

Newport Town Council
Minutes – Regular Meeting
July 19, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Michael Spencer and he announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Public Open Meetings Act.

Present: Town Manager Wendy King, Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor Mary Harrington, Commissioner Albert Bradbury, Commissioner Kathy Joseph, Commissioner Michele MacDonald. Also, Solicitor Stephen Robinson and Police Chief Michael Capriglione were in attendance.

Minutes from the June 21, 2012, meeting were approved via motion by Commissioner Bradbury and seconded by Commissioner MacDonald. Voice vote – all ayes.

Public Comment – Bill Lower, Harvey, Hanna & Associates, advised that he completed a special use permit application relative to the 5K Run for the Delaware Kids Fund.

Correspondence – none.

Town Manager King reported on the purchase of the CD, replacement of the HVAC system in the municipal building, and tree grant application. Sheriff's office was notified of past due property taxes on 1515 E. Ayre Street. 102 E. Ayre Street property was boarded after last tenant moved out. Pam Baker from Barbacane Thornton will be at the August meeting to review the 2011 audit.

After discussing the options for the tree grant, council voted to approve a tree maintenance application and allowing expenditures up to \$5,000 via motion from Mayor Spencer and a second from Commissioner Bradbury.

Town Manager King reviewed the Statement of Accounts. There were no questions.

Police Chief Capriglione presented his monthly departmental statistics. He noted the rise in thefts in and around the Industrial Park and the increased graffiti around town. He said that he planned on visiting the skate park to remind the manager of the curfew and to talk to the kids. He also reported that one of the light poles was knocked down as the result of a traffic accident on Market Street.

A FOIA request was made to the police department regarding the handling of mentally challenged residents. It was addressed by Police Chief Capriglione.

Alderman's Report was presented with no questions.

Maintenance Report was reviewed. Maintenance Supervisor Bob Harvey was present to address questions and concerns. He mentioned the amount of illegally parked cars on Ayre Street.

Resident John Joswick asked about issuing instant tickets for property code violations which is the way New Castle County operates. Mayor Spencer advised that Newport does not and probably would not adopt that method of enforcement.

Resident Kevin Haigh suggested having copies of the financial documents (budget, statement of accounts) supplied for the audience.

Solicitor Robinson provided copies of Middletown's rental inspection ordinance for council to review.

Vice Mayor Harrington asked about the condition of a home on Highland Avenue and Bob Harvey from Maintenance advised it was being addressed. She also asked about the old maintenance building. Bill Lower from Harvey Hanna will get in contact with Solicitor Robinson and advise what is needed in order to draw up a contract.

Mayor Spencer advised of the FOIA bill about to be passed and the issues that a municipality in lower Delaware have had. There was discussion about the reasons that the bill was introduced. Bill Lower, Harvey, Hanna & Associates, commented that in another municipality, commissioners were not even required to live in the municipality or the state and were operating in executive sessions secret and adding last minute agenda items. A resident of that town submitted a complaint to the Attorney General's office. Resident Kevin Haigh suggested keeping a log of anyone requesting information.

Mayor Spencer advised that after his return from vacation, he and the town manager will reach out to the apartment owner to discuss the paving on Ethan Drive and non-payment of the annual business license. Commissioner Bradbury stated for the record that they should not be allowed to operate without a valid business license.

Commissioner Bradbury made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Joseph seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

