

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
February 25, 2019 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Marco Boyce

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Inspector

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

Public Comment

Dorsey Fiske – 26 East 3rd Street

Ms. Fiske called a point of information. She stated that Mr. Baldini was elected to the Board in 2017, 20 months ago, and the Commission is in violation of City Code Section 58-2A, which states “Said Commission shall elect annually a Chairman ... from its own number”. She also noted that the annual requirement of an election indicates that there should be a rotation of members and it would be appropriate for the current Vice Chair to be nominated and elected. She then asked if Mr. Baldini would call for such an election. Mr. Baldini stated the Commission would discuss Ms. Fiske’s point during Public Comments at the end of the meeting.

Minutes

Mr. Justice noted several corrections to the Minutes of the January 28, 2019, meeting:

- Page 2, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence: change “Bergmuller” to **Burgmuller**
- Page 2, 7th paragraph: change “Ruff” to **Ruf** (two places)
- Page 3, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence: change “mailing” to **email**

Mr. Baldini suggested the Commissioners consider the raw data to ensure the results of the survey are not skewed based on the location respondents identified.

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 28, 2019, Planning Commission meeting as amended was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

46 East 3rd Street – Parcel 21-015.10-120 Minor Subdivision

Mr. Mark Ziegler from McBride & Ziegler, Inc., came forward as representative for Ms. Nancy Jodlbauer requesting the Commission’s recommendation to City Council for a two-lot subdivision for 46 East 3rd Street. He explained the existing tax parcel contains two residential units, and the subdivision will bring the two parcels into compliance with the Code. He noted that the Historic Area Commission approved the Application, that zero

development is being proposed. and both lots will more than meet the minimum lot area requirement.

Mr. Bergstrom confirmed that the subdivision was reviewed and approved by both the City Planner and the City Solicitor, and the Application is before the Planning Commission for recommendation to move the Application to the City Council.

Mr. Justice noted that a 25' rear yard setback is drawn on a part of the lot that includes an existing barn, and Mr. Ziegler explained the Code states the rear lot line must be created along the street with the narrowest frontage and a note has been added to the Plan addressing that issue. Mr. Bergstrom added the City Planner and City Solicitor agreed the Plan needed to be this way. It was also confirmed that the proper processes were met and no laws or Codes have been violated.

Public Comment

Dorsey Fiske – 26 East 3rd Street

Ms. Fiske clarified that the subdivision is to separate the small residence from the rest of the property.

A Motion to recommend the Application as presented to the City Council was made, seconded, and unanimously carried.

Comprehensive Plan

City Website

Mr. Baldini stated that he had forwarded an updated slide presentation to the Commissioners for review, and if the Commissioners approve the deck, the presentation and the original raw data (excluding email addresses) will be posted to the City website. The Commissioners commended Mr. Baldini on the slide presentation.

Mr. Baldini asked that Kim Burgmuller post the following documents to the City website:

- Revised slide presentation
- Revised raw data document (*deleting email addresses – Question #24*)
- KCI's presentation from the January 28, 2019, Planning Commission meeting (*removing any redundant data that was presented at the meeting*)

Public Meetings

After discussion of the format, content, timing and location of the neighborhood meetings, the Commissioners agreed they will conduct three separate two-hour meetings on three separate dates in three separate locations.

Location of Neighborhood Meetings:

There is still a gap with neighborhoods and where neighborhood meetings should be held. It was suggested WILMAPCO could assist with compiling neighborhood maps and setting up meeting logistics. A Subgroup consisting of Ms. Seitz, Ms. Antonio and Mr. Smith will meet with WILMAPCO and discuss these issues.

Target locations for Neighborhood Meetings:

- Downie (Carrie) Elementary School and/or Bellanca Airfield Museum
- Buttonwood School
- Senior Center

The following individuals will contact the target locations to coordinate dates:

- Bill Walters – Senior Center
- Peter Toner – Buttonwood School
- Jeff Bergstrom – Downie (Carrie) Elementary School

Target dates for the Neighborhood Meetings:

- April 29 – May 2

Meeting Format:

During discussion, it was noted that one 2009 Comprehensive Plan neighborhood meeting was conducted for all neighborhoods utilizing basic demographic data and neighborhood maps on easels. A Commission member was stationed at each easel to take notes from people who had comments about things they thought could usefully be changed or kept the same in each specific neighborhood. The data was compiled into a report and distributed to the Commissioners.

It was noted that there are two organizational types of neighborhood meetings typically used in Delaware:

1. Meetings organized by neighborhood
2. Meetings organized by topic area (i.e., economic development, housing, etc.)

The 2019 Neighborhood Meetings will be conducted by neighborhood. It was suggested that two Commissioners attend each of the Neighborhood Meetings. With the survey responses to work with, the meetings can utilize leading observations such as “this was something that came up on a lot of survey responses” to generate attendees’ reactions, thoughts and ideas. The meetings should focus on data collection, but should include data presentation as well. The slide presentation at the beginning of the meeting is a way to acquaint the attendees of data already gathered.

Meeting Topics:

Topics will be pulled from sections of the Plan as well as topics relevant to the specific neighborhood concerns. It was also noted that because Downtown responses dominated on the survey it is critical to refine the survey data to determine neighborhood concerns. Mr. Baldini is manipulating that data to sort neighborhood responses into larger areas:

- Downtown
- Bull Hill
- Washington Park

It was suggested that WILMAPCO can assist by separating out the responses from the neighborhoods.

Responsibilities to the Plan:

Topics that need to be in the Comprehensive plan include housing, census data, quality of life and transportation; and these items should be included in discussions at Neighborhood Meetings. The Office of State Planning Coordination List details all required topics that need to be in the Comprehensive Plan. The 2009 Plan included those required topics, and by addressing all issues from the 2009 Plan in the 2019 Plan, the minimum requirements of the State should be met.

Communicating the Neighborhood Meeting dates and times:

The Neighborhood Meeting dates and times will be communicated to the public via the Town Cryer and the City website.

Timeline of the Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan deadline is July 2019; however that date will be extended to December 2019. The Planning Commission's work will need to be completed in September 2019.

Public Comment on the Comprehensive Plan

Dorsey Fiske – 26 East 3rd Street

Ms. Fiske clarified the discussion had been about public meetings and asked what the Commissioners are putting into the Comprehensive Plan itself. Mr. Baldini explained the Plan would be completed after public input regarding different elements of the Plan has been compiled. He added that the Comprehensive Plan has been discussed at every Planning Commission meeting for the past year and that the WILMAPCO presentation from the January 28, 2019, Planning Commission meeting will be available on the City website.

Phil Gross – 301 Moore Avenue

Mr. Gross asked if the neighborhood meeting presentations will disseminate the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Baldini explained the steps of completing the Comprehensive Plan. The first part of gathering data was the surveys. The next part is to have neighborhood meetings to get public input of wants and needs. There are also State topics that need to be addressed. After all the data is gathered there will be a Reveal. The Commission will then put everything together and there will be another Public Meeting. The Plan will then be presented to Council for their acceptance and finally it will be submitted to the State. The neighborhood meetings are step 2 of the data collection process. He explained the Comprehensive Plan has been an agenda item for the past year and public input could have been given at any time.

Dorsey Fiske – 26 East 3rd Street

Ms. Fiske clarified that the Survey was part of the Commission's work. She noted that multiple choice questions do not help people take surveys, and Mr. Smith explained that the

survey questions will guide the Commission in targeting topics for discussion at the neighborhood meetings. Ms. Fiske expressed her approval of holding the public meetings.

Public Comments

Dorsey Fiske – 26 East 3rd Street

Ms. Fiske reiterated her point that it was a violation of City Code Section 58-2A that the election of a Chairman had not taken place and asked if Mr. Baldini would call for an election. Mr. Baldini concurred that Ms. Fiske was correct and that the election of a Chairman should have already been held. During discussion, Mr. Walters noted that there is no presumption that the current Chair must exit the position and a new Chair elected. Mr. Toner nominated Mr. Baldini as Chairman; however, it was agreed to defer the election to the March meeting so it could be recorded as an Agenda Item.

Commissioner's Comments

43 East 3rd Street

Mr. Walters noted the Plans for 43 East 3rd Street reflect an encroachment, and although the site plan is not a survey, he would like to have the survey exception removed from any title plan. It is a minor encroachment dealing with two property owners who built their fences on the wrong parcel, which could affect title and should be taken care of. Mr. Walters will discuss additional issues with Mr. Bergstrom after the meeting.

Mr. Baldini asked Mr. Bergstrom to draft a letter of the Commission's recommendations to the City Council for Ms. Jodlbauer's property.

WILMAPCO

Ms. Seitz will send an email regarding the meeting with WILMAPCO to discuss the community outreach. She also advised that WILMAPCO is working on a New Castle County Bicycle Plan that includes an interactive survey that she encouraged the Commissioners to take, and she will forward a link to the survey.

There being no further business, a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer