

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
July 22, 2019 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Baldini, Chair
William Walters, Vice Chair
Jonathan Justice
Erin Sabatella
Vera Worthy
Brenda Antonio
Marco Boyce

Members Absent: Peter Toner
Gail Seitz

Mr. Baldini called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Minutes

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the June 24, 2019, Planning Commission meeting as presented was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Ms. Antonio was not in attendance at the June 24, 2019, meeting, and abstained from voting.

Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Baldini began a discussion of the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies document created by KCI.

He noted that the report from Municipal Services will be a significant part of the input for the Infrastructure section of the Plan. The MSC report also contains a number of Goals and Strategies that should also be included.

Mr. Walters noted that he had some questions for the MSC and Plan Goals and Strategies regarding what the Commission can and cannot legally do; the feasibility of some of the goals; and questions about where funding will come from.

Mr. Boyce noted that MSC's report indicates they plan to continue undergrounding and recommended that a note be added that MSC and the City will work together to arrive a strategic way to accomplish that goal. Mr. Baldini concurred, and added that some of the projects relate to a number of different topics simultaneously and those topics need linkage in order to accomplish goals in concert.

Mr. Baldini noted that the City's Annual Report, which was signed by Mayor Quaranta, shows the status of goals against the plan. He added that some of the goals lack funding and recommended that target dates be established for those goals in order to encourage the City to seek ways to obtain funding, giving the metrics some accountability.

Comprehensive Plan Goals

After an initial discussion, it was agreed that the language of all goals should be more tactical.

Government Services

Goal 1 – Review and update City Charter and planning documents.

- Establish a Commission to review and update the existing City Charter with the recommendation that such review include land use review authority by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Goal 2 – Buyer information package

- Strike goal from Plan and have Buyer Information Package uploaded to the City website.

Goal 3 – Long term strategic plan with associated financial accrual plan

- The need for dedicated resources will be added to the Plan Introduction.

New Goal 4 – Obtain adequate resources to help fund strategies

- Staff a position to be responsible for compiling a list of resources and applying for funding

Land Use Plan

Goal 1 – Continue to encourage mixed residential/retail/office uses

- Modify Zoning Code and relevant Design Standards

Goal 2 – Develop New Castle's remaining undeveloped parcels, brownfields, and redevelopment areas harmoniously with nearby land uses

- Incent private investment in redevelopment

Goal 3 – Change to: In light of new plans for roadways, re-evaluate plans for roadways to determine best use of land and transportation. Studies for land use and transportation will be needed

- Re-evaluate the Ferry Cutoff project in light of all State and County roadway projects

Goal 4 will be incorporated in Goal 3 above

During discussion:

- It was suggested that Community Design Goals be combined with Land Use Plan.
- Mr. Walters noted that goals should be identified as (1) what are doable, (2) what are feasible, and (3) what are fundable.
- Mr. Boyce noted that Land Use Plan Goal 3 will be reviewed by WILMAPCO and will require matching funds for a land use and transportation study

Annexation Plan

All Goals will remain as written

Infrastructure Plan

Goal 1 will remain as written

Goal 2 – Encourage improvements for drainage (i.e., corner of 6th & Chestnut, Rt. 9 & Washington, Rt. 9 Bend)

- Continue to implement green infrastructure and green technology to conform to Federal/State regulations on management of untreated stormwater drainage into the river
- Change “Encourage” to Implement” in order to make goal more tactical

Goals 3 and 4 will remain as written

Transportation Plan

Goals 1, 3 and 4 will remain as written

Goal 2 – Clarify regional and local traffic patterns throughout the City

- Authorize the creation of a traffic and roadway study

During discussion it was suggested that the Commission coordinate with DNREC regarding safety and improved utilization at the fishing beach.

Historic & Cultural Resources Plan

Goals 1 and 2 will remain as written

Goal 3 – Develop the lost historical aspects of Shawtown, Dobbinsville, Penside, and Bellanca

During discussion, Mr. Boyce noted that as time passes, more structures can be considered “historic” and buildings such as Dairy Palace and Charcoal Pit are under consideration to be considered historic. Whether newer buildings in New Castle should receive historic protection was considered and Mr. Baldini opined that if a newer structure is considered historic, at the least a plaque recognizing its historic significance could be used. Mr. Walters cautioned the Commission that basing an historic designation on the history of an area without it actually having historic buildings could put an economic burden on the residents; and he suggested striking Goal 3.

Community Design

Goal 1 – Incorporate detailed urban design standards into the City’s development controls to assure high quality new development

- Follow design aspects and design standards when land use regulations and controls are enforced or implemented.

Goal 2 – Reinforce community identity with attractive gateways at the City’s edges

- Include streetscapes and open spaces

Goal 3 – Establish requirements for landscape buffers to screen residential neighborhoods from more intense land uses

After discussion, it was agreed to designate Community Design and all Goals as a sub-set of Land Use Plan.

Economic Development Plan

Goals 1, 2 will remain as written

Goal 3 – Replacement market sectors for lost big box business

- Replace “big box business” with “retail”

Goal 4 – Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with the Trustees of New Castle Commons

- Add “, Municipal Services and New Castle County” after “Trustees of New Castle Commons”

Goal 5 – Economic Plan for Main Street and Waterfront

- Strike Goal 5 from Plan

Mr. Boyce suggested that KCI reorganize the Goal Review document. During discussion it was noted that establishing larger retail stores in the City would create tractor trailer traffic and large parking lots.

Mr. Walters exited the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Housing Plan

All Goals will remain as written

Environmental Protection Plan

Goals 1, 2 and 4 will remain as written

Goal 3 – Conserve State Resource Areas (SRA)

- Strike Goal 3 from the Plan

Goal 5 – Emergency Management Plan

- Move Goal 5 to Government Services

Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan

Goal 1 will remain as written

Goal 2 – Expand local recreational opportunities by creating new neighborhood parks in the Boothhurst and Washington Park neighborhoods

- Remove Boothhurst because residents do not want a neighborhood park

Goal 3 – Explore the development and potential funding of new community-wide recreation facilities, including:

- Community swimming pool
- Public fishing pier and/or non-motorized boat launch
- Greenway and multi-use trail system expansion
- Dog park
- Add: recreational facility at the little league field

- Add: fitness center in town (suggested locations: Charter School or old Middle School buildings)
- Add: Partner with DNREC for wildlife management in parkland
- Add: Work with Trustees for improvements to Trustee-owned land

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal will remain as written

Ms. Antonio will modify the Goal and Strategies spreadsheets and provide copies at the next meeting. A meeting to review Plan Strategies is scheduled for Monday, August 5, 2019, at 6:30 pm.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Baldini called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 pm was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer