

**New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
April 24, 2017 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall**

Members Present: David Baldini, Vice Chair
Joseph DiAngelo
Jonathan Justice
Josephine Moore
Gail Seitz
William Walters

Members Absent: David Bird
Michael Quaranta, Chair
Vera Worthy

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Inspector

(There was no March meeting.)

Mr. Baldini called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed. A quorum was declared. Mr. Walters begins his term with the Planning Commission tonight.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/23/17 meeting as distributed. Motion was approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 2/27/17 meeting as distributed. Motion was approved.

Commissioners Comments

Mr. DiAngelo provided fellow commissioners with a document written by former commissioner Henry N. Herndon, Jr. dated 12/7/1998. The document addresses Mr. Herndon's position in denying a rezoning request. Mr. DiAngelo thinks the document is well written and could be a resource as the Planning Commission deals with future rezoning issues. Mr. Baldini agreed adding the document provides references to case law and the City Code. Ms. Seitz added the document is rational with points laid out clearly.

Mr. Walters asked about the process for projects to come before the Planning Commission. Mr. Bergstrom explained the City Planner reviews the project then forwards it to this body. The Planning Commission only has the authority to recommend projects to City Council. Mr. Baldini noted that recommendations are based on the Comprehensive Plan and solid facts, not opinions or emotions.

Ms. Seitz asked how the Planning Commission budget is determined. She noted that expenses will be higher because we have tasks upcoming for the comprehensive plan. She wants to ensure those expenses are captured in the Planning Commission's budget request. Mr. Bergstrom said the budget process must be done and the tax rate established before 6/30/17. He said the Chair and City Planner typically work together to develop a budget for review by commissioners. Mr. Justice thinks it would be wise to get in front of the process now and determine our needs. Mr. Baldini will speak with Chris Rogers, City Planner, to get the process of putting together a preliminary budget in motion.

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Ms. Seitz asked if an application has been submitted for the Downtown Development District. Mr. Baldini believes we are applying. Associated expenses would need to be included in the budget.

Messrs. Baldini and Justice and Ms. Seitz met and submitted the online form to meet with the State Pre-Plus committee. They are scheduled to appear before the committee on 5/24/17.

Ms. Seitz regularly attends WILMAPCO meetings. She has asked for funding assistance for the comprehensive plan update process. WILMAPCO has designated two planners to assist in the areas of transportation and pedestrian/bicycles. Ms. Seitz said the draft Unified Planning Work Plan is currently out for public comment until 5/4/17. We need to determine how the planners can best utilize their resources with the Planning Commission and AECOM.

Ms. Seitz reported the Route 9 Master Plan (WILMAPCO) is out for public review through the end of April. It is on WILMAPCO's website, wilmmapco.org/route9. She said WILMAPCO does give attention to comments.

Mr. Baldini asked if the City has a listing of the large industries and number of employees in the City. This data is not in the comprehensive plan. He quoted Mike Quaranta's information that during the day we have about 15,000 people in the City and 5,000 in the evening. Mr. Baldini asked commissioners to give thought to other items they think should be in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Moore asked for the status of commissioners to replace the three members no longer serving. Mr. Baldini said some names are being circulated for consideration. He will look into the status and report back at the next meeting.

Mr. DiAngelo suggesting thinking about nominating a chair and co-chair for this body. He understands that Mr. Quaranta has resigned his position with the Planning Commission. Mr. Baldini confirmed Mr. Quaranta's resignation.

Mr. Bergstrom said he will provide a copy of the DelDOT Plan to eliminate the traffic light at Sixth Street and Delaware Street to commissioners. There was a suggestion to have the document put on the City's website. Mr. Bergstrom said the light will be removed, but not until fall 2018. It is proposed to be replaced with a four-way stop intersection. There will be a special City Council meeting on Thursday, 5/4/17, concerning this issue.

Mr. Baldini wants to add the Comprehensive Plan Update to the agenda each month going forward to keep it visible. We have one and one-half years to get the update finished.

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Public Input

Next month, Mr. Bergstrom anticipates having a minor subdivision for the Riverwalk project to separate the Gambacorta marsh (near corner of Washington and Seventh Street) from the project itself with an eye toward the marsh property being transferred to a group like the Trustees of the New Castle Common to manage in perpetuity. In most jurisdictions it is a simple administrative subdivision.

The Planning Commission's next meeting is 5/22/17. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer