

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes  
August 27, 2018 -- 6:30 p.m.  
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Baldini, Chair  
Jonathan Justice, Vice Chair  
Brenda Antonio  
Gail Seitz  
Russ Smith  
William Walters  
Vera Worthy

Members Absent: Marco Boyce  
Peter Toner

Guests: Debbie Pheil, Project Manager KCI

Mr. Baldini called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum was declared.

**Minutes**

**A Motion to approve the Minutes of the July 23, 2018, Planning Commission meeting as presented was made, seconded and approved unanimously.**

Mr. Justice joined the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

**2019 Comprehensive Plan**

Ms. Pheil, who is managing the Commission's Comprehensive Plan Update, introduced herself and explained that she would be going over the planned Meeting #3, the Kick-off Meeting of the project.

Ms. Pheil advised that she would be reviewing the Project Meetings, Data Collection, the Survey that was submitted from WILMAPCO, Committee Homework and Next Steps in the project.

**Project Meetings**

The scope of work agreed to with the Planning Commission and the City is 11 meetings. Two scope refining meetings were held: one on 9/25/17 and one on 10/16/17, and the current meeting is the third scope refining meeting.

The Data Collection Reveal, Meeting #4, is tentatively scheduled for the winter.

At the Outreach Results meeting (#5), all data collected from the State, County, Federal, and Census will be reviewed. At that meeting, everything from the data collection will be revealed and how things have changed from the last Plan will be reviewed.

The remaining meetings are:

#6 – Goals & Strategies

#7 – Draft Document Meeting

#8 – Draft Plan Public Presentation

#9 – Public Hearing (Joint Planning Commission/City Council)

#10 – Comment Meeting

#11 – Potential Adoption (Joint Planning Commission/City Council)

Ms. Pheil advised there would be sufficient time between the meetings so the documents can be reviewed and public input can be obtained.

### **Data Collection – Planning Commission Outstanding Items**

Ms. Pheil reviewed the items that still need to be received from the Commissioners. She explained that KCI cannot move forward until all outstanding items have been individually completed.

### **Existing Plan – Redline Comments**

Four of the nine Commissioners have submitted redline comments on the Comp Plan. She explained that each Commissioner needs to submit their individual redline comments as soon as possible. Mr. Smith noted that as a new Commissioner, he was not sure he had any comments on the old Plan. Ms. Pheil explained that if he felt that he did not have any comments to make on the old Plan, he should send that information to Mr. Baldini, and Mr. Baldini will pass that information on to KCI. She added that each Commissioner needs to respond individually to Mr. Baldini with their comments, or if they have no comments, with their agreement to the old Plan. She further explained that KCI requires the Commissioners to respond to each task individually.

### **Events List – 57 identified**

Ms. Pheil advised that there were 57 events identified in the town, and only three were received back from the Commissioners. She noted that the Events List helps to identify the community character. She received nine from Ms. Seitz at the present meeting, so 12 have now been received. She explained that KCI tries to take the Comprehensive Plan and talk about the community character to embrace all the neighborhood events and who might want comments in the document (i.e., non-profits, volunteer, etc.).

### **Organization List – 38 Identified**

Thirty-eight organizations have been identified, and seven have been received by KCI.

### **SWOT Analysis – Individually Completed**

Ms. Pheil noted that the SWOT Analysis is probably the most important item for KCI. She explained the SWOT Analysis was the anonymous document sent out by KCI of strengths/weaknesses, opportunities/threats, and only three out of nine have been received. She emphasized that the SWOT Analysis needs to be 100%. She noted that there were some collective responses, but only one comment. Mr. Baldini noted that the spreadsheet sent to KCI consolidated the Commissioners' comments. Ms. Seitz added that

all the Commissioners comments were consolidated. Ms. Pheil explained that each Commissioner received an anonymous SWOT worksheet as homework and the worksheets should have been completed individually. She asked if the Commissioners felt the SWOT Analysis task was complete, or if they want an opportunity to submit individual worksheets. Mr. Justice stated that he felt each of the Commissioners should submit a worksheet, and Ms. Pheil added that she felt it was very important to have the task completed individually. Mr. Baldini advised that individual worksheets would be completed and returned to KCI.

Ms. Pheil emphasized the importance of having the Data Collection completed as soon as possible, and advised she could extend the due date in order to give the Commissioners adequate time. She added that the SWOT Plan should be the #1 priority of the Commission.

#### Data Collection – Ongoing Items – KCI Staff

##### Plan Data

- City – Received Questionnaire from City. The questionnaire requesting all the data they have (*are you collecting business licenses, are you collecting building permits, when is the last annexation, etc.*) was received on August 24, 2018. KCI will pull out information from the Questionnaire and use that as data to write the Plan. After the data is analyzed, KCI will present their findings to the Planning Commission.
- County – Ongoing. KCI met with Mr. Rich Hall and other municipalities and reviewed that documentation and is pulling that data in as well.
- State – Ongoing Multiple Departments. There are several departments in State Planning and KCI is pulling all the latest data into the Plan.
- Federal – Ongoing. There are a number of Federal departments that will affect the Plan.
- Census Availability – Tracking Updates. KCI is pulling in the Census data as well as projections from the Population Consortium for Delaware for the Plan. The Census data for non-population will be updated by the American Community Survey in December and KCI will use that data as well. Population Census data will not be available at that time. Mr. Baldini asked if that data will give the Commission the demographics they are looking for, and Ms. Pheil advised the Plan of 2009 will be updated with the current data for the new Plan.
- Municipal Services Commission – Requested Meeting. KCI asked to meet with MSC regarding utilities growth information and will include that data as well. Mr. Justice asked if KCI was going to speak with the Trustees regarding open space and the 700 +/- acres of property they control, including land zoned for commercial use. Ms. Pheil advised that KCI would conduct an interview with the Trustees to see what their Vision Plan is and bring that information back to the Commission. She asked

that the Commissioners notify KCI of any other critical stakeholders that should be added.

- WILMAPCO – Ongoing. KCI is done communicating with WILMAPCO and trying to obtain a negotiation. She noted that the Commission has had further discussions with them, but KCI needs to start moving on the project to meet the deadlines. Ms. Seitz noted that she was not certain what information had been communicated to KCI, but WILMAPCO agreed to do the Transportation piece and they have been helping with the survey. WILMAPCO sent a draft survey that the Commissioners reviewed and it is currently in Survey Monkey. Ms. Pheil noted that she did not have a follow-up from their last meeting. She added that KCI had numerous questions about the survey since they were not part of it. She will note that WILMAPCO is doing the Transportation section. She added that KCI has started doing the mapping.

### Survey

Ms. Pheil noted that KCI recommended a survey, but it was not included in their scope. She asked that the Commissioners ask WILMAPCO some questions regarding the survey:

- Draft Survey released for comments Ms. Seitz advised that it was being released via Survey Monkey. Ms. Pheil asked if the town was going to enter data from surveys completed by hand. Ms. Seitz advised that the Commissioners agreed that in addition to having the survey available on Survey Monkey, hard copies of the survey will be available and the City will be asked to include survey information on its website. During discussion, the number of IP addresses allowed for the survey was reviewed. Ms. Pheil noted that by limiting the number of IP addresses allowed, the number of people in a household who want to take the survey could be reduced. Ms. Pheil added that other municipalities have dealt with online surveys in different ways, but in her experience, no more than four surveys have been received from a single IP address.
- How is the survey being released? The survey is being released via Survey Monkey and having hard copies of the survey available. Ms. Pheil advised that KCI had a very effective release (900 respondents) by using the City website as a portal.
- Who is promoting outreach? Ms. Pheil noted that this is possibly the most important thing. She advised that one of the municipalities KCI is working with is not promoting the outreach, and residents are not taking the survey. She suggested flyers, website, newsletters, mailings, etc. Mr. Justice added that using the City's website as a portal is very easily communicated in a newsletter. Ms. Pheil suggested using social media blasts, and noted that communicating a beginning date and an end date is very important. She added that using quick response barcodes has been very effective (*an idea received from the University of Delaware students*). She explained that the barcode can be scanned using a phone and it takes you right to the survey. She asked if the Commissioners had identified start and end dates

because that data has to be collected and revealed during the next meeting. Ms. Seitz asked if KCI was going to provide a defined timeline for tasks. Ms. Pheil advised that KCI is trying to do a timeline; but the timeline is dependent on KCI receiving all homework from the Commissioners. She added that KCI has not been involved in the survey data, including the survey launch.

- What is the schedule (release & due date)? Ms. Seitz noted that the launch date still needs to be determined and asked when all the data needed to be collected. Ms. Pheil advised that the target date for receiving all data is within the next three months. She added that if the launch is September, the end date should be the end of November.

Ms. Seitz stated that the Commissioners had discussed taking the survey results and then conducting outreach meetings in various communities. Ms. Pheil explained that outreach meetings should not be conducted until all the data is collected, and suggested those meetings be held in early spring. Ms. Antonio noted that the Commissioners had discussed how the survey would drive the outreach meetings. Ms. Pheil noted that because November is a holiday month, the survey could be conducted in September and October, and perhaps half of November. She added that along with the survey results, the other data KCI provides will also drive discussions at the outreach meetings. Mr. Baldini asked if Data Collection and the Survey should be completed by November end, and Ms. Pheil explained that KCI is looking to complete their work in the winter months (November/December); however that is dependent on the Commissioners completing homework tasks. Ms. Antonio suggested the end-date of the survey be November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Pheil suggested that the survey be heavily promoted throughout the communities. She added that the Planning Commissioners of the municipality that received 900 respondents went door-to-door, distributed flyers and post cards, and made a concerted campaign effort. They also attended homeowner association meetings, visited schools, and had an informational table at events and fairs. She suggested contacting organization heads to have information distributed to members. Mr. Walters asked what percentage of response KCI expects, and Ms. Pheil said their target is 500 respondents. She added that the Commissioners have a short window, and that normally an outreach program is promoted for about six months before the release date. New Castle has a 60-90 day window and the budget did not allow for some promotional avenues that require funding.

Ms. Antonio asked if KCI recommends having non-residents complete the survey, and Ms. Pheil said that non-resident input is also very important. She added that when KCI is in charge of the entire project, they set up a tent at the largest community event in the municipality to promote the survey, and they try to get residents, tourists, and walkable/livable individuals to complete the survey. She also noted that one of the questions is "Do you live here? Do you work here?" Ms. Antonio noted that the questions on the New Castle survey are geared to residents,

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and Mr. Baldini said they would look at the questions to ensure they are not too resident-specific. Ms. Pheil advised that KCI tries to have online surveys that can be completed in less than 15 minutes, and 10 minutes is optimum. She added that the Commission can review the timeline in December to see if an extension is necessary.

- Who is collecting the data? Survey Monkey is collecting online data and the Commissioners will collect hard copy surveys.
- What is the data format? The survey format is Survey Monkey, which is what KCI uses. KCI will take all results and submit the data as an appendix at the back of the Plan. Mr. Smith asked what KCI expects should be done with the hard copy surveys. Ms. Pheil advised that data from all hard copy surveys will need to be input into Survey Monkey. She suggested that volunteers from the local high school honors program could receive service hours to assist in data input.
- Who is analyzing the data? Ms. Pheil suggested that if, after the Commissioners talk to WILMAPCO about the survey, they feel the timeline is too tight to accomplish the assigned tasks in the next 60 days, the Commissioners should determine if the timeline needs to be pushed. KCI will only need two weeks to analyze the data and complete that task.

Committee Homework – Goals – Due September 21, 2018

Government Services & Community Facilities Plan

- Review and update City Charter and planning documents
- Buyer Information Package

Land Use Plan

- Continue to encourage mixed residential/retail/office uses
- Develop New Castle's remaining undeveloped parcels, brownfields, and redevelopment areas harmoniously with nearby land uses
- Develop and adopt long-term redevelopment vision plans for the Ferry Cutoff and the 7<sup>th</sup> & South Streets areas

Ms. Pheil advised that KCI would like the Commissioners to focus on the survey, and added that the September 21 due date for the Committee Goals can be pushed to November if necessary. KCI will provide a spreadsheet with all Goals from every Chapter, and they need to know (1) is it still relevant, (2) should they keep it in the plan, and (3) is there something new that needs to be added to the plan.

Committee Homework – Strategies – Due September 21, 2018

Government Services & Community Facilities Plan

- Mayor and City Council to appoint a Special Commission or Committee to review the existing Charter and recommend appropriate revisions, modifications and amendments

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- Charter Review Commission to include elected officials, City solicitor, City staff and residents
- Charter Review process should include significant public involvement
- Review the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination to ensure it still meets the City's needs and make revisions if needed
- Develop an Ordinance requiring every purchaser who acquires title to land within the City to view a "Buyer Information Package" disclosing the status of the zoning, historic preservation, floodplains or wetlands on the property prior to purchase

Mr. Baldini noted that some issues have moved from being Goals and Strategies to being Requirements by statute, and those should become a To-Do List for the City. Ms. Pfeil noted that after Goals and Strategies are done, the next step is Implementation, and that is the last meeting of the Comp Plan. She reminded the Commissioners that not all of the Implementation items will be completed due to funding issues; however, if funding becomes available tasks can be prioritized and shifted, or items can be added to the City Budget. Mr. Baldini noted that Ms. Woods said she had a list of 85 potential funding sources and he asked Ms. Pfeil if KCI can provide a list of the agencies doing the funding associated with the Implementation as that will assist in accomplishing the To-Do tasks. Ms. Pfeil advised that KCI will not put all of their funding resources in the document, but they will refer to obtaining future funding which is a Business Plan. She added that KCI can help write a Grant for funding for the next project. She added that Implementation is the last step of the Comp Plan, and the New Castle Comp Plan is still in Data Collection. She also noted that the Commission should be looking now for 2019 funding, which could mean additional tasks in the Comp Plan.

Ms. Pfeil emphasized the importance of staying on the task of Data Collection and she cautioned the Commission not to get too far ahead of the process. Ms. Seitz asked if KCI wants all Goals and Strategies homework completed individually, and Ms. Pfeil reiterated that all homework should be done by every Commissioner individually. Mr. Baldini clarified that the Goals and Strategies were pulled from the Annual Plan. Mr. Smith asked if Ms. Pfeil wanted the Commissioners to respond directly to her, and she requested that all communications be made through Mr. Baldini.

Mr. Baldini asked if KCI had provided a copy of the current year Annual Report, and Ms. Pfeil advised what was provided to Mr. Barthel was not the Commission's spreadsheet, it was just the Annual Report of what was done. She added that the spreadsheet she prepared 3 years ago will be updated. Ms. Pfeil will send all forms to Mr. Baldini with instructions.

Committee Homework – Outstanding Items – Due September 21, 2018

- Existing Plan Redline – Ms. Pfeil noted that if there are no comments, the Commissioners should email Mr. Baldini and he will pass that information on to KCI. Mr. Smith asked if there was a format to be followed, and Ms. Pfeil advised some redlined with a pen or added information. Mr. Walters advised he already

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submitted a Plan redline, and Mr. Baldini will check to make sure it has been forwarded to KCI. Ms. Pfeil reiterated that all data should be submitted individually and the importance of staying on the task at hand. Ms. Pfeil explained the Data Reveal process where all strengths are discussed and categorized. She added that threats and weaknesses are categorized ahead of time and addressed as they come up in the Chapters.

- Events List
- Organization List
- SWOT Analysis

#### Next Steps

##### Committee Homework

- New due September 21, 2018
- Outstanding due September 21, 2018

##### KCI Tasks To Do

- Analyze staff data
- Continue data collection
- Continue drafting document
- Prepare for next meeting

Ms. Pfeil advised that it will be several months before KCI attends another Commission meeting. She added that she will be available for conference calls if necessary.

Ms. Pfeil suggested creating a web page link on the City website for all information on the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Seitz asked if Ms. Pfeil had a definition of the Comprehensive Plan since many people do not understand what it is or how it impacts them individually and communally. Ms. Pfeil advised that she would forward what KCI has. She added that she will also forward samples of the flyers and post cards KCI has used. Other types of promotional opportunities she suggested were placemats at local restaurants, marquees, and flyers taped to pizza delivery boxes explaining what the Comprehensive Plan is and how residents' input can impact the community.

Mr. Walters asked what Survey Monkey is, and Ms. Pfeil explained it is a software program where the survey is housed and questions are easily populated.

Mr. Baldini asked about branding, and Ms. Pfeil advised that KCI will use the branding colors the City already uses throughout their document. She reminded the Commissioners that they are doing an update vs. a full re-write of the Plan.

Ms. Pfeil noted that at the Data Reveal the updated Plan will include all data that has not changed as well as highlight new data and data that has changed.

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Ms. Seitz asked if there is enough time to meet the final deadline if the Reveal is done in winter. Ms. Pfeil reviewed the meetings, noting that Outreach Results will be done with Data Collection Reveal (meetings 4 and 5). Meetings 9, 10 and 11 will take approximately 3 months. She noted that in December the Commission will be able to determine if an extension is needed. During discussion of parcel-by-parcel land use, Mr. Baldini noted that Mr. Bergstrom could do that if it is necessary. Ms. Pfeil noted that after the Plan with Future Land Use has been adopted the Commission will have 18 months to ensure the zoning matches the Future Land Use Map, or the Comp Plan can be amended. It was noted that is a #1 priority of Implementation because it is mandated by State Law. Mr. Baldini expressed his concern that the current 2009 Comprehensive Plan is in conflict with the State Checklist. Ms. Pfeil noted the Checklist was correct in 2009, but the Checklist was modified in 2015. She added that the new Comprehensive Plan Update Scope was written by the new Checklist, and it will be in compliance with the 2015 Checklist. Ms. Pfeil explained the process of creating the Draft document, citing the page where comments have been added. She added that the documents to be submitted to the state are: Draft Plan, Comp Plan Update Checklist Application, and Comments from Pre-Plus.

Ms. Pfeil envisions a potential extension as long as there is justification. She added that a lot of new information is being received from surveys, and what matters has completely changed. Mr. Baldini asked if the changes were more from an age group or an ethnic group, and Ms. Pfeil advised that they do not categorize by demographics. She added that the majority of responses have returned a 60%-85% feedback. Mr. Justice noted that it could be the same respondents but their personal circumstances and focus may have changed in the last 10 years, as well as the increase in traffic and population. Ms. Pfeil added that the current trend is smaller houses with minimal upkeep.

Ms. Pfeil reiterated that she will send examples of flyers and post-cards, as well as the definition of Comp Plan. She added that KCI did not go through the survey questions because they did not feel comfortable telling WILMAPCO how to do their survey.

Ms. Pfeil also reiterated that all information should be sent to her through Mr. Baldini.

Mr. Justice noted that a possible project for his students in the fall is a Business Survey for Main Street in Newark.

Ms. Pfeil noted that the Planning Conference is coming up in October, and she will send the link to Mr. Baldini. She suggested the Commissioners might gain some useful information at the Conference.

Mr. Baldini noted that Mr. Bergstrom sent some maps to add to the survey with numbering for the neighborhoods, and he asked for more specific maps identifying neighborhood areas. Ms. Seitz asked if everyone received the attachment Mr. Justice sent out showing some of the neighborhood results. She noted that each neighborhood had a delineated map. Mr. Baldini noted that the map from Mr. Bergstrom is not as specific as Mr. Justice's

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map. Ms. Pfeil asked if those maps were in the Comp Plan, and Mr. Justice advised he would send out updated maps. Ms. Seitz noted that the survey will have questions to identify what neighborhood the respondents live in, and the Commissioners wanted to include a reference map to assist in identifying the neighborhoods. Ms. Pfeil suggested that the survey not ask where the respondents live. She added that any map provided should clearly show street names with house numbers to identify which sides of the street on which residents live. Ms. Seitz noted that Mr. Justice's map shows more of an area vs. street-by-street. She also added that respondents from the Historic District might answer questions differently from respondents in other areas or neighborhoods. Mr. Baldini noted that neighborhood identification was being asked in order to determine the number of respondents from the various communities. Mr. Justice added that asking for the respondents' nearest intersection would give a location without asking for an address. Mr. Walters expressed his concern that asking for an address or location could give the appearance of bias in the survey. Ms. Pfeil suggested that if neighborhood identification was taken off the survey, the outreach meetings could identify neighborhood issues through targeted outreach. She added that when the surveys come back issues can then be identified as city-wide vs. neighborhood. Ms. Pfeil also noted that for the last outreach, meetings were held in the different neighborhoods and a survey was not used. After an in-depth discussion it was agreed to revise the Survey to remove the request for neighborhood identification and the map of the City, and identify neighborhood issues during individual outreach meetings when high-interest topics can be discussed.

Ms. Antonio asked what the introductory paragraph of the survey said, and Ms. Pfeil advised that KCI can provide an introductory paragraph for the survey. Ms. Seitz suggested that the introductory paragraph request that answers apply to the City vs. the respondent's neighborhood.

Mr. Baldini asked if the Commissioners had any further comments. Mr. Baldini noted that he sent the survey out and asked if they were satisfied with Mr. Smith's comments. Ms. Seitz noted that she changed it. Mr. Justice suggested that all the Commissioners test the survey to see how long it takes to complete it. Ms. Seitz advised that Survey Monkey sent a draft and it did not contain all of the Commission's comments. She added that she would collectively get the Commissioners' comments and send them to Survey Monkey so the survey can be updated and the Commissioners can test it. Ms. Pfeil suggested that when reviewing the questions the Commissioners identify if the question is necessary to complete the Comp Plan or not, and if it is not, the question should be deleted.

Ms. Pfeil advised that she will send the breakdown of races, which needs to match the Census track.

Mr. Smith suggested the Commission review how Outreach is planned and who will be in charge. Mr. Smith agreed to start planning Outreach and asked for all of the Commissioner's input and help. Ms. Pfeil will provide some options that will be helpful for the Outreach meetings. She added that the organization list the Commission provided was

very helpful, and instead of contacting all members, the head of the organization can be contacted and communicate with their members.

**Public Comments**

Ms. Cindy Brooks – 118 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Ms. Brooks explained that she had an Application to add a shed to her property, and she was advised to present the Application at the August 27<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Baldini advised that her Application was for the Historic Area Commission. Ms. Brooks replied that she was told her Application might not need to be presented to the Historic Area Commission since it was only a shed. Ms. Antonio advised that the issue was public comment, and the Commission could not act on it; however, it could be placed on a future Agenda so the public could comment on the Application. Mr. Baldini noted that the Application is for Mr. Bergstrom and it would go before the Historic Area Commission. Mr. Justice added that Mr. Bergstrom could advise Ms. Brooks if the Application needed to go before the Historic Area Commission. He told Ms. Brooks where Mr. Bergstrom's office was and suggested that she reach out to him. The Commissioners expressed their regret that they were unable to review the Application.

**There being no further business, a Motion to adjourn the Meeting was made and seconded. The Motion was carried and the Meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.**

Kathy Weirich  
Stenographer