

**City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, October 10, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.**

Roll Call:

Councilperson Valarie W. Leary
Councilperson Michael J. Quaranta
Council President Linda Ratchford
Councilperson Michael M. Platt
Councilperson John A. Di Mondì

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Jamie Rogers, Police Chief
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Mayor Jimmy Gambacorta

The Tuesday, 08/08/2017 meeting minutes were **unanimously approved as amended.**

Janet Carlin, City Treasurer reported unaudited cash account totals, as of 09/30/2017:

The total cash on hand in all accounts is: \$5,146,658.67.

Councilperson Quaranta asked the City Treasurer to comment on information he received, that revenue and expense for the fiscal year ending June 2016, and the budget, came in approximately \$100,000 less than projected.

Ms. Carlin advised that finances are on par with previous years, last year having been an exception, and that there is no cause for concern.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked the City Treasurer to explain the withdrawal of almost \$12,000 from the police pension account. Ms. Carlin stated that she is aware of this, has not yet looked into it, and will do so.

The Treasurer's report was **unanimously approved, as presented.**

Staff Reports

City Administrator William Barthel reported that, at Councilperson Di Mondì's request, Mr. Barthel, Building Official Jeffrey Bergstrom and the police chief have looked into the possibility of a no parking zone on Penn Street. This will require a survey to be completed, at a cost of \$2500.

Councilperson Di Mondì explained that at least two people in the area requested that he look into the parking situation.

Mr. Barthel also reported that he, the police chief and Council President Ratchford had met with representatives of DelDOT, regarding the red light on Delaware Street. DelDOT is considering suggestions made by Council, and will present their proposal to Council when ready. Mr. Barthel guesses that will be with the next 30 to 45 days.

Councilperson Di Mondì requested that a Resolution be put forward at the next meeting, to contact state Representative Mulrooney, and request that he put pressure on DelDOT to leave the red light alone.

Mr. Barthel reported that truck traffic through Dobbinsville, and down Washington Street, was another topic of the conversation. DelDOT stated that they have evaluated the situation, and need their management's approval of their suggestions to Council. Once that approval has been given, Mr. Barthel presumes that DelDOT will come back to Council.

Mr. Barthel also reported that the City has received a few resident requests; one being that a stop sign be placed at 7th and South. This was brought to the attention of DelDOT. Another request was for a "no truck traffic" sign on South Street, before 6th. Another request was that the blinking light on the island in Dobbinsville have a longer duration. DelDOT has completed that change, from 10 seconds to 22 seconds.

DelDOT also provided statistics related to speeding. Mr. Barthel requested that Chief Rogers report on that.

Councilperson Quaranta stated that, at an earlier meeting, a status update had been requested, as to changes to the light at Municipal Blvd., as far as having it be a tripped light, rather than cycling. Mr. Barthel will request that update from DelDOT. Councilperson Di Mondì expressed concern about trucks carrying hazardous materials going through residential areas, and would like it stopped. Mr. Barthel advised that there will be an opportunity to discuss this with DelDOT, and Mr. Barthel will also keep on top of this, with DelDOT.

Police Chief Rogers shared DelDOT's statistics related to speeding through Dobbinsville. Prior to completion of the island, and the speed sign being put up, before April of 2016, average speeds at that time were 32mph and 33mph (different directions). Since the sign and the island, average speeds are 26mph and 27mph; the posted speed being 25.

Regarding compliance with the pedestrian crosswalk, before the island was built, and the flashing light added, it took approximately 1.5 to 2.3 cars to physically stop, when someone was in the crosswalk. Since those changes, it is now .7 cars. Also, it used to take between 12 and 17 seconds to cross the road, due to traffic. It now takes 8 seconds.

Council President Ratchford advised that a similar pedestrian light will be placed at Route 273, where the multi-use trail goes across, and no time line is yet available on that.

Police Chief Rogers provided the following statistics for the month of September: 28 criminal arrests, 140 traffic tickets issued, 87 traffic warnings, 4 crime prevention requests checks, 122

reports written. Three overdoses were handled by patrols. So far, in October, there were two overdose deaths. Also, in September, there were 22 car accidents handled by patrols.

Council Communications

Councilperson Quaranta provided information related to demographics and projections related to New Castle County, that he had learned from a news magazine that Council receives. This was passed along on paper, not verbally.

Business from the Mayor

Mayor Gambacorta reported on the following events/meetings he has attended and/or participated in:

- The River Towns Ride and Festival Kickoff
- The Senator Tom Carper visit, including some beach cleanup
- Governor John Carney's visit, and his talk about the local museum, as well as museums throughout the state
- The Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation's "Turn the Town Teal" program

The Mayor has also met with each of the City's department heads, for at least one hour each.

Council President Ratchford reported that she had asked the City Administrator to look into putting the Council meeting recordings online.

She also reported that, once the City Administrator and building official come up with more information related to infrastructure and priorities for streets and drainage, a special meeting will be scheduled to discuss those items.

Comments from the Floor

Gary Burgmuller, President of the New Castle Hundred Lions Club, spoke in favor Resolution 2017-34.

Speaker Tim Slavin, Director, Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs

Tim Slavin, Director, Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs introduced colleagues that attended the meeting with him. He reported that the New Castle Courthouse Museum has achieved accreditation from the American Alliance for Museums. Mr. Slavin also recognized Cyndi Snyder's efforts related to the museum and community participation.

Proclamations from the Mayor

Mayor Gambacorta read two Proclamations, both having been posted on 10/03/2017. The first was a Proclamation recognizing Monday, November 6, 2017 as the 4th Annual "Color the World Orange Day" to help promote awareness of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, also known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. The second was a Proclamation recognizing Saturday, November 25, 2017 as Small Business Saturday in the City of New Castle.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2017-32;

A motion was made and seconded, to consider Resolution 2017-32; A Resolution to allow Resident Handicapped Parking at 45 W. Fourth Street. The Resolution, which was posted by Council President Ratchford on 10/03/2017, was read into the record by Council President Ratchford.

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

Council President Ratchford mentioned that the reason the handicapped parking permit under Resolution 2017-32 had to be considered before Council is that there was other available parking. Normally, a person who needs such a permit need only apply to the City office.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2017-34;

A motion was made and seconded, to consider **Resolution 2017-34**; A Resolution granting request from New Castle Hundred Lions Club to place a plaque on a donated Street Tree commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Lions Club. The Resolution, which was posted by Council President Ratchford on 10/03/2017, was read into the record by Council President Ratchford.

Councilperson Quaranta asked Mr. Losco whether the plaque needs to go through the approval process of the Historic Area Commission, because of its proposed placement in the historic district. Mr. Losco advised that it would not, as the plaque will not be attached to a structure.

Mr. Burgmuller advised that the design and size of the plaque had not yet been decided on. Jeff Bergstrom advised that it might be worthwhile for Mr. Burgmuller to discuss this with the Historic Area Commission (“HAC”). Mr. Losco stated that he had just checked, and the plaque would require HAC approval.

Council congratulated the Lions Club on their many years of service.

Resolution 2017-34 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2017-35

A motion was made and seconded, to consider Resolution 2017-35, A Resolution approving annual license fees for telecommunications facilities. The Resolution, which was posted by Council President Ratchford on 10/03/2017, was read into the record by Council President Ratchford.

Councilperson Di Mondri requested a motion to change the fee to a per device fee, rather than a per property fee.

Mr. Losco clarified that the Board of Adjustment would have to approve each antenna.

After discussion, it was determined that there are three options on the floor; one is the Resolution as currently written, which is per property; another is to change the Resolution to be per device or antenna; another is to change the resolution to be per carrier.

A motion was made and seconded **to table Resolution 2017-35. The motion was carried unanimously.** More information and research will be requested from the City Solicitor, before considering the Resolution again.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2017-36

A motion was made and seconded to consider **Resolution 2017-36**, A Resolution approving excess trash pickup fees. The Resolution, which was posted by Councilperson Di Mondri on 10/03/2017, was read into the record by Council President Ratchford.

Councilperson Quaranta offered an amendment to the Resolution for consideration, which consists of striking out the words “residential and,” in the fifth paragraph, making the Resolution relate to commercial properties.

Councilperson Quaranta offered a second amendment to the Resolution for consideration, increasing the fee from \$20 to \$25 per week.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Resolution by, in paragraph five, striking out the words “residential and,” making the Resolution relate to commercial properties. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Resolution by changing the \$20 per week fee to \$25 per week. The motion was passed by a vote of 3 to 2.

Resolution 2017-36 was passed by a vote of 3 to 2.

The Motion passed, with the Council votes recorded as follows:

Councilperson Valarie W. Leary - No
Council person Michael J. Quaranta - Yes
Council President Linda Ratchford - Yes
Council person Michael M. Platt - No
Councilperson John A. Di Mondri - Yes

Councilperson Di Mondri recognized that Senator Poore was in attendance at the meeting.

Council discussion on disposition of Dobbinsville Police Station

There was discussion on the disposition of the Dobbinsville Police Station, including some background and historical information on the building, provided by the City Administrator. It was decided to request additional input on the topic, from the residents of Dobbinsville, and discuss further at a future meeting.

Councilperson Di Mondri asked Mr. Barthel to look into whether there are state programs that might be available to the children of Dobbinsville.

Roger Clark commented on the branding project, stating that it should be considered a marketing project. He expressed his concern that the project might be too internally focused, and offered his assistance.

Paula Stockton spoke on behalf of the Pinkett family, to thank the Council for the Resolution, and would like to accept it on November 5th. Regarding the drug issue, she reported that two people are now in rehab, since the railroad was closed. Regarding the Dobbinsville Police Station, she advised that there are insurance issues that need to be considered.

Karen Whalen asked the Council where they are in the consideration of a previous proposal that had been put forth, at the meeting at which City Charter changes process was discussed, specifically that a clause be added to the Charter, allowing citizens to put referendums on ballots, during elections.

Council President Ratchford advised that the City Solicitor is doing some research, and the topic is scheduled to be discussed further at the November meeting.

Phil Gross commended the Council on how they handled the discussion of excess trash fees. Regarding the Dobbinsville Police Station, he stated that people moving in an area is a deterrent to drugs and crime. Regarding the branding project, he advised that outside input is important, as well as businesses picking up a portion of the costs.

Sandy Beale spoke on the topic of civility, expressing that Council President Ratchford lecturing the citizenry is not appropriate, in her opinion.

Ben Beale spoke on comments overheard after the July meeting, that were inappropriate, in his opinion, as well as comments made by a Council member, at the September meeting. He requested that Council members seriously consider their comments before emotional outbursts.

Councilperson Leary made motion to adjourn the meeting; Councilperson Platt seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 09:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian G. Whitaker

City Clerk of New Castle, Delaware