

Date: March 1, 2026

To: The City Council of the City of New Castle

From: Margo Reign, Chair Planning Commission

RE: 2025 Annual Report from City of New Castle Planning Commission to City Council.

**1. Please provide highlights of the Board/ Commission's 2025 activity and efforts.**

From January to July the Planning Commission researched, held hearings, and listened to the input of residents regarding tourist homes/ short-term rentals concerns and the need for updated regulations. An ordinance was drafted by our city solicitor and approved at the July 11, 2025 meeting to be recommended to City Council as Ordinance 555 – An ordinance to amend the City of New Castle Municipal Code, Chapter 230, Regarding Home Occupations in the Historic Residence Zoning District.

At the August 25, 2025, meeting there was a discussion of Ordinance 556 updating the regulations to allow for in-home occupations in the historic district. The Planning Commission voted to approve recommending the ordinance to City Council. In addition, the Planning Commission also recommended that Home Based Businesses be allowed in the R-1 Zone.

Approvals

- Recommendation of Special Exception in the DG Zone for Self Storage Units located at 300 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street for New Castle Self Storage LLC, at the December 15, 2025 meeting.
- Preliminary Subdivision Plan of lots 1 – 6 at 1004 Gray Street – approved at the November 24, 2025 meeting.
- Approval of extension of the conditionally approved site plan at 427 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street, known as The Battery at the April 28, 2025 meeting.

New commission members:

Reverend Aaron Moore joined the PC in October 2025.

Educational activities

- During the year, several chapters of the Comprehensive Plan were reviewed at various meetings so all commissioners would be familiar with the contents and in consideration of the 5-year review. After reviewing all the chapters, a list of things to address in the 2030 ten-year review were made and no changes were recommended for the 5-year review.
- Commissioners Batty, Franklin, Majewski, Reign, and Rivera attended FOIA training given by Max Walton in the fall of 2025.

**2. Would you like to request additional education for your Board/Commission? Have all of your members taken the FOIA class through University of Delaware? If so when and if not please provide the names of individuals who need training.** Kristen Zumar, Tamara Stoner and Marc-Anthony Williams still need FIOA training. We are discussing additional training available.

- 3. Do you feel you need more training or guidance on how to better deliberate and or be more effective. If so please elaborate.**
- 4. What additional logistical support and guidance can the City's Administration provide you to better support your Board/Commission?**
- 5. Does your Commission or Board interact with a professional advisor. If so, who is the advisor and how does s/he work with (or guide or help) the board/committee.** Our professional support comes from Chris Roger, City Planner and Lisa Hatfield, City Solicitor.
- 6. Do you have any current openings on your Committee/Commission or Board?** Yes.
- 7. Are the meeting dates and times ones that are functional for all committee members?** Yes
- 8. Does the board/ commission receive complaints directly? If so, how do you respond to them? If you receive complaints directly, please share them with the City Administrator.** The Chair has not received any direct complaints.
- 9. What are the plans and goals of the Board/ Commission for 2026?** To develop a plan for how to tackle the 2030 Comprehensive Plan update and consider issues that the Planning Commission can investigate and make recommendations to City Council.
- 10. Do you have any grant funding requests for outside grants and/or budget needs? If so please opine.** Please accrue money to cover the cost of the 2030 Comp Plan,
- 11. Please share your Fiscal Year 2027 Budget request.** Please budget for at least two meetings to be held at the senior center and training funds.
- 12. Is there anything that you would like to share not captured in the above?**