New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
February 26, 2018 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Baldini, Chair
                    Jonathan Justice, Vice Chair
                    Gail Seitz
                    Russ Smith
                    Peter Toner

Members Absent: Brenda Antonio
                    Marco Boyce
                    William Walters
                    Vera Worthy

Mr. Baldini called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Roll call followed. A quorum was declared. Russ Smith was introduced and welcomed to the Planning Commission.

Minutes – Corrections were noted. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 1/22/18 Planning Commission Meeting as amended. Motion approved.**

2019 Comprehensive Plan – Mr. Justice informed that a team of three highly-motivated University of Delaware (UD) undergraduate students, most majoring in public policy, will be working with the Planning Commission and planning consultants to develop a public involvement plan to help guide commissioners in getting the greatest and broadest participation possible from residents. We want to ensure their interests and concerns are taken into consideration during the planning process. Further, Mr. Justice said that students will work with the planning consultants (KCI) defining what they can and cannot get done in the available time, document the agreement, and work with commissioners to deliver the product. The students will tell commissioners what they need and how to get that from commissioners. Ms. Seitz asked if students will be able to participate in public meetings. Mr. Justice said it will depend on the students' timeframe and what they negotiate with the Planning Commission. The students will be completely done with the project by the second week in May.

WILMAPCO – Mr. Baldini reminded that the Planning Commission previously asked WILMAPCO to help with some aspects of the transportation plan and they planned to provide some staffing for the project. WILMAPCO then talked about matched funding. The Planning Commission was not successful in receiving the grant we were seeking. In summary, WILMAPCO will help to write the transportation plan based on data they and the Planning Commission has.

Information Gathering -- Mr. Baldini reviewed organizations within the town with commissioners. Commissioners discussed same and added those to his list. Mr. Baldini will update his information and redistribute to commissioners. Commissioners were asked to add any addresses and points of contact they may have.

Mr. Baldini said a survey will be done that speaks to the goals, mission, annual events and organizational history of the groups to get a better profile of all the groups.

Mr. Toner asked who the UD students would interact with considering the compressed timeline for the project. Mr. Justice said that needs to be determined. Debbie Pfeil and Lauren Good of KCI wrote the project description and one of them will be the point of contact for the students. Mr. Baldini welcomes the students' involvement with the Planning Commission saying it is beneficial for all parties.

The organizations will be divided among commissioners. It was suggested that commissioners do phone interviews (1-2 minutes) with the groups and make follow-up calls for more details.

Events from various sources were reviewed with commissioners. Additional events were added to the list.

Mr. Baldini then individually reviewed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) he has identified. Commissioners discussed and added their input to the list.

Mr. Baldini said there are a number of reports, some electronically, that can be used as resources. He suggested finding a way to organize this information so it can be referenced easily. Ms. Seitz referenced the Downtown Development District application as a source for information about SWOT. The application will be pulled and pertinent information culled from it.

Mr. Baldini informed there are a number of grants we can apply for to help with funding. Ms. Seitz stated when doing a new plan the State of Delaware Office of Planning recommends coming up with funding resources for some of the initiatives that have been in place for years.

Mr. Baldini will edit the SWOT spreadsheet and send to commissioners to fill in the blanks and return to Mr. Baldini. He will edit the spreadsheet; it will be shared with residents during neighborhood meetings. Mr. Baldini will divide the groups and notify commissioners.

Debbie Pfeil will begin doing monthly reports starting in March. A schedule should be provided in March.

Commissioner's Comments – None.
Mr. Justice – Continues to request zoning maps in the meeting room.

Ms. Seitz – There will be a Community Resiliency Workshop on Sea Level Rise and Flooding on 3/14/18. Study results can feed directly into the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Input – A resident in the audience questioned the comment about lack of funding for marketing as a weakness. Mr. Baldini said there is not enough money in the City's budget to

do promotions of the town. That is why many of the nonprofits are doing their own marketing. He added there are a number of grants we need to be applying for to help with those costs.

Resident Rob Miller has spoken to the Planning Commission in the past about instituting an anti-chop ordinance in the City. His concern is with homes originally built as single-family homes being converted into multi-unit rentals on a single taxable lot. Parking becomes an issue, there is over taxing of City utilities like water and electric, and police. He has spoken with City Council and City Administrator Bill Barthel.

Noting historic guidelines/regulations, Mr. Toner said we do not make it easy and inviting to buy a large historic house. He supports Mr. Miller's proposal. Mr. Baldini said this is an issue that warrants discussion. It is something that could extend beyond the historic district.

The Planning Commission's next meeting is 3/26/18. **There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10 p.m.**

Debbie Turner
Stenographer