

City of New Castle Delaware
City Council Special Meeting
Meeting to be held electronically via Zoom
Tuesday, September 29, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Roll Call

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

Also present: William Barthel, City Administrator
Daniel Losco, Esquire, City Solicitor
Mayor Michael J. Quaranta
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Brian Whittaker, City Clerk

Council President Ratchford called the September 29, 2020, Special City Council meeting to order and introduced the Council and attendees.

Discussion Regarding Municipal Complex Feasibility

Two concepts for a Municipal Campus were previously presented to Council by GMB to combine the existing facilities (Police Station, MSC Maintenance Area, and Public Works Department) with the City and MSC administrative space to improve efficiencies and provide better service to the public. The initial cost estimate for the project is \$10M. The administrative building is priced out at approximately \$3M.

During discussion, support of the project was expressed, as well as a concern for the reoccupation of the City building on Delaware Street that will enhance the downtown area. It was suggested that Council reach out to the DDD Consultant to discuss doing a market analysis on the Delaware Street office.

Concerns relative to sufficient space on the site have been raised on both concepts. City Administrator Barthel explained the next step in the process and the estimated cost of proceeding with GMB. Mr. Barthel will ascertain the scope of the next step and the project will be discussed at the October Budget Workshop. Council President Ratchford proposed Council consider looking at properties adjacent to the proposed site to address space concerns.

Council President Ratchford made a Motion to have City Council consider properties adjoining the site of the proposed Municipal Campus. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Leary and on vote passed unanimously.

The City Administrator, City Solicitor and MSC General Manager will research appropriate properties and report back to Council.

First Reading Ordinance No. 529: An Ordinance to Amend and Restate Chapter 28 of the City Code entitled “Emergency Management”.

The purpose and scope of the Ordinance was explained by Councilperson Smith. During discussion a number of concerns were raised that were addressed by the City Solicitor, and Council President Ratchford clarified the right of City Council to declare an Emergency Meeting.

A Motion to put Ordinance 529 into First Reading was made by Councilperson Leary and seconded by Councilperson Smith. The Ordinance was read into the Record.

Mayor Quaranta commented on the importance of Ordinance 529 and suggested Council carefully deliberate to ensure the proper checks and balances are in place to manage any State of Emergency appropriately. He also suggested exploring how other municipalities have handled a State of Emergency.

Discussion Regarding possible changes to the Board of Health and the Board of Building Appeals.

Board of Health

Council President Ratchford explained that the current Code is dated from the 1940’s and requires updating. The City is required by State Law to have a Board of Health. Mr. Losco reviewed the Draft Ordinance to amend and restate Article II of Chapter 193 (Board of Health) of the Code of the City of New Castle. The Draft Ordinance will be referred to the Board of Health for review and comment.

Board of Building Appeals

Council President Ratchford noted that the Board of Building Appeals has not met in five years. Mr. Losco explained the role of the Board of Building Appeals and reviewed the Draft Ordinance to amend and restate Sections 141-9 and 141-10 of Chapter 141 (Dangerous or Vacant Buildings) and amend Section 230-57 of Chapter 230 (Zoning) of the Code of the City of New Castle.

During discussion, a number of questions and concerns were addressed and clarified by the City Solicitor.

Council President Ratchford stated Public Hearings will be scheduled on Chapter 28 and the Board of Building Appeals; and the Board of Health legislation will be sent to the Board of Health for review and comment before the Public Hearing is scheduled.

There being no further comments or questions, Council President Ratchford called for a Motion to adjourn.

City Council Special Meeting
September 29, 2020

A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Platt and seconded by Councilperson Smith. On vote, the Motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Weirich
Stenographer

Next Regular Meeting Date: October 13, 2020
Posted: 09/22/2020