

City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, August 13, 2019– 7:00 p.m.

Call to order: 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder
Councilperson Russell P. Smith
Council President Linda Ratchford
Councilperson Michael M. Platt
Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

Also present:

Michael Quaranta, Mayor
William Barthel, City Administrator
Richard McCabe, Chief of Police
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official

Treasurer's Report

The City Treasurer being absent, Council President Ratchford presented the unaudited Treasurer's report, as of July 31, 2019:

Total cash in accounts: \$5,401,945.

After a motion and second, the unaudited Treasurer's report as of July 31, 2019, was approved unanimously.

Reports from the City Administrator and Staff

The City Administrator reported that three contractors attended the Delaware Street project pre-bid meeting on August 6. Bids are due back by August 23. The bids will be presented at the September Council meeting.

104 East 3rd Street was sold at Sheriff's sale today, August 13. The city recuperated roughly \$7,400 in fees and fines owed.

The city's Building Official reported on the recent MS4 inspection. The results of the inspection were positive, with two minor items needing to be addressed. One item was related to the location of the STOPPIT program on the city's website. The other item was the snow plow program not being included in a specific city manual. Both of these items have since been resolved.

Police Chief McCabe's report included:

- The backpack drive at Goodwill ends on August 24. If there are any backpacks left over, they will be donated to local schools.
- There have been five arrests in the city, related to recent motor vehicle thefts.
- Systems and processes have been updated, and continue to be updated, to handle nuisance property complaints at residences. The Chief reviewed some details of how these complaints are now being handled.
- On the topic related to shootings around the County, the Police and Fire Department have met to determine standards they might recommend for community events. This process is ongoing.

Council Communications

Councilperson Smith commented that the Delaware Street project has generated many comments, and that it is not on tonight's agenda. It will be on the agenda for the September meeting, but no decisions will be made at that time.

Councilperson Souder reported that a citizen had requested that Ms. Souder mention that the citizen is interested in receiving old bicycles to paint and decorate, and display on the bike path.

Business from the Mayor

The Mayor expressed his support for the backpack program. He also reminded everybody about the presence of school busses, and well as schoolchildren walking, this time of year.

The Mayor also mentioned that this is the time of year for road projects, and asked that everyone be patient during this time.

Regarding the planned repair work on Delaware Street, the Mayor expressed his preference for more blocks to be repaired than under the current plan.

The community organizations that met recently to discuss shared calendars, volunteers and events in the community have started a survey. They will meet again in September to review the survey results, and discuss next steps.

A group is working on the creation of an Arts Council, possibly a City Commission.

The Mayor expressed support for current work related to residential code enforcement, and would like more information to be required on non-owner-occupied properties, as to either tenants' or property managers' contact information.

Business from the Council President

Council President Ratchford mentioned that the River Towns Festival will take place on October 5. The Lynx will be in for this event.

A group of University of Delaware students are working on a popup project, including a transition plan where the Markell Trail ends. There will be a one-day trial scheduled.

Minutes

After a motion and second, Council voted unanimously to table review of the June 11, 2019 regular meeting minutes.

After a motion and second, the minutes for the June 13 budget workshop, the June 19 budget workshop, and July 9 regular meeting were approved unanimously, as amended.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)

No items.

Proclamation from the Mayor

Mayor Quaranta read a proclamation in support of the Ovarian Cancer Foundation's "Turn the Town Teal" awareness campaign (Mayor Quaranta – posted 08/06/2019).

Old Business

Councilperson Souder presented a proposed Code of Conduct for the Mayor, City Council, Boards, Commissions and Non-Union Staff; and Guidelines for Public Comment Period and Public Hearings (Councilpersons Suzanne Souder and Valarie Leary – posted 08/06/2019). Council had no comments. No action was taken. A resolution is expected to be presented at the next Council meeting.

Councilperson Platt discussed the placement of "book boxes" throughout the city (Councilperson Platt – posted 08/06/2019). Andrea Lang reviewed what she had discussed on this topic, at the July Council meeting. She described the location that she would recommend, at the end of the street near the wharf, where two concrete pads are currently located. She responded to some concerns and questions that were brought up.

New Business

As a discussion item, Melissa Ferraro of Sonora at The David Finney Inn spoke about the Mickey-Fest Music Festival downtown on September 7th, 2019 (Council President Ratchford – posted 08/06/2019). Ms. Ferraro provided some background on this fundraising event, and details about the plans for this year's event. She responded to questions and concerns that were presented.

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read Resolution 2019-28, A Resolution to add One to Two Temporary Speed Bumps between Chestnut and Harmony Streets, and One between Harmony and Delaware Street on East 3rd Street (Councilpersons Leary and Smith – posted 08/06/2019) into the record. After discussion, including input and concerns from the Police and Fire Departments about difficulties they face related to speed bumps, it was moved and seconded to table the resolution. The motion to table was passed unanimously.

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read Resolution 2019-29, A Resolution to Designate One (1) Piece of Equipment owned by the City as Surplus Property and Authorizing Disposal of said Surplus Property (Council President Ratchford – posted 08/06/2019) into the

record. The City Administrator provided some background on the vehicle referred to in the resolution. The resolution was pass unanimously.

Public Comments

Phil Gross of 301 Moore Avenue asked whether the proposed code of conduct is available to the public. He was advised that it will be posted prior to the meeting at which it will be voted on. Mr. Gross expressed his opposition to the “book box,” if it is not done in coordination with the public library. He also asked the status of the raising of fees for landlords, related to what he read in the Weekly. This was a discussion topic, with no specific action scheduled.

Rod Miller of 124 E. 3rd Street expressed concern about the fact that the city does not receive all the proceeds from traffic tickets that are issued, and asked about the possibility of a Mayor’s Court being established, and how that might work. He was advised to discuss this with the Mayor.

Alice Jarvis of 15 the Strand asked how the public might be able to see the bids that come in on the Delaware Street project. She was advised that when the bids are ready to go to Council, they will be posted on the website.

Dorsey Fiske of 26 East 3rd Street stated her preference for a bypass road to be put in place.

After a motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Whitaker
Clerk of the City of New Castle

Next Regular Meeting Date: September 10, 2019