

Newport Town Council
Meeting minutes
December 19, 2013

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Commissioner Kathy Joseph, Commissioner John Joswick, Commissioner Michele MacDonald (late), Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Michael Capriglione, Solicitor Stephen Robinson. Vice Mayor Mary Harrington was absent.

Commissioner Joswick made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 19, 2013, meeting. Mayor Spencer seconded.

Council went right to the 2nd reading/adoption of FY2014 budget. Town Manager King noted a change in total due to some calculation errors and presented a correct, balanced budget without a tax increase. There was no public comment on the budget. Council voted to adopt.

Second reading/adoption of Ordinance 2013-001. Public hearing opened. There was no public comment. Mayor Spencer made a motion to close the public hearing and adopt ordinance. Commissioner MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote – all ayes.

Town Manager King presented her report that detailed the audit schedule for 2014, James Street Bridge Rehabilitation project meeting, Streetscape Phase II financing concerns, resignation of Vice Mayor Harrington and the roads during the storm.

Police Chief Capriglione presented his monthly statistics. He also presented the Alderman's Report. Commissioner MacDonald asked about the number of capias' listed on the report and there was an error on the worksheet that will be fixed next month.

The Maintenance Report was presented with no questions.

Solicitor Robinson spoke to the Chief Magistrate about finding candidates for an upcoming opportunity with the town.

Mayor Spencer asked about the revocation of business licenses and Solicitor Robinson said that those cases should be heard in Court 42.

Town Manager King noted that Verizon Wireless sent in their \$4,000 signing bonus and they will be onsite in January, 2014.

Mayor Spencer reported that he attended the DuPont Solar Array dedication and said that Secretary O'Mara would like to see about getting the Environmental Center project jumpstarted again. The comprehensive plan progress has been turned over to Chris Fazio for first draft development. Next meeting will be January 16, 2014. Mayor Spencer spoke to Lydia Prigg and she feels the town should advertise in regard to finding candidates for Alderman. He attended the Pearl Harbor ceremony at the Memorial Park near St. James Church.

Public Comment – Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna Associates, discussed the potential for Goodwill Industries to locate a collection trailer on the Wendy's lot on Market Street. The trailer is not permitted on that lot because there is no building on it. A variance hearing would have to be scheduled. There was much discussion and it was determined that even if the trailer could be there per code, Council did not want the trailer at that location and the potential of it becoming an eyesore or graffiti magnet. Other locations were discussed and the James Street Tavern lot was considered. Council gave Mr. Lower permission to obtain a special use permit for a period of two weeks to get maximum benefit of the holiday giving season after which they could decide if they wanted to pursue to locate on a more permanent basis, they would have more time to go before the Board of Adjustment for a variance.

Council discussed Streetscape Phase II financing. Town Manager reached out to the elected officials and only one would commit any funding. The town cannot responsibly come up with the \$170,000 needed for this project. Mayor Spencer made a motion to suspend this project and allow the funds be placed back into the federal pool. Commissioner Joswick seconded.

Mayor Spencer mentioned that for November, revenues were off by 10%.

Commissioner Joswick wanted to know if businesses that do not pay their license will have their State license revoked and the answer is no.

Resident Kay Walsh asked what the status of the Dollar Plus and Surplus was. The store is still closed and investigation is still being conducted by the State Police.

Having no more business coming before the board, Commissioner Joseph made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Joswick seconded. Voice vote- all ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

