

City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, November 12, 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
David Athey, City Engineer

In honor of Veteran Days, all Veterans present were asked to stand, and were thanked for their service.

Minutes

After a motion and second, minutes for the following meetings were approved unanimously, as amended:

June 11, 2019 – Regular Meeting
August 5, 2019 – Special Meeting
August 13, 2019 – Regular Meeting
September 10, 2019 – Regular Meeting
September 16, 2019 – Special Meeting
September 23, 2019 – Special Meeting
October 2, 2019 – Special Meeting
October 8, 2019 – Regular Meeting
October 24, 2019 – Public Hearings (3)
October 24, 2019 – Special Meeting.

Treasurer's Report

The unaudited Treasurer's report was presented by Janet Carlin, City Treasurer; as of October 31, 2019, reported in \$4,438,002.70 unrestricted finds, and in \$2,554,792.94 restricted funds, for a total of total cash in accounts \$6,992,795.64.

100% of property taxes have been collected. Tax penalties received are at 95%. At this time last year, tax penalties received were at 29%.

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

Reports from the City Administrator & Staff

The City Administrator reported on the following:

- DelDOT has received the necessary permits for work to address drainage and icing issues in areas of Route 9. The work is expected to be completed by Thanksgiving.
- In a collaborative effort with the Trust, spraying has been completed to get rid of the tall grass and the phragmites in the wetlands from the Bull Hill Boat Club up to the Velitskakis property. Grasses will be taken down in the fall. The Trust is paying for their portion of this effort, as well as for the city's.
- A meeting took place on November 5, to discuss the Delaware Street traffic control project logistics and schedule. The anticipated/estimated schedule for the construction will be included in Mr. Athey's presentation later in this meeting. Delmarva has indicated that they would like to change out gas lines from 4th Street to The Strand, as part of the project. This will be further discussed at a November 14 meeting. Delmarva's request and the weather are the two factors expected to most impact the schedule.

Building Official Jeff Bergstrom reported that the repaving of the bike trail, where it had been damaged by work done by Delmarva, is on schedule to begin on November 13.

The Police Chief reported on the following:

- The Hero Help program was introduced last month. There have been several referrals.
- Teddy bear donations were overwhelming.
- The annual Police Department and Goodwill Fire Department Christmas party will take place on December 1 (this date was corrected to December 21 later in the meeting), where needy families will be selected to be provided with Christmas needs. Any suggestions for recipient families should be passed along to Captain Shughart.
- The New Castle Police Department will be going through the process to become accredited by the Delaware Police Accreditation Commission. It is hoped that the accreditation will be received by May 2020.
- Regarding the Police Chief's monthly report, which was provided to Council in a handout, the increase in thefts does not appear to be a trend or pattern.
- Details of some of the significant events from the month were highlighted by the Police Chief.

Council Communications

Councilperson Souder reported that she and Council President Ratchford will be attending a November 15 workshop in Dover, on Delaware Resilient Communities.

Councilperson Leary reported that she and others attended the Tall Ship Festival in Chestertown, Maryland. While there, invitations to New Castle were given to each of the tall ships. Six of the seven ships expressed interest. They need to be contacted soon, regarding scheduling for the 2020 season.

Councilperson Platt thanked those who participated in a recent neighborhood cleanup effort.

Business from the Mayor

In regard to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, the Mayor would like to find avenues for people to donate food, money and/or volunteer time.

Regarding his and others' efforts related to coordinating community groups' calendars and efforts, the Mayor would like to see that effort combined into one position.

The Mayor thanked the Lions Club and all involved in the Halloween parade. He also thanked all residents for their participation, with special thanks to John and Beverly Wik.

The Spirit of Christmas will take place on December 14. Volunteers will be welcome and appreciated.

The Mayor expressed his approval of the Tree Commission and Planning Commission nominees who will be presented later in this meeting.

Business from the Council President

Markell Trail maps are available in the city office. A link will be posted on the city's website.

The city netted about \$4,000 from the October River Towns Festival. Any suggestions about the use of those funds should be passed along to Council.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)

Bill Emory spoke regarding the crosswalk options to be discussed later in the meeting, and expressed his support of the stamped option.

Proclamations from Mayor Quaranta

The Mayor read a Proclamation in Honor of Veterans Day (Mayor Quaranta – posted 11/05/2019).

The Mayor read a Proclamation Recognizing November 21, 2019 as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in the City of New Castle (Mayor Quaranta – posted 11/05/2019).

The Mayor read a Proclamation Recognizing Saturday, November 30th as Small Business Saturday (Mayor Quaranta – posted 11/05/2019).

Old Business

City Engineer Dave Athey provided a Delaware Street Traffic Control presentation, including the following:

- Mr. Athey briefly reviewed previous discussions and decisions related to the project.

- Future meetings will take place, and a change order will be submitted, related to extending the project to 5th Street and clarifying some of the quantities, particularly related to curbing.
- Results of a recently completed survey will be rolled into the project plans.
- There will be a meeting with Delmarva on November 14, to discuss some concerns and requirements that they have expressed about the project.
- Proposed project details and city staff recommendations, as well as outside recommendations related to traffic controls, signage, crosswalks and road markings were discussed, referring to the Delaware Street Signing and Striping Plan 110819 exhibit that was provided. Council members, the City Administrator, the Police Chief and city staff asked questions and commented on the proposed project details.
- Work is expected to begin in early December, starting at the wharf, and proceeding up to 5th Street. Work that can be completed during winter will take place first, with pavement work anticipated to start in early spring 2020.
- The tentative timeline related to road closures was reviewed, also provided as an exhibit.

The following changes were agreed upon:

- The exhibit attached to **Resolution 2019-43** will be updated to note that crosswalk striping will be single lines, if allowed by law.
- The yellow sign will be changed to read “Oncoming traffic has right of way.”
- Eliminate white painted curb.

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read **Resolution 2019-43**, A Resolution Approving Traffic Control Striping, Crosswalks, Signage, Road Markings and Parking Considerations on Delaware Street (Council President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2019) into the record.

Resolution 2019-43 was passed unanimously.

New Business

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read **Resolution 2019-44**, A Resolution Approving Grant-In-Aid Application for 2021 Separation Day (Council President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2019) into the record.

The City Administrator provided a brief background on **Resolution 2019-44**. After discussion, Resolution 2019-44 was passed by a vote of four to one (Councilperson Leary voting no).

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read **Resolution 2019-41**, A Resolution to Appoint William Walters as Planning Commission appointment to Historic Area Commission (President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2019) into the record. **Resolution 2019-41** was passed unanimously.

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read **Resolution 2019-45**, A Resolution Approving Mayor’s Appointment to the Planning Commission of John Lafferty, to fulfill the unexpired term of Peter Toner (Council President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2019) into the record. **Resolution 2019-45** was passed unanimously.

After a motion and second, Council President Ratchford read **Resolution 2019-46**, A Resolution Approving Mayor's Appointment to the Tree Advisory Commission of Sheila Shannon, to fulfill the unexpired term of David Robinson (Council President Ratchford – posted 11/05/2019) into the record. **Resolution 2019-46** was passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Glenn Rill spoke against moving the stop sign from West 4th Street.

Bennie Beale requested that a plan be put in place in which first responders, etc., are able to determine who the owners and/or residents of properties are.

In response to a question from Councilperson Leary, the Goodwill Fire Company Chief provided some information on Knox Boxes.

Alice Riehl spoke against painted stripes and arrows in the area of the town square.

Phil Gross spoke in agreement with the previous speaker. He also stated that there should be no admission charge to attend Separation Day. He also would like Council to pursue requiring nominees for commission positions, such as those discussed earlier in this meeting, be required to attend the Council meeting at which their nomination is being considered.

The Goodwill Fire Company Chief noted that this year's pancake breakfast will be on December 7, 8:00 to 11:30 AM.

The Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Platt, seconded by Councilperson Smith and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 9:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Whitaker, Clerk of the City of New Castle

Next Regular Meeting Date: December 10, 2019

Posted: 11/05/2019