

Newport Town Council
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 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 Michele MacDonald, and Solicitor Chris Griffiths. Commissioner CarolAnn Gretz and Police Chief Mark Wohner were absent.

Minutes from the meeting of May 16, 2019, were approved via motion by Vice Mayor Joswick and seconded by Commissioner MacDonald.

Public Comment: Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates, thanked the town in advance for allowing them to hold the 10th annual Delaware Kids Fund 5K on Saturday, August 3, 2019.

Rosemarie Hegarty and Dianna DeRose, residents from E. Ayre Street, wanted to be sure that council was aware of the road conditions on their street and wanted to know if there was a timeframe in place to repair it. There is not a specific timeframe, but engineering will be taking place in order to put the job out to bid. Mrs. DeRose said that she felt that the town was deteriorating and that no one seems to have a sense of pride in their property. Trash everywhere and that "slumlords" were taking over. Grass is not being cut. She wanted to know how often street sweeping was to be done because she has not seen the streets swept in over a year and that because maintenance does not have trash to pick up, there should be more free time to take care of sweeping. Vice Mayor Joswick noted that there were occasions where apartments were being left and code enforcement had to get involved in order to have the piles of trash removed. Ms. Hegarty said she contacted the police on the neighbors on her other side and the police told her to deal with it. Mayor Spencer said that while the police chief is out tonight, if things required further investigation, the general public would not necessarily be privy to the resolution. The town is not unsympathetic. Mrs. DeRose noted the grass situation and knows that the houses are selling cheap, why else would someone buy in Newport? Mayor Spencer said that our properties have increased in value and the homes in our area don't stay on the market long. Rents are increasing. There are a few properties that are being dealt with. Mrs. DeRose said that code enforcement should be more proactive in fining people. Process was explained and the potential to have code enforcement float through our alderman court was shared. Mayor Spencer said that the town would not consider adopting an instant ticket format. Mrs. DeRose said it was also the trash on the sidewalks, people disposing of beer bottles, empty soda bottles, etc. She also shared that there are rottweilers are jumping their fence and destroying their yard. Animal control has jurisdiction over nuisance dogs, but the town can interact with the owners and hold them accountable. Commissioner MacDonald suggested taking photographs of the dogs and trash.

No correspondence,

Town Manager's Report - feasibility study for bike trail will cost \$39,000 and the town was granted \$20,000. We will be covering the \$19,000 through the CIBA Foundation Grant. Mayor Spencer made a motion to

transfer the \$19,000 from the CIBA Foundation Grant; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. Open enrollment period for healthcare was through May. Two employees were added as they aged out of their parents' policies. Budget will be reviewed to cover the overage. Meeting with DFIT to review our renewal of workers compensation and liability insurance. Chief Wohnner included a memo outlining conversations he had with DelDOT. A certified letter was sent to the owner of 309 E. Justis and has not responded. Reached out to Paul Beane with Waste Management regarding yard waste - waiting for pricing. Met with the county executive and planning department head regarding expanding the town's boundaries for grant and funding purposes.

Police Chief' Report - reviewed May's statistics.

Alderman's Report - \$38,718 court fines

Maintenance Report - reviewed / no questions. Commissioner MacDonald asked if storm sewer would be repaired and it is. Area is being paved since school is no longer in session.

Code Enforcement - same issues with cars and grass.

Solicitor's Report - 4 items with police department, agreements, personnel issue, one FOIA request, lease agreements with two leaseholders on monopole. Property maintenance issue, Attended former police chief's sentencing - two years' probation until restitution is paid - criminal side of matter is closed. Executive session recommended. Mayor Spencer wants court functioning.

Mayor's Report - bike path meeting - submission of request for \$2.8 million (state funded) to increase the study. Met with the county executive and planning director regarding the establishment of an "enterprise zone" with surrounding areas. Any transit-oriented projects in these "zones" will be put at the top of the list. There is no real financial benefit to the town and the bulk has to be residential property. A comprehensive plan update will occur in five years instead of ten. A committee needs to be formed, but the former committee is still interested.

Vice Mayor Joswick asked if environmental assessments were going to be done on bike path because of the migratory birds in the industrial park. Feasibility study is essentially to determine cost. There was more discussion about how nice it will be to be able to connect to the Markell trail and the anticipated timeframe of construction if feasibility is determined.

No new business.

No old business.

Motion to go into executive session by Mayor Spencer; seconded by Vice Mayor Joswick at 7:42 pm.

Regular session resumed at 7:55 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

