

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
May 18, 2015 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: Michael Quaranta, Chair
David Baldini
David Bird
Joseph DiAngelo
Jonathan Justice
Josephine Moore

Members Absent: Florence Smith
Vera Worthy

Also present: Debbie Turner, Stenographer

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes – A correction was noted on page 2. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the 4/27/15 minutes as corrected. The motion was approved.**

Appointment of Planning Commission representative to the Historic Area Commission – Messrs. Bird and Quaranta serve on the Planning Commission and Historic Area Commission (HAC). Mr. Bird is the Planning Commission representative to the HAC. Mr. Bird has submitted his resignation to HAC and will serve until his successor is named. Mr. Quaranta is City Council's appointment on HAC.

A formal vote by the Planning Commission is needed to replace Mr. Bird on HAC. If approved by the Planning Commission, Mr. Quaranta will resign his position on HAC. City Council will then need to fill his vacancy on HAC. If the Planning Commission approves Mr. Quaranta being named its representative to HAC, he would fulfil Mr. Bird's expired term on HAC and City Council would then need to name an appointee to fill Mr. Quaranta's former seat.

Mr. Bird made a motion nominating Mr. Quaranta as the Planning Commission representative on HAC. Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Comments from Commission Members

Mr. Quaranta informed that documents Dr. Viola provided at last month's meeting were not provided on the city's website as planned. Therefore, discussion about those materials will be presented at next month's meeting. Comments/observations from commissioners were taken.

Mr. Baldini – Look at work of Parking Sub-committee as it relates to the Comprehensive Plan (parking inventory) and concerns expressed by the Planning Commission to move forward with WILMAPCO to address transportation issues. The committee's data supports that some of the same issues involving parking, land use issues and transportation are contained in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. He noted in workshop comments in the Comprehensive Plan that there must not be any added parking in the historic area. The

next update of the Comprehensive Plan is due in 2019. Mr. Baldini asked for an update on the Comprehensive Plan Matrix that is filed yearly with the state.

Ms. Moore – Cited studies being done evaluating land and drainage, and wonders about their impact on homes and open space.

Mr. Bird – What is the true nature of the parking issue? Is it just for events or every day use? What is the future impact of visitors to the city with the growth of the national park? There are alternative materials to asphalt rather than paving over an area. The material could be put over grassy areas to keep the grass intact while allowing for a better look and helping with drainage.

Mr. Quaranta – He reiterated his interest in getting a visual map of the downtown area showing what the capacity looks like. (*\$1,000 request in 2016 budget.*) We need to know the number of parking spaces in defined areas (street locations only). (*There was discussion about non-public areas that are used by the public.*) He suggested the city needs to improve its communications with residents about street closings. Residential permits have been discussed by the Parking Sub-committee. Mr. Quaranta said social media could be used to alert of street closings, street openings, etc.

Observation -- Mr. Bird recently participated in a restaurant tour in Kennett Square, PA. He compared it with the City of New Castle. The city is three times as large; medium income is similar. Kennett Square uses parking meters, but does not charge on weekends. They have a parking garage and a parking authority. They have general obligation bonds that help finance improvements. Kennett Square is attracting chefs and is becoming a food hub.

Public Comments

Gail Seitz of the Parking Sub-Committee spoke. Ms. Seitz is replacing Mr. Bird as the city's representative on WILMAPCO. The committee will do a comparison about what they have done and what is planned versus the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Quaranta said the consultant has been asked to check off items that have been completed. He thinks most of the outstanding items are the city's responsibility to take recommendations and decide whether to act on them. Ms. Seitz said the committee did a parking inventory last summer based on certain days and times, all with volunteers. They counted Delaware Street to the wharf, East 2nd Street, East 3rd Street, Market Street. They plan to do another survey this summer. (*Discussion followed.*)

Mixed-use parking (*Delaware Street*) – Committee member Drew Hayes is handling. They hope to get an understanding of the number of apartments, number of cars, single residents, types of businesses, and where employees of those businesses park.

Ms. Seitz reported on a resolution in front of City Council concerning the five (5) study areas. Council hopes to allocate funds in the next budget cycle to do some engineering work (drainage study, flooding, etc.)

Separation Day Entry Permits – The city is planning to hold a special council meeting to consider a resident entry permit to cover the whole year, not just specific events.

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Terry Gormley of the *New Castle Weekly* talked about a resident's complaint on social media about being ticketed for parking in an area displaying 'no parking' tape. She thinks the city needs to communicate more information to residents to help avoid these issues. Concerning Kennett Square, she wonders whether the tax base has anything to do with their resources. She asked how vacant positions are filled on the Planning Commission and HAC. (*Discussion followed.*) Ms. Gormley suggested that maps that Drew Hayes prepared for the meadows (Trustees) and for the Wayfinding Committee (signs) might help Mr. Quaranta. He will follow up with Council President Ratchford on the Wayfinding Committee maps.

The Planning Commission's next meeting is 6/22/15. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.