

**City of New Castle Delaware**  
**Public Hearing City Council Meeting New Castle**  
**Tuesday, November 13, 2018– 6:30 p.m.**

**Roll Call:** 6:30 pm

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

**Also present:**

Jimmy Gambacorta, Mayor  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
William Barthel, City Administrator  
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official and Fire Marshal

Council President Ratchford stated the purpose of this public meeting, is a hearing regarding Ordinance 516, An Ordinance to amend the City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan and to rezone tax parcel 21-017.00-045 (708 W. 7th Street) and tax parcel 21-017.00-046 (706 W.7th Street) to the RC (Retail Commercial) zoning classification. (Council President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2018.)

Ms. Ratchford read a letter from David Baldini, Chair of the Planning Commission, regarding the Ordinance. The letter reiterates the request from City Council that the Planning Commission provide a recommendation regarding Ordinance 516, and notes that there are two requests; one being that the Comprehensive Plan be amended, to ensure that the proposed rezoning is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan; the second being that the parcels be rezoned, and that the Zoning Map be revised, to reflect these changes.

The letter further states that the Planning Commission found no objection to the matter, and has voted unanimously to recommend that the requested changes to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Map be made.

City Administrator Barthel summarized the background behind Ordinance 516, which began with a request that the city market and sell the Dobbinsville Police Substation. The potential purchaser of the property required that the property be rezoned. The property owners next door had no objection to the zoning change.

Mr. Barthel has confirmed with the buyers that they intend to purchase the property, and pending approval of the zoning change, closing of the sale is anticipated to be 11/19/2018.

Councilperson Di Mondì expressed concern about the process, time and expense involved in selling the property.

Councilperson Quaranta requested confirmation that address 706 is the former Police Substation, and 708 is the former pizza parlor. This was confirmed.

Mr. Barthel pointed out that the offer to purchase the property is contingent upon the zoning change being considered.

Terry Gormley, of the New Castle Weekly, asked whether Mr. Barthel has an idea of what the costs are, that are associated with making the zoning change.

Mr. Barthel responded that he does not know, but a guess might be a few thousand dollars.

Councilperson Quaranta commented that previously, there had been interest expressed in the property being used for church-related services and social services, but that others had stated that those uses were not wanted for the property. The currently proposed use seems to be the next best use, and is financially viable.

Council President Ratchford commented that putting these properties back in use and making them appealing, with community support, can improve the tax base. Also, an occupied building is preferred over an unoccupied building, which is a detriment to any community.

Councilperson Di Mondì stated that he does not object to the proposed use of the property, that his objection is to the process required to make it happen.

Mr. Barthel commented that the proposed change results in avoidance of costs to the city of repairing and maintaining the property.

Councilperson Platt agreed with Mr. Di Mondì about the amount of time taken for changes such as these, but stated that public input is needed, and this is the process that has to work.

Councilperson Quaranta pointed out that the long drawn-out process is required, to comply with state law.

After a motion and second, the Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Brian G. Whitaker**

**City Clerk of New Castle, Delaware**