

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
January 28, 2019 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Vera Worthy
Peter Toner

Guests: Debbie Pfeil, KCI Associate/Planning Manager
Lauren Good, KCI Project Planner

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

Mr. Baldini stated there was no quorum at the November and December 2018 Planning Commission Meetings and asked for comments or corrections to the October 22, 2018, Minutes. Ms. Seitz noted a correction to the October 22, 2018, Minutes on page 4, 4th full paragraph, 1st sentence: the word "date" should be "data".

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the October 22, 2018, Planning Commission meeting as amended was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Baldini noted an Agenda change: the Trustees withdrew their Application for the Bowling Alley Parking Lot and that item was removed from the Agenda.

Mr. Baldini introduced Ms. Debbie Pfeil and Ms. Lauren Good from KCI.

Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Pfeil noted the Data Reveal meeting would consist of two segments: the information collected thus far, and the City Survey results. Ms. Pfeil made a presentation of the Project Update, including data collected, goals and next steps.

Ms. Pfeil noted that it is not uncommon to request an extension of the deadline, and recommended a five month extension to December 14, 2019.

The Data Reveal Presentation, the SWOT information, and the Survey Results will all be available on the City of New Castle Website for public viewing.

Mr. Baldini made a presentation of the City of New Castle Survey Results.

At the conclusion of the Survey Results presentation, Ms. Seitz commented that WILMAPCO and KCI had advised a survey response of 500 was very good, and expressed satisfaction that the Survey garnered over 700 responses, with 596 complete responses. She commended the Commissioners who worked hard to communicate the Survey to the communities. She also noted that many respondents wrote in comments that had not yet been analyzed.

Mr. Smith noted responses to residence location will be grouped by region to ensure a true reading of the various communities is reflected.

Mr. Baldini commended Mr. Smith and Ms. Kim Burgmuller for their efforts in creating handouts, door hangers and signs communicating the Survey to the communities. He also thanked WILMAPCO, KCI, and all the Commissioners for their input, thoughts and ideas.

He further noted that one element in the raw data that was not reflected in the Survey Results was that some communities felt a disconnect with the City of New Castle itself, and the outreach will emphasize that everyone's involvement is vital and important.

Mr. Smith added that the Commissioners spent many hours on the streets make every effort to ensure all communities were informed of the Survey and to get a good sampling of the concerns and issues of everyone.

Public Comments

Jim Whisman – 10 Dalby Aly

Mr. Whisman noted that there are several groups and organizations that would be happy contribute to accomplishing goals. He specifically mentioned the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation can provide service to tourism and educational opportunities. He also noted that he has been asked to reenact as Thomas Garrett for Brian Cannon's program with the Underground Railroad. He suggested that providing restroom facilities at the pier for crew members would encourage longer visits by the Kalmar Nyckel and other tall ships. Mr. Baldini commented that bringing in those organizations would not only benefit the community with educational programs, but would encourage tourism and business development. He added that the entire community needs to make the decision to move forward to make New Castle more relevant.

Bernadette Ruf – 157 2nd Street

Ms. Ruf stated that since 1997 she has moved several times in New Castle and in that time her home value has more than doubled. She added that during that same time period businesses on Delaware Street were closing. She commented that people are not against businesses in New Castle, but that with escalating prices it has become difficult to keep a business operating in downtown New Castle.

She added that the surveys show that only 33% of the people were unhappy with parking, and she felt that supports most people in town feel parking is adequate.

Gail Levinson – 318 South Street

Ms. Levinson submitted for the record a Petition that she circulated in October, 2018, that speaks to the feeling about the Bowling Alley parking lot by the people living in closest proximity to the proposed parking lot. She also noted that the same percentage of people who were concerned about parking were concerned about flooding in the park. She added that she felt putting a parking lot in the park goes against the concern people have for what's going on in terms of the park, FEMA reports, etc. She added that an elected official commented to her that there would be a parking lot there *[in the park]* and eventually the people on 3rd Street will appreciate the parking lot.

Roderick Gillespie – 24 West 4th Street

Mr. Gillespie asked why the parking lot Application was removed from the Agenda, and Mr. Baldini explained the Trustees had withdrawn their Application. He also noted that, if the parking lot was item #4 and public comments were item #6 on the Agenda, public comments would be held after the vote on the Bowling Alley parking lot; and therefore, the Commissioners would not hear all comments from the public before voting on the issue. He referenced City of Newark Planning Commission Public Rules of Procedure, in which public comment comes before a vote. Mr. Baldini noted that the order of the Planning Commission Agenda has been in place for over five years. Mr. Gillespie suggested that the Agenda order be changed.

Mr. Baldini will send notes to the Commissioners to plan some time to review homework assignments. He asked Ms. Seitz to contact WILMAPCO to have their logo placed on the Survey Results before it is uploaded to the City Website. Mr. Justice suggested email addresses be deleted from the Survey Results document prior to it being uploaded to the City Website.

There being no further business, a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer