

**City of New Castle Delaware**  
**Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall**  
**201 Delaware Street – New Castle**  
**Tuesday, September 10, 2019– 7:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** 7: 00 PM

**Roll Call**

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

**Also present:**

Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
William Barthel, City Administrator  
Richard McCabe, Chief of Police  
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor  
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official and Fire Inspector  
Dave Athey, City Engineer

**Treasurer's Report**

The unaudited Treasurer's report was presented by the City Treasurer, as of August 31, 2019:

The unaudited Treasurer's report was presented by Janet Carlin, City Treasurer; as of August 31, 2019, \$4,373,566.30 in unrestricted finds, and \$2,522,413.66 in restricted funds, for a total of \$6,895,979.96 total cash in accounts.

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

**Reports from the City Administrator & Staff**

The City Administrator reported that the city had foreclosed on the property at 911 Gray Street. The property sold for \$43,000, and the city recouped \$8,278 in expenses, from the Sheriff's sale.

The City Administrator read a letter that he had received from Trustee Michael Alfree, dated September 9. In the letter, the city is advised that the Trust has approved funding to support a grant match of \$40,000 toward the DNREC Surface Water Matching Planning Grant. The letter included details about the administration of the grant and the planned use of the funds.

The Chief of Police reported that the department has hired the last of their recruits, and there are three officers ready to start at the Academy next week. The Chief also reviewed the highlights, which had been provided in a handout, and gave some additional details about recent Department activities.

**Council Communications**

Councilperson Platt commented on success of the Mickey-Fest, and thanked all involved.

Councilperson Smith thanked all involved for working together on the Delaware Street project.

## **Business from the Mayor**

The Mayor commented on it being the beginning of hurricane season, and the importance of preparedness in the event of any emergency, as well as the need to look for funding opportunities to this end.

Regarding the city having been selected by the Governor to participate in the Downtown Development District program, the Mayor pointed out the access to grant monies from the state that are available, as a result of that selection. A presentation to provide details about those grants is being planned, hopefully in October.

Additional comments from the Mayor:

- He thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their assistance at the prior weekend's events.
- He stated his preference that Council proceed quickly on the Delaware Street project.
- He stated his support for Cynthia Batty to be appointed to the Historic Area Commission.

## **Business from the Council President**

The Council President read a letter she received from Tim Slavin, Director of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, regarding the Delaware Street project. The letter included questions about the project, and the city will be responding to those questions.

After a motion and second, the Council President read Resolution 2019-30, A Resolution Honoring the Life and Service of K9 Cooper (Council President Ratchford– posted 09/03/2019) into the record. The resolution was passed unanimously. The Allston family came forward, and will be presented with the resolution, once it is signed.

## **Delaware Street Project Discussion and Update**

The Council President advised that there will be a public meeting on Monday 9/16, on the topic of Delaware Street.

City Engineer David Athey reviewed the timeline that had transpired, related to the Delaware Street project. He reviewed the information in the slide presentation, which was also provided as a handout, including the following:

- Two bids were received.
- This is a unit price job, so quantities can be adjusted up or down, to a point.
- The city must make a decision about awarding the contract, by October 7.
- Mr. Athey reviewed some details about the bids and project options (included in the handout/presentation).

Discussion followed, Council members and the Mayor commenting and asking questions, and the City Engineer and City Administrator providing clarifications and answers.

City Architect Leila Hamroun was consulted regarding historic use and appearance, related to the project.

The Mayor pointed out that additional funds might be available from the state in June.

Council members agreed that:

- The street widening from Second Street to the wharf is no longer under consideration.
- The bump-outs that do not include bio-retention are no longer under consideration.
- Including green infrastructure in the project is not viable at this point.
- Crosswalk options need to be looked at more closely.

### **Public Comments and Questions Regarding the Delaware Street Project**

Roderick Gillespie of 24 W. 4th Street expressed his disapproval of installing brick crosswalks.

Cynthia Batty of 18 E. 3rd Street advised that she is doing some research and will be presenting results at a later date. She also expressed that HACs opinion on the historic aspects of the project might have been impacted by a mistaken understanding of how pressing the safety and bio-retention portions of the project were/are.

Dennis Young of 12 W. 5th expressed concern about truck access to the businesses. He also stated that safety to pedestrians should be given serious consideration.

Richard Cooch of 16 E. 3rd Street requested that the letter that the Council President read earlier, from Tim Slavin, be made available for others to review. He also suggested that the city would be well-served to get opinions from outside historic preservation-related organizations.

Jim Meek of 30 The Strand stated his disapproval of using brick for crosswalks, whether real or imitation. His preference is white lines.

Marty Wright of 123 W. 7th Street stated that HAC has not discussed this project, and that the most important concern to HAC is the streetscape in front of the town hall.

Phil Gross of 301 Moore Avenue expressed that green infrastructure is important. He also stated his opposition to the book drops (Resolution 2019-32), as well as his opposition to the code of conduct resolution (Resolution 2019-31).

Beverly Wik of 2 E. 3rd Street stated that safety concerns could be addressed by better enforcement.

Dorsey Fiske of 26 E. 3rd Street expressed appreciation for peoples' input.

Bill Emory of 300 Baldt Avenue expressed that the resurfacing should take place all the way to Seventh Street or Eighth Street. He also expressed concern about bio-retention not being addressed. He opposes painted crosswalks and brick crosswalks, and prefers the imitation brick.

Tom Tritelli (NCIHF) of 10 W. 9th Street requested confirmation that the widening of the road is off the table, some bump-outs are still up for consideration, and the traffic circle is no longer being considered. He was confirmed to be correct. He prefers that the street be left as is, refurbished, and that the unique identity of New Castle be maintained.

The Council President stated that there will be a meeting on the Delaware Street Project on Monday 9/16 at 6:00 PM.

### **Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)**

No items.

## **Old Business**

After a motion and second, the Council President read **Resolution 2019-31**, A Resolution to Adopt (1) a Code of Conduct applicable to the Mayor, City Council Members, and Volunteer Appointees to City Boards and Commissions; and (2) Guidelines for Public Comments at New Castle City Council Meetings and Other Public Hearings (Councilperson Souder – posted 09/03/2019) into the record. After discussion, the resolution was passed unanimously.

After a motion and second, the Council President read **Resolution 2019-32**, A Resolution to place “Book Boxes” Throughout the City (Councilperson Platt – posted 09/03/2019) into the record.

It was moved and seconded that the wording in the resolution and title be changed to reflect placement of one Little Free Library at the Pocket Park, subject to Trustee approval, not to exceed \$500. The motion to change the wording was passed unanimously.

The amended resolution was passed unanimously.

## **New Business**

After a motion and second, the Council President read **Resolution 2019-33**, A Resolution making a Council appointment to the Historic Area Commission (Councilpersons Souder and Smith – posted 09/3/2019) into the record.

Proposed appointee: Cynthia Batty: Fulfilling Jean Norvell’s Term Ending January 10, 2020.

After discussion, the resolution was passed unanimously.

## **Public Comments**

Arleen Harris of 301 Moore Avenue asked whether there is an audit of city fines. She was advised that there is, every year. She expressed concern about an item that was left on her porch. She stated that, related to the code of conduct voted on earlier, there should be consequences included. She also asked how to go about obtaining knowledge of transactions or police reports. She also would like consideration given to repairing her street, at Moore Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

Bill Emory of 300 Baldt Avenue stated that everybody in town got the letter that the previous speaker referred to.

Roderick Gillespie of 24 W. 4th Street spoke against the bump-outs in the Delaware Street project.

After a motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Whitaker Clerk of the City of New Castle