

**New Castle City Board of Health Meeting**  
**October 24, 2023 -- 6 p.m.**  
**1 Municipal Drive, New Castle, DE**

Members Present: Tish Gallagher, Chair  
Jackie Metz, Vice Chair  
Eleanor Green  
Dr. Joanne Viola  
Dr. David Bechtel

Ms. Gallagher convened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Ms. Gallagher noted that there are two additions to the Agenda:

- CERT update from Chief David Majewski
- Update on Foxes

**CERT Update**

Chief Majewski gave an update on efforts to develop a community emergency response program (CERT) in New Castle.

CERT is a volunteer program founded in 1987 by the Los Angeles Fire Department to put a citizen response team in place to assist during emergencies. In 1998 the program was adopted by FEMA. The program trains in basic disaster response skills: fire safety, life search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations.

Chief Majewski suggested having training specifically for citizens of New Castle. Steps to move this forward include:

- Engage elected officials and City government as stakeholders;
- Conduct a hazard analysis, including hurricanes, ice storms, excessive heat, flooding, and man-made hazards;
- Determine the role of the CERT Team, i.e., debris cleanup, traffic control for public events, shelter management, welfare checks in the absence of the Police or Fire Departments to do so, door-to-door contact during major flooding events or natural disaster, etc.;
- Identify program goals;
- Training needs – New Castle County offers basic and advanced CERT classes, ICS offers some classes, advanced medical training, etc.;
- Needed resources – meeting room, etc.;
- Determine who leadership is and who they report to;
- Recruitment and retention, and how the program can be integrated into City government, i.e., training City employees, etc.; and
- Identify an official start date for the program.

Chief Majewski noted that funding is available from the County and State levels, and they also have the kits. Team members will receive some level of backpack that will include items such as flashlight, hard hat, masks, etc.

Chief Majewski opined that most people want to be educated in emergency response. He noted that there is no limit to the number of people who can be involved in either an active or passive role. Chief Majewski suggested community outreach to determine interest in the program. In response to a question from Dr. Viola, Chief Majewski explained more about the potential role of participants. He added that the Red Cross will probably not be very involved in the program.

*(Stenographer's Note: There was a one-minute break in the video feed at 6:15 p.m.)*

Training is for a broad range of ages:

- Ages 13-15 with a parent or guardian taking the training
- Ages 15-17 with parent or guardian approval
- Ages 18 and up – anyone can take the training

The leaders can also funnel participants toward an area that they may be interested in, i.e., firefighting, police, EMS, etc.

Dr. Viola noted that New Castle is an aging community, but there are also many energetic younger residents who may be interested in the program.

Regarding insurance, Chief Majewski opined that because participants are not deputized or certified, it would be covered under the “hold harmless” clause; adding that insurance would have to be researched, including discussing this with City government.

Ms. Gallagher stated that the Board of Health would be interested in participating in the program.

### **Meeting Minutes**

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the July 25, 2023, Board of Health meeting as presented was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

### **Report from Building Inspector**

Ms. Gallagher noted that no report was received.

### **Old Business:**

Playground Committee – Mr. Brian Mattaway was in attendance and Ms. Gallagher asked him to give an update on the Playground Committee.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to officially open the playground in Battery Park on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. Participants included community children and parents, as well as City, County and State officials. Mr. Mattaway offered kudos to Mr. Ric Delgado and the Public Works staff for their help in completing work on the border of the playground. Mr. Mattaway

also noted that the mulch, which costs approximately \$12,000 per load, will need to be replaced each year; and the Committee is researching a more permanent rubberized alternative.

In response to a question from Dr. Viola, Mr. Mattaway explained the formation of ONCOR (Old New Castle Outdoor Recreation Coalition), its research for funding and equipment, and finally, how the organization made a presentation to City Council and was made an official Subcommittee to rejuvenate the playground in Battery Park. He noted that the Subcommittee's term was extended for another year to Fall 2025 to research improvements to satellite playgrounds.

Ms. Gallagher thanked the Committee and their efforts to make the playground handicap accessible. She also noted her appreciation that the Committee is looking beyond the playground in Battery Park. Mr. Mattaway noted that the Committee did not want to unilaterally decide what equipment should be updated in satellite parks, and is requesting volunteers from the various communities to partner with them to have a direct impact of equipment selected for their playgrounds.

Mr. Mattaway noted that there have been requests for adult playgrounds as well, and the Committee is hopeful that when satellite playgrounds are update they can include equipment for adults as well.

Mr. Mattaway also noted that permanent signage to indicate age appropriateness is scheduled to be installed.

Dr. Bechtel expressed his appreciation that the Committee was able to improve the Battery Park playground in a very economical way.

#### Update on Articles

- The Edgar Allen Poe article, written by Dr. Bechtel, was in the latest issue of The Weekly.
- The article on Tick Borne Diseases was too lengthy and Ms. Gallagher is working on making it a two-part piece for The Weekly. She will forward a draft to the members when that has been completed.

#### Mosquito control measures

- Ms. Gallagher will do more research on mosquito control methods in the spring to determine exactly what is being sprayed.

#### **New Business**

##### Proposal to update City Code regarding Board of Heath membership requirements

Ms. Gallagher reported that this proposal is being considered to broaden the requirement to have a physician on the Board. It was noted that the individual does not have to be resident of the City. Ms. Gallagher will forward relevant parts of the Code to members for review. Dr. Bechtel suggested that licensure may not be a necessary requirement.

### CERT

Ms. Gallagher noted that Chief Majewski gave the Board an excellent description of CERT. Dr. Viola noted that the County offers CERT classes. Discussion included available classes.

### Foxes in Town

Ms. Gallagher noted that there have been many fox sightings in town. Dr. Viola opined that there is probably not a concern for rabies; however, everyone should be cautious. Ms. Gallagher concurred, noting that if anyone sees an animal behaving in very odd ways it should be reported.

### **General Discussion**

Traffic – Ms. Metz stated that she witnessed a vehicle speeding that did not slow down and ran the stop sign at 6<sup>th</sup> Street, noting that this is a serious safety issue that is getting worse. The other Board members concurred and a general discussion of traffic and possible solutions ensued. Dr. Bechtel noted that he suggested a short bypass on Rt. 9 South that would keep traffic out of town, but he did not think WILMAPCO pursued that option.

### **Public Comment**

#### Brian Mattaway – 628 Delaware Street

Mr. Mattaway thanked the Board of Health for their work in the community.

October 28, 2023 is National First Responders Day and Mr. Mattaway thanked Chief Majewski and Chief McCabe and the brave men and women who also serve the community; and asked everyone to thank a first responder on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Mattaway concurred that the CERT program is a good initiative, and suggested that the CERT program could also be advertised at the High School to encourage participation and to encourage public service as a potential career path.

Mr. Mattaway agreed that traffic is a quality of life issue, noting that there are several entities involved. He said that he would like to encourage more involvement from residents at the County level. He noted that GPS is something that should be targeted to avoid having traffic redirected through the City, as well as possibly lowering the speed limit in town. He added that he would champion citizen involvement through workshops to brainstorm ideas.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Gallagher called for a Motion to adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The Motion was carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich  
City Stenographer