

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
November 18, 2021

Pledge

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

Attendance: Mayor Franklin Walker, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Joseph Stagliano, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Town Manager Wendy King, Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths.

Appointment of New Commissioner. There are three people interested in the seat: Kathleen Joseph, Justis Street, John Joswick, Ayre Street, and Gary Martinez, Market Street. Mayor Walker has the ability to make an appointment, but in making it more inclusive with the commissioners, he would like the interested parties to advise council why they believe they should be appointed. Kathy Joseph was a former commissioner, lived in town since 1967 and is interested in seeing the town grow. She liked some things about being on council and there were things she did not like and at times felt intimidated to speak her mind. She has grown over those years. She walks the town almost every day and night so she sees different views of the town and wants to assist in finding ways to make the town more walkable and livable. Things she sees and hears, like dirtbikes riding down Justis Street and mail carriers delivering mail at night, she believes she can help improve the safety of the town. She always said she would assist if given the opportunity and is willing to step up again. Mayor Walker thanked her for her presence at the meetings and for her past service and interest in serving. John Joswick said he was a former commissioner for eight years, was involved with the bridge project and with Richey School with Chief Wohner. He cares about the town and knows that a lot needs to be done and that is why he would like to come back. He has been a part of the town for almost 20 years and cares about the people of the town. Mayor Walker thanked him for his interest and past service. Gary Martinez has lived in the town for a little over two years. He formerly lived near Dickinson High School for 20 years and formerly ran the Nextel store in Newport Plaza. He currently works for a non-profit as a governmental mediator. When he located here, he read up on the history of the town. He is seeing a lot of positive things happening in the town, such as the future development of the town and thinks with his experience with the public, it would be a good opportunity to share that with the town and make it move forward. Mayor Walker thanked him. He then asked the commissioners if anyone would like to put forth a nomination. Commissioner Capriglione said that he thought each person brought a lot to the table. Commissioner Stagliano nominated Mr. Martinez. Commissioner Capriglione seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Mayor Walker reiterated that he could have put forth the appointment, but wanted the commissioners' perspective to see who they would want to work with. Commissioner MacDonald commented that she appreciated the fact that Mr. Martinez has a business background, has worked with non-profits and brings a different perspective to the board. Mayor Walker thanked all three interested parties and commented that it was nice to see such interest after years of having no election. Mayor Walker advised that this appointment would be until April and that there will be two open seats for two-year terms each. Mr. Martinez wanted to know how far in advance of the

election do people have to register to vote. Town Manager King advised that it would be 30 days prior to the election, which is the first Monday in April and that all information regarding an upcoming election will be posted in January. Mr. Martinez took his Oath of Office.

The office of Vice Mayor needs to be filled due to former Vice Mayor Gretz's departure. Commissioner Capriglione nominated Commissioner MacDonald. Commissioner Stagliano seconded. All ayes. Commissioner MacDonald took her Oath of Office.

Minutes from the meeting of October 21, 2021, were approved via motion from Mayor Walker and seconded by Commissioner Stagliano. All ayes.

There was discussion regarding the posting of the agenda and how there needs to be two additional places where the agenda can be found. Peniel Methodist Church and M&T Bank have public bulletin boards. 7-11 was suggested around the gas pumps – a constructed enclosure.

Town Manager's Report – 2020 audit will be reviewed at January's meeting. Code of Ethics for town employees and elected officials was included in the packet. DE Kids Fund Operation Warm Campout will be held on Friday, November 19, and if you attend, there is a suggested \$10 donation. FY2022 and ARPA projects will be presented. No salary adjustments were recommended with the exception of the court clerk as her current salary is below standard for her experience and workload. If council was inclined to offer a salary adjustment, it would cost \$20,500. Noted that Chief Wohner has not had a salary increase since becoming Chief. His increase went toward funding an hourly investigatory position that is utilized as needed. Thanksgiving office closure. Questions and clarifications were submitted to Solicitor Griffiths for the independent council to review. A donation of \$450 was made to the 80th Anniversary Pearl Harbor Day celebration. Mayor Walker explained the additional funding was to pay for a special wreath and it would be nice if everyone could show up. A donation of \$500 was made to Operation Warm and \$100 was donated to Richey School for the annual walkathon fundraiser. The Operation Warm coat donation will occur on December 9 at Richardson Park School. There will be a parade starting in Banning Park since the school can have no visitors due to Covid. Mayor Walker read the Code of Ethics and wanted to know why it was distributed. Town Manager King advised that it is a fairly new council and there are things they may not be aware of, such as keeping executive session matters to themselves and what the duties and expectations are in such a position. Also, the employees knowing what their responsibilities are is important. Mayor Walker agreed and believed it should be updated. He noted that he and the town manager discussed in March that the employees who do not live in town or vote in town should not be discussing the election on town time was not proper. An update would not require a visit to the General Assembly, but an amendment to the ordinance would be proper. The Public Integrity Commission should approve it to be sure it was as stringent as state code. Mayor Walker advised the commission to read the charter for understanding and review to see if they believe changes can or should be made. He would like to hear from everyone.

Police Chief's Report – October, 2021, department statistics. The state accreditation should have occurred and was put off until November 29. New car is on order and will be in patrol hopefully by the end of the year. Commissioner Capriglione thanked Chief Wohner for speaking to Richey School about the parking issue in front of his home. Mayor Walker asked if he had the opportunity to speak to the