

Newport Town Council
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2015

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Spencer announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor John Joswick, Commissioner Timothy Chatburn, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Town Manager Wendy King, Solicitor Stephen Robinson. Commissioner Kathleen Joseph and Police Chief Michael Capriglione were absent.

Minutes from the meeting of July 16, 2015, were approved via motion by Mayor Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Chatburn. All ayes.

No public comment.

Town Manager King reviewed her report. State healthcare plan update, water tower work, meeting with owners of 102 E. Ayre Street regarding building requirements. Discussion regarding renovations on 102 E. Ayre; discussion about detailing the affected cars that were damaged from cell tower work; Discussion of separate vision plan for employees versus self-insuring.

Police Chief's Report was presented by Town Manager King in Chief Capriglione's absence. Third highest criminal /traffic arrests ever.

Alderman's Report - \$52,108 for July. Receivables are the same.

Maintenance Report – Commissioner Chatburn complimented the Maintenance Department for clearing the weeds and grass along the curbs. Commissioner MacDonald thanked Maintenance for removing mud in front of her house.

Code Enforcement Report – Code Officer Walker mentioned an issue on Marsh Road that he has addressed with the property owner. Overgrown trees encroaching on utility lines. Delmarva needs to get involved.

Solicitor Robinson drafted the ordinance that will allow the town to revert the tax rate after a two year period on demolished properties that have not rebuilt. There was some discussion regarding tax assessments and the last time New Castle County assessed properties.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor Joswick mentioned that Red Clay is redistricting and school taxes will increase based on this.

Mayor Spencer – Received calls from Patti Blevins and Larry Mitchell that the Governor signed the open carry legislation, spoke to Tom Hubbard from United Water regarding repairs done a little at a time and made a suggestion about how the utility and the town could work together to fix the water mains and get the roads repaved. Visited DNREC about lagoon and grant opportunities. Permits were extended for one year. Spoke to Waste Management about recycled decking to use for boardwalk.

Old Business – 2nd reading/Public Hearing for 2015-001 – 2014 Comprehensive Plan Zoning Classifications. Mayor Spencer motioned to accept; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. Mayor Spencer opened hearing for public comment. No public in attendance. Mayor Spencer motioned to adopt; Roll call – all ayes.

2nd reading/Public Hearing for 2015-002 – Firearms in Public Buildings/Police Stations in Town of Newport. Mayor Spencer made a motion to accept; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. Mayor Spencer opened public hearing. Frank Walker asked about posting to advise public of HB150 and our ordinance. Commissioner Chatburn asked if state was going to fund metal detectors for towns that pass this ordinance. To clarify, concealed carry permit holders go through a rigorous process in order to be issued a permit; the ordinance addresses open carry only. Public comment was closed. Vice Mayor Joswick was skeptical because another town shut down the ordinance and it only addresses firearms. Solicitor Robinson noted that the term “weapon” would need to be clarified as far as what is considered a weapon and the bill cannot be amended. Mayor Spencer made a motion to adopt; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. Roll call vote – all ayes.

New Business – 1st reading/Introduction 2015-003 – An ordinance to govern the demolition of buildings in the Town of Newport and the assessment of the real property upon which buildings have been demolished in the Town of Newport. Mayor Spencer made a motion to accept; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. The ordinance will allow the town to revert the tax rate of a building that was demolished on a property back to the amount that was assessed prior to the demolition after a two year period if no redevelopment takes place. Commissioner MacDonald asked where the two year time period came from. The time frame was taken from other towns with similar ordinances. There was discussion about the ordinance and the town being flexible when recessions or extenuating circumstances occur. Mayor Spencer wanted to strike the third “Whereas” and the first comment. Transfer of property will be addressed also. Mayor Spencer made a motion to adopt 1st reading; Commissioner Chatburn seconded.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Chatburn seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

