

**City Council of the City of New Castle**  
**City Council Special Meeting**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street, New Castle**  
**Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Call to order:** 6:30 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Councilperson Megginson - present  
Council President Ratchford - present  
Councilperson Petty - present  
Councilperson Di Mondì - present

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator  
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor  
Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official  
Chris Rogers, City Planner  
Janet Carlin, Treasurer

**Public Hearing concerning Ordinance 508** to amend the City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan and to rezone parcel 21-013.00-001 (portion of Little League fields on Route 273) from I (Industrial) to the Residential (R-1) zoning classification.

President Ratchford opened the meeting and asked the City Solicitor to make opening remarks regarding the Public Hearing.

City Solicitor Losco stated that the prerequisites and all process requirements have been met for the Council to vote on Ordinance 508.

City Planner Chris Rogers provided an overview of the proposal. Some of the land proposed for zoning in Ordinance 508 was never zoned in the current Comprehensive Plan, so this rezoning must go through the State's Plus Review. Three State Agencies were present at the Plus Review. None of the agencies had any issues and their comments were about any future construction. The next step was to present the rezoning request to the City Planning Commission. The Commission recommends against the change to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning as outlined in Ordinance 508. The believe many changes should be incorporated in the update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked if they take into consideration that the only use has been recreational. He asked why this rezoning is different from the rezoning of the west end of town over the objections of the residents. Mr. Rogers replied that the Planning Commission rezoned the west end within the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

The President asked for input from citizens.

Russell Smith of Chestnut Street stated that he hates to see things fixed that aren't broke. The Trustees and the Little League seem satisfied.

Councilperson Di Mondri reported that the Little League's lease ends next year. The Little League was told not to raise the issue at City Council or the Trustees won't sign the lease. The Trustees haven't given money to the City in five years. The Little League is important to the 500 families that participate. City Council is the representatives of the people of the City and need to protect the interests of those families.

President Ratchford stated that the focus of this Public Hearing is the rezoning as described in Ordinance 508.

Judie Baldini of South Street asked if there is a cost associated with the rezoning process and if so how much. Are there filing and legal costs? Her understanding is that the zoning has to be done anyway as part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan. If there is a cost involved why pay twice? Councilperson Di Mondri replied that it will take three years for the change thru the update to the Comprehensive Plan. President Ratchford added that there are costs involved but the City Administrator doesn't know how much. Councilperson Di Mondri offered to pay the cost of the rezoning out of his pocket.

Jim Pankowski is involved with New Castle Little League but doesn't represent the organization in this meeting. Mr. Pankowski believes that the Little League has had better talks recently with Trustees. Councilperson Di Mondri believes the City Council proceedings have helped them along.

Councilperson Megginson asked what could be developed on the land rezoned as R1 (residential) such as apartments. The City Solicitor replied that it can be developed for single family homes. Councilperson Megginson asked if it remains zoned I (industrial) can a retail center or warehouse be built. Mr. Losco stated that all of the requirements of setbacks, etc. must be met. Retail as in a strip shopping center requires a different zoning to commercial. The motivation for this rezoning is to coerce a specific property owner to act in a certain way. The City does have some liability. If the property owner asks for the rezoning, it changes the liability.

Councilperson Di Mondri has a letter from the President of the Trustees asking for time to work on a solution. The lack of action for six months caused the response.

Valarie Leary of Harmony Street asked what proof exists that the Trustees are planning to build anything. Councilperson Di Mondri stated that he doesn't need any proof. Why don't they extend the lease?

Gene Dempsey of Delaware Street asked why there is so much commotion about the Little League. He asked that Council and the Trustees sit down to discuss the issue. The issue is a lack of communications. Mr. Dempsey recommends that the Ordinance be tabled for three months and revisited. He would appreciate it if the two groups would talk to each other.

The **Motion to adjourn** was made by Councilperson Megginson, seconded by Councilperson Petty and **passed unanimously**. The Hearing adjourned at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel  
Clerk of the City of New Castle