

Newport Town Council
Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2019

Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Michael Spencer. He announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor John Joswick, Town Manager Wendy King, Commissioner Florence Czerwinski, Commissioner CarolAnn Gretz, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Police Chief Mark Wohner, and Solicitor Chris Griffiths.

Minutes from the meeting of March 21, 2019, were approved via motion by Mayor Spencer and seconded by Vice Mayor Joswick.

Public Comment: There were many people in the audience to speak on behalf of the police K-9 unit as it was relayed to them that the K9 unit was being discontinued:

Valerie DeLisle - K9 advocate
Jeff Sanders - town resident, 13 N. Mary Street
Mary Ryan - town resident - 200 N. Mary Street
Carly - Movies 10 employee, Darwin Drive, Newark
Angela Bartosek, Movies 10 employee, Creekside Drive
Shannon Ryan - former town resident, Main Avenue
Amanda Matarese, town resident, 203 Stonehurst Drive
Joe Stagliano, town resident, 200 Stonehurst Drive
Wilmington PD K9 Handler - could not identify name on recording

The general consensus was that they felt the town was making an "arbitrary" and "wrong decision" for discontinuing the K9 program and that it was irresponsible to put the dog through training but stop the program before the dog ages out. The residents in attendance live in Stonehurst and feel safe with the presence of the dog given that these homes are in close proximity to Newport Terrace Apartments and they noted the presence of drug paraphernalia in the area and believe the dog will stop any drug activity occurring there or nearby. The Movies 10 employees believe the town has "deteriorated" over the past several years and don't feel the town is safe without the dog. They also voiced their support over the entire Newport Police Department. Overall, the audience wanted to know the reason why it was decided to discontinue the program. Chief Wohner, after providing the monthly police department statistics, advised that it was not a rash decision and that it was a personnel matter and could not discuss it. He acknowledged that he did not think about the animal's transition to a non-working existence. Mayor Spencer added that while he did not agree with the non-residents' position that the town is "unsafe", he appreciated the feedback and town participation and stressed that the decision was an administrative one and not one that the commission could vote on.

Fran Tusi, Tusi Electric, wanted to be sure he was on the same page with maintenance regarding drainage issue he was having at his business.

Town Manager's report - FOIA workshop, police awards ceremony, spring cleanup, audit schedule, tax invoices, budget notes, yardwaste proposal.

Alderman's report - \$44,714

Maintenance Report - Met with Deldot regarding the private drainage issue at Tusi Electric, attended the DFIT safety meeting. Mayor Spencer asked about the sewer pumps and Commissioner Gretz wanted clarification on the backup sewer pump since it was going to storm.

Code Enforcement - Mr. Walker did not submit a report, but indicated things were looking good.

Solicitor's report - Working on civil fines/penalties for code violations, personnel issue, suggesting an Executive Session to discuss personnel, renegotiating monopole contracts with AT&T and Sprint. He has an associate looking into laws or position regarding trespassing on private property for service purposes (grass cutting, etc). Commissioner MacDonald asked about the monopole negotiations and Solicitor Griffiths outlined AT&T's basic request.

Mayor's report - Mayor Spencer attended a league meeting. Mentioned registering for early voting, but how it would not affect municipals.

Commissioner Gretz thanked the audience for attending the meeting to speak on behalf of the K9.

There was no new business and no old business.

Solicitor Griffiths recommended an Executive Session to discuss personnel.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded it. All ayes,

7:33 pm.

Back in regular session at 7:59 pm.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner MacDonald seconded. All ayes

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.