: "unlimited" indicates no time restrictions):

1. Expand parking lot at rear of M&T bank to a minimum of 30 spaces, per Phase 1 to a limited access lot during business hours
 - Signage - 1 hour business customers
 - Permits
 - Overnight Bed & Breakfast guests “unlimited”
 - Residents “unlimited”
 - Employees 7:00am to 11:00 pm

2. Make Delaware Street to Limited Access Parking
 - Signage
 - 3 hour parking - visitors
 - 1 hour parking for 2 spots in front of M&T bank customers
 - Permits
 - Residents “unlimited”
 - Bed & Breakfast guests directed to M&T rear lot – customers

3. Develop a parking lot on the East side of tennis court to provide a minimum of 34 spaces
 - This would be a limited access lot
 - Signage - Visitors 8:00am to dark
 - Permit - Residents “unlimited”

4. Provide additional limited access parking between Sailing Club and Progressive Club of potential for 20 spaces
 - Signage visitors 7:00am to dark

5. Existing public lots to consider for resident only permits include:
 - Cherry Street lot (behind NC Post Office, 24 spaces);
 - Dalby Alley (8 spaces); and;
 - Harmony St (east of the Strand, 8 spaces)

New Castle Planning Commission subcommittee Parking Plan

Reference: City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan 2009 Update, Transportation Plan Goal 4 page 35

Goal statement: To recommend parking solutions for the City of New Castle which will optimize the existing parking be cost effective, and meet residential and special events while preserving the character of New Castle's Historic District.

The parking plan will address the needs for **residents and local commerce in the New Castle Historic District, and welcome visitors** for the following situations:

Standard usage, typical week days and weekends

High volume usage, seasonal weekends, private events

Peak Usage, special events planning, city wide and state sponsored

Using the following **Guiding Principles:**

Improve utilization of existing parking spaces before creating new parking spaces.

Minimize vehicular traffic in the historic area,

Enhance the pedestrian and bicycling experience.

Minimize impacts on residential quality of life,

Minimize impacts on businesses within the historic district,

Enhance the community's overall character and minimize environmental impact for any new parking facilities in the Historic District.

Partner with other organizations and government entities to optimize resources.

And consider the following **strategies** in our recommendations:

Review current parking practices and policies/ordinances.

Inventory the existing parking availability in the historic area.

Provide adequate and appropriate way finding and directional signage.

Include a process for public dialog.

Provide support for appropriate business mix for economic development

Enhance the pedestrian and cyclist experience by improvement of facilities for walking and bicycling.

Develop de-centralized parking options to distribute parking resources among many destinations.



City of New Castle Parking Usage Inventory

The New Castle City Planning Commission Parking Study Sub-Committee inventoried on-street parking use in the historic district on four Saturdays and five Thursdays during July and August 2014. Volunteers counted parked cars on each street once per hour.

Usage Levels Explained

Less than 65%: Low Use	Parking use that is less than 65 percent is under capacity. Underused parking is costly in terms of the expense to provide and maintain, excess impervious surface, and potential speeding traffic due to a wide, unobstructed road. Certain locations counted were underused during all or most times counted. Strategies to promote greater use of these spaces should be explored (signing, pedestrian enhancements, promoting employee and residential parking, promoting turnover in overcapacity areas, etc.).
65% - 85%: Optimal Use	Parking use that is between 65 and 85 percent is ideal. Users will find spaces easily without excessive circling the block. The resource is being used efficiently and parked cars serve to slow speeding traffic.
Greater that 85% - 90%: High Use	Parking is well used and drivers may need to spend more time searching for a space or park further from their destination. Certain locations counted were at high capacity during all or most times counted.
Greater than 90%: Overcapacity	Parking use that is greater than 90 percent is overcapacity. Here, drivers may add to traffic congestion and use excess fuel searching for parking. Certain locations were over-used during most times counted, however at no time was the entire study area over capacity. Strategies should be explored to promote greater distribution of parking across the historic area and turnover in over capacity areas.

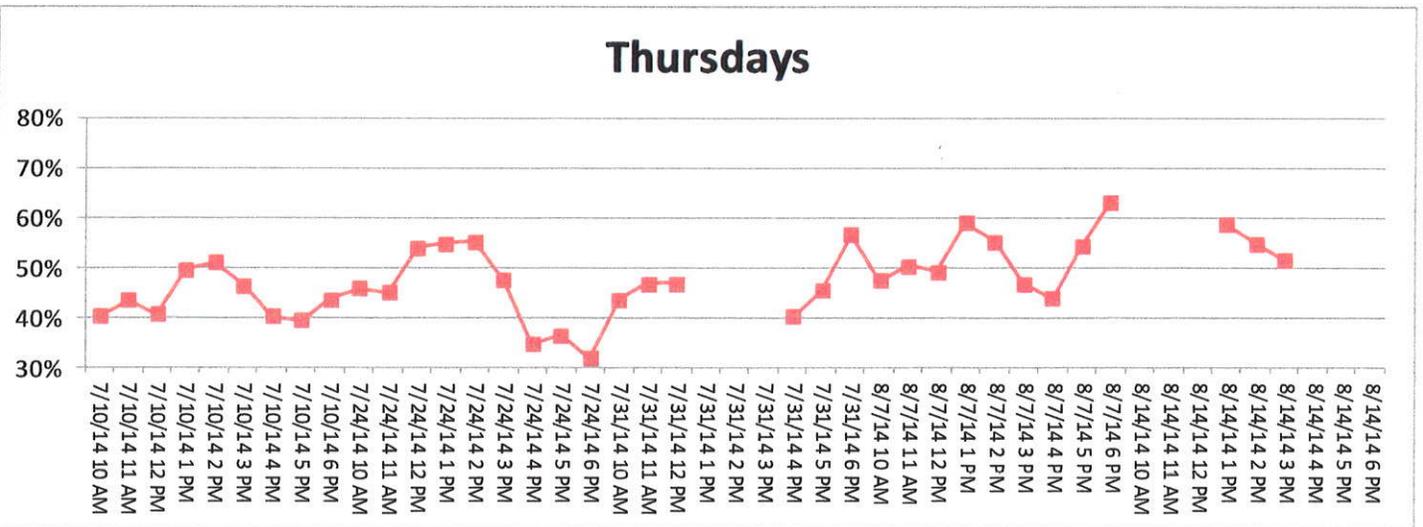
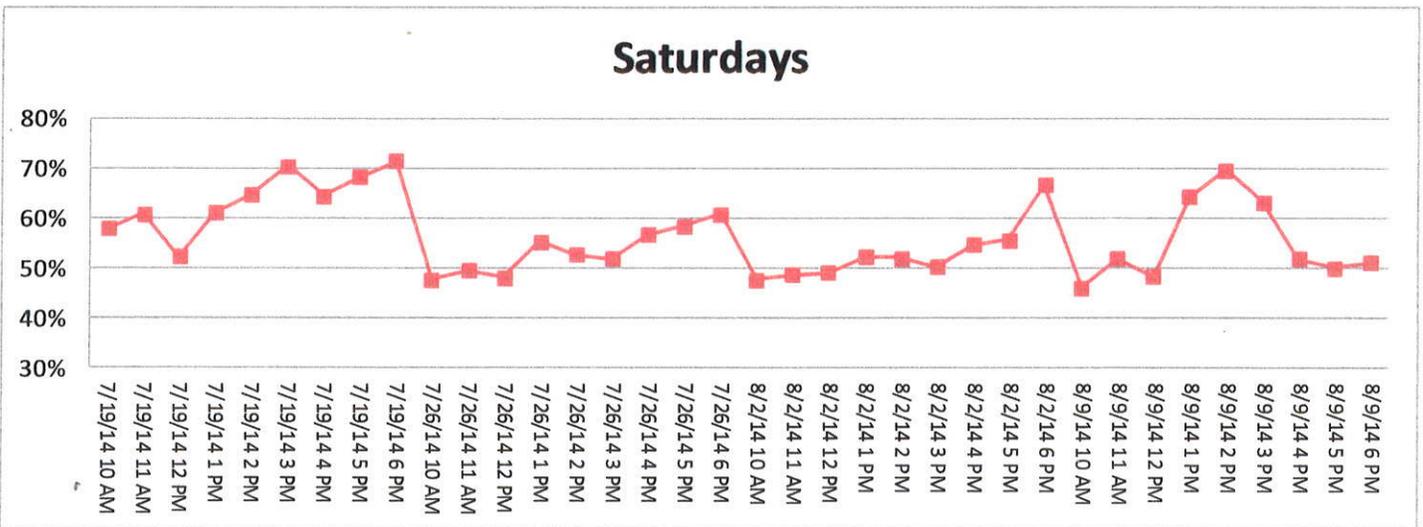
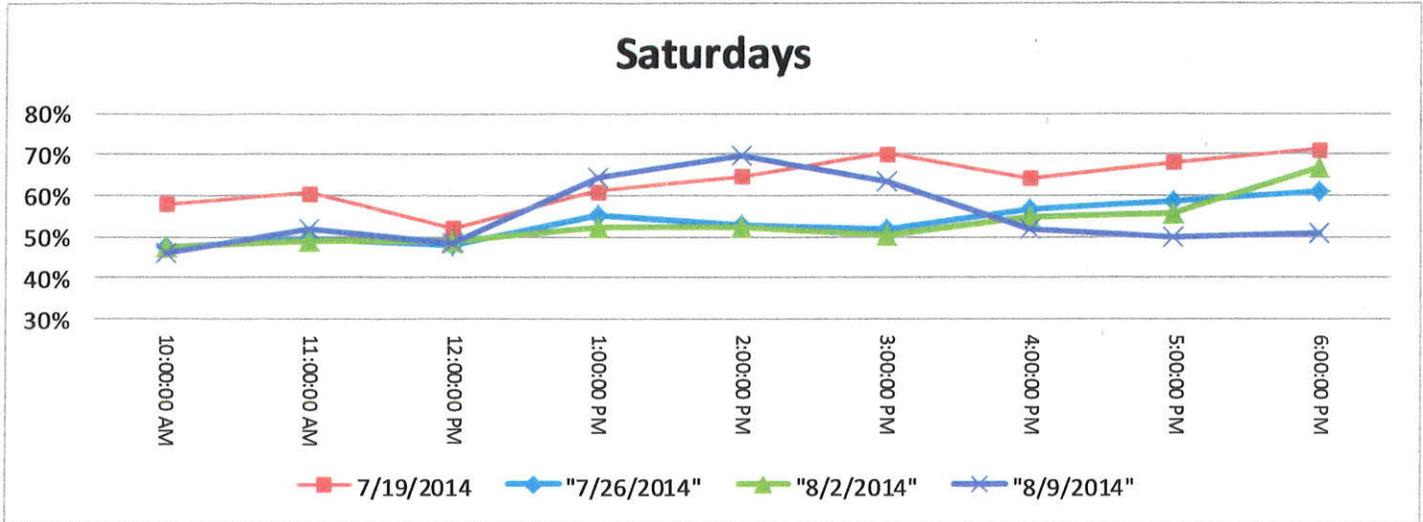
City of New Castle Parking Usage Summary by Location

Street	Block	Capacity	Saturday Average	Saturday Peak	Thursday Average	Thursday Peak
2nd Street	Delaware - Harmony	18 day, 24 4 p.m. & later	72%	100%	70%	100%
3rd Street	Delaware - Harmony	46	32%	43%	34%	48%
3rd Street	Foundary - Delaware	14	51%	100%	48%	86%
3rd Street	South - Foundary	24	57%	154%	32%	54%
Delaware	2nd - 3rd	46	81%	96%	80%	100%
Delaware	3rd - 4th	8	50%	88%	26%	75%
Delaware	4th - 5th	17	66%	88%	29%	118%
Delaware	5th - 6th	17	58%	94%	47%	76%
Delaware	The Strand - 2nd	10	87%	120%	79%	100%
Delaware	Wharf - The Strand	30	84%	107%	63%	100%
Market Street	Delaware - Harmony	50	26%	54%	19%	32%
TOTAL			56%	71%	48%	63%

Note: Peak hours represent the highest usage count from among all days and times counted. Specific days and hours vary by location.



City of New Castle Parking Total Usage Summary





273

W. 10th St.

W. 9th St.

Tremont St.

Clayton St.

W. 8th St.

W. 7th St.

Cherry St.

E. 8th St.

Harmony St.

Deemer Place

Tremont St.

W. 6th St.

Delaware St.

E. 5th St.

E. 4th St.

E. 3rd St.

W. 7th St.

South St.

W. 5th St.

Foundry Alley

Shaw St.

W. 4th St.

W. 3rd St.

Market St.

E. 2nd St.

Harmony St.

Umbrella Row

Williams St.

South St.

W. 3rd St.

The Strand

Packet Alley

Alexander's Alley

Dalby Alley

Delaware River



Greater New Castle Pedestrian & Bicycle Guide Map

Legend

- Mixed use trail
- Route with sidewalks
- Low-traffic road
- Moderately busy road, use extra caution
- Busy road, avoid when possible
- Bicycle lanes or shoulders present
- East Coast Greenway
- Parks, open space, and natural areas
- Historic New Castle
- Historic Attraction



Trail complete to south bank of Christina River Connection to Wilmington Riverfront expected to be complete by 2015

Route 9 / ECG Use extreme caution! (No shoulders, unpredictable road conditions)

Underpass expected to open Summer 2014

Rt. 273/13 is a major intersection Not suitable for most users Use extreme caution!

Must pass around gate

Route 273 Trail and at-grade crossing expected completion by 2014

Historic New Castle
See detail map inside

Ted Patten

Resolution No. 2014-28

A Resolution To Accept Certain Recommendations of the Planning Commission or Parking Committee Regarding Proposed Municipal Parking Improvements and Further Studies Associated Therewith.

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission appointed a Parking Committee that first began meeting in January, 2012 for the purpose of evaluating the parking needs of the City of New Castle; and

WHEREAS, Phase 1 parking study has been completed and includes a recommendation for the creation of 134 regular parking spaces and 3 bus spaces. More specifically, the following recommendations were presented to the Planning Commission:

PHASE 1A: Location: Broad Dyke at Chestnut St.
Estimated Spaces: 45 regular and 3 bus
Status: Conceptual Sketch Complete

PHASE 1B: Location: Municipal Lot B (east side of tennis courts)
Estimated Spaces: 34
Status: Conceptual Sketch Complete

PHASE 1C: Location: Municipal Lot A (off 3rd Street-behind bank)
Estimated Spaces: 30
Status: Conceptual Sketch Complete

PHASE 1D: Location: Fort Casimir
Estimated Spaces: 30
Status: Conceptual Sketch Complete

PHASE 1E: Location: Battery Park Lot Expansion
Estimated Spaces: 25
Status: Discussion only, conceptual sketch needed

WHEREAS, the Parking Committee has recommended to the Planning Commission that the City Administrator, City consultants and the Parking Committee Chair further review each Phase 1 location option and prioritize such locations, define the project scope for each such location and evaluate the availability of project funding. The defined scope may include but is not limited to: lighting, landscaping, type of surface, safety considerations, off-site improvements, drainage, long term maintenance costs, improvement costs, location, insurance, and permitting process.

WHEREAS, the Parking Committee further recommended that parking on the 2nd St. side of Market Street (perpendicular to Harmony St.) be eliminated; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council accept the recommendations of the Parking Committee in part, but only proceed at this time with the recommended further review of Phase 1A (Broad Dyke location) and Phase 1D (Fort Casimir

location) and with the recommended elimination of parking on the 2nd St. side of Market Street (perpendicular to Harmony St.);

WHEREAS, the City Council has the authority to accept or reject, in whole or in part, the recommendations of the Planning Commission; and

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the City Council adopts the recommendations of the Parking Committee as set forth above and authorizes the City Administrator, City consultants and Planning Committee Chair to proceed accordingly.

PASSED this 13th day of May, 2014.

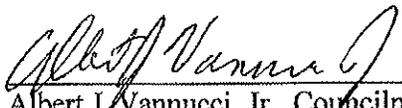

Linda Ratchford, City Council President


John W. Cochran, Councilperson

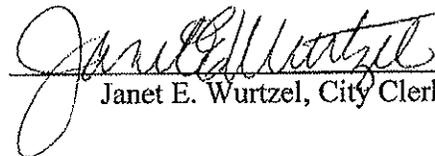
Absent

Teel Petty, Councilperson


Theodore H. Megginson, Councilperson


Albert J. Vannucci, Jr., Councilperson

Attest:


Janet E. Wurtzel, City Clerk

RESOLUTION 2014-29

A Resolution to Approve a Temporary Resident Entry Permit for Separation Day

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has accepted the parking sub-committee's recommendation to allow for a Temporary Resident Entry Permit on Separation Day, as an opportunity to evaluate the residential permit process using a temporary residential entry permit for residents who live town on streets where traffic will be "blocked off " for events during Separation Day weekend, and

WHEREAS, Participation would be voluntary, and would enable the police, VIPs and fire police to better enforce traffic into the town and still let residents get through to their homes; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has the authority to approve or not approve, in whole or in part, recommendations made by the Planning Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of New Castle hereby approves the recommendations made by the Planning Commission allowing for a Temporary Resident Entry Permit on Separation Day. The City Administrator is directed.

PASSED this 13th day of May, 2014.



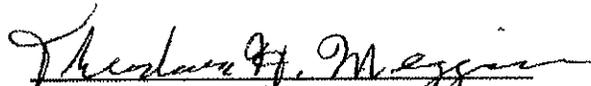
Linda Ratchford, City Council President



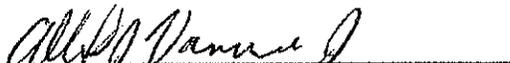
John W. Cochran, Councilperson

Absent

Teel Petty, Councilperson

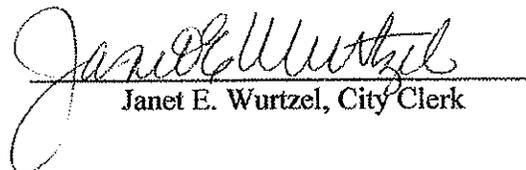


Theodore H. Megginson, Councilperson



Albert J. Vannucci, Jr., Councilperson

Attest:



Janet E. Wurtzel, City Clerk

City of New Castle Visitor Data

2011 baseline is:

12,980 New Castle Courthouse

2012 data:

16,568 New Castle Courthouse

2013 data:

16,609 New Castle Courthouse

2014 data:

17,077 New Castle Courthouse/First State National Historic
Park

NPS Estimate for First State National Historic Park, New Castle:

40,000 **

** Estimates based on visitors to two semi-urban, small historic parks - Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Elverson, PA and Longfellow Historic House, Cambridge, MA.

NPS experience says a Visitors Center will cause visitors to stay longer.

Revised: 4/21/2015