

City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, October 8, 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:

Mayor Michael Quaranta
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
William Barthel, City Administrator
Richard McCabe, Chief of Police
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official and Fire Marshal

It was moved and seconded, and approved unanimously, to table the motion, discussion and vote on **Resolution 2019-36**, A Resolution Eliminating Parking on both the Northeast and Southwest sides of Clayton Street within Five Feet of the Intersection with Pfrommer Street. (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019.)

There was discussion about the status of Council meeting minutes which remain to be received and/or approved. The expectation is that review and potential approval of all past due minutes will take place at the November 12, 2019 Regular City Council meeting.

Treasurer's Report

The unaudited Treasurer's report was presented by Janet Carlin, City Treasurer; as of September 30, 2019 reported in \$4,679,504.32 unrestricted finds, and \$2,560,570.35 in restricted funds, for a total of total \$7,240,021.67 cash in accounts.

99% of property taxes have been collected. Revenue is currently on target.

After a motion and second, the unaudited Treasurer's report as of September 30, 2019, was approved as presented, unanimously.

Reports from the City Administrator & Staff

The City Administrator provided an update on the Delaware Street project. The contract was signed on October 7, 2019. He also provided an update on pricing, based on previous discussions as to the extent of the project. Funds currently available for the project are at \$1,775,581. The latest anticipated cost estimate is at approximately \$1,722,000, for work from the wharf to Fifth

Street, not including the lining of the storm sewer pipes, which city officials are comfortable with delaying.

Police Chief McCabe's monthly report was provided to Council in a handout. The Chief also mentioned:

- Fall inservice training has been completed.
- The Department will be participating in the county initiative "Hero Help." Informational pamphlets were shared with Council.
- A search for a new K-9 is in progress.
- The Department may participate in the Take Care Delaware initiative, in coordination with local schools. The Chief is currently looking into this.

The Chief reviewed some of the handout information in some detail, including future programs that the Department is considering. He also discussed highlights of the monthly report, as well as some detailed police activity and investigations over the last month.

Council Communications

Councilperson Platt brought up the feasibility of publishing the names of citizens who are fined, in the Weekly, and advised that he will work on a resolution to that effect.

Councilperson Platt also brought up security concerns about the current City Council meeting location. The City Administrator will bring recommendations to the next Council meeting.

Councilperson Smith advised that the Fort Casimir archeological project has been completed, and the fort was located, as well as some artifacts.

Business from the Mayor

The Mayor reported that the community cleanup will take place the following weekend, and provided some details about the program. He also reported that he had participated in the River Towns Bike Ride.

Regarding the group of people who have been discussing an Arts Council, they have decided to meet on an ad hoc basis. Recommendations to the Council, related to this, will be coming in the future.

The Mayor urged caution and safety reminders for the upcoming Halloween holiday. He also expressed appreciation to the Trustees for their financial support of infrastructure projects, such as the Delaware Street project.

Related to this week being Fire Prevention Week, the Mayor expressed appreciation to the Fire Department. He urged citizens to also express appreciation, and suggested that the Fire Department encourage community volunteers.

Progress is being made on the issue of and concern about truck traffic through Dobbinsville.

The Mayor provided a handout summarizing a presentation made by the Federal Reserve Bank in Philadelphia, related to area employment and unemployment.

The Mayor expressed support for current and future efforts related to concerns about nuisance properties. He also expressed support for the city providing reports related to rental properties and rental license fees. In addition, he encouraged the creation of a program that will incentivize residents to install video surveillance cameras.

The City Solicitor addressed the topic of the Mayor's concerns about rental properties. The Mayor clarified that he would like data related to numbers and potential concentrations of rental properties.

The City Administrator addressed concerns that were expressed about nuisance properties.

Business from the Council President

The Council President provided some details about part of New Castle having been designated as a Downtown Development District. She reviewed some of the available state incentives to residents and businesses within the DDD, and potential city incentives to be discussed later at this meeting.

New Business

After a motion and second, the Council President read Resolution 2019-35, Recognizing the contributions of Robert "Bob" Sigmund (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019) into the record. The Resolution was passed unanimously.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items)

Bill Emory of 300 Baldt Avenue spoke in favor of encouraging sidewalk repairs as a result of potential passage of Resolution 2019-38.

Alice Jarvis of 15 The Strand commented that the state DDD program includes minimum expenditures for financial assistance to be made available to property owners.

Old Business

After a motion and second, the City Solicitor completed the first reading of **Ordinance No. 522**, An Ordinance to enact a City Property Tax abatement on the increase in property taxes caused by an increase in assessed property values resulting from certain improvements made to properties within the Downtown Development District (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019).

After a motion and second, the City Solicitor completed the first reading of **Ordinance No. 523**, An Ordinance to enact a City Realty Transfer Tax waiver for first time homebuyers of properties located within the Downtown Development District (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019).

After a motion and second, the Council President read **Resolution No. 2019-37**, A Resolution to provide for a Historic Area Commission fee waiver for certain improvements for new businesses operating in properties located within the Downtown Development District (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019) into the record. The Resolution was passed unanimously.

After a motion and second, the City Solicitor read **Resolution No. 2019-38**, A Resolution to provide a City Building Permit fee waiver for certain improvements for properties located within

the Downtown Development District (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019) into the record. After discussion, the Resolution was passed by a vote of four to one (Councilperson Platt voting no).

After a motion and second, the City Solicitor read **Resolution No. 2019-39**, A Resolution to provide for a City Business License fee waiver for new businesses operating in properties located within the Downtown Development District (Council President Ratchford – posted 10/01/2019) into the record. The Resolution was passed by a vote of four to one (Councilperson Platt voting no).

Public Comments

Lisa Rankin commented on a flyer that was left on her porch, related to the community cleanup that the Mayor spoke about earlier. Ms. Rankin stated that she was offended by the content of the flyer that the Mayor had circulated throughout the City.

Bill Emory expressed appreciation and support for the Delaware Street project being extended to the end of the wharf. He expressed opposition to spending money on a new bathhouse at Battery Park. He suggested a renovation of the existing Trust facilities in Battery Park.

Rod Miller commented on owner occupied properties that are not structurally sound, and might have serious safety and/or health issues.

Tim Moore advised that the Goodwill Fire Company will have their Open House on Saturday, October 26th.

After a motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Whitaker, Clerk of the City of New Castle

Next Regular Meeting Date: November 12, 2019