

Town of Newport  
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners  
April 20, 2023

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendance: Mayor Michele MacDonald, Vice Mayor Michael Spencer, Commissioner Stephanie Banks, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner John Joswick, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths. Town Manager Wendy King was absent.

Minutes from the March 16, 2023, meeting were accepted via motion from Vice Mayor Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Joswick. All ayes.

There was no Town Manager report as the town manager was on leave.

Police Chief's Report – March, 2023, department statistics. Through a grant from the Office of Highway Safety, he was able to purchase a traffic data collector. It was deployed for a week on East Justis Street and the report was included. The report shows where it was deployed from April 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. It gives the GPS coordinates. There were 73 vehicles going the opposite direction. Could be people backing out of their driveways and believes it can show all the way down 141 so it could be EMS apparatus going the wrong way to leave the firehouse. The westbound traffic was 64,002 vehicles for that time frame. Back page gives breakdown of vehicles not speeding and speeding in excess of 45 mph was 1,764. 35.86 mph was the average speed. Commissioner Banks asked if he would keep moving the device and he will. It was deployed on East Market Street, but it needs 100 feet of clocking a vehicle and we did not have that there and it was not facing into the roadway enough. He did say that he has to notify the state when it gets deployed so when they do their sweeps, they will know it is not an adverse object. It will come back to East Market Street and the plan is to do it three times a year (Spring, Summer and Fall/Winter) to analyze what time of day vehicles are more inclined to be traveling at higher rates of speed. He wanted to be able to utilize this technology since manpower is limited now and to identify trends.

Alderman's Report – March, 2023, court fines collection was \$27,573.

Maintenance Report – Joe Dierolf's report was submitted but Robert Harvey's was not.

Solicitor's Report – Nothing to report on.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor Spencer had some items from the league. Bill that will allow urban towns like Newport to bypass PLUS for redevelopment. The league supports it. We do it, but if things come up prior to a comprehensive plan update, we don't have to do it. Homeless Bill of Rights is still in draft. League was against it in 2018. If some is picked up by police, the case will be adjudicated by the Delaware Human Relations Commission. The bill is ill conceived and basically allows someone to sleep on a sidewalk. A bill having trouble is mandating municipalities to use state voter rolls. Commissioner Capriglione asked what the league's position was on 16-17 year-olds voting in school board elections. Vice Mayor said that it was not addressed and it has come out of the blue. They try to steer clear of social issues and keep it to matters that affect towns directly. He did not think the league would even

take a position on that matter. The league is also against an Electric Vehicle mandate. The town should be against it. There was not thought of towns like Newport, Elsmere and the city of Wilmington – where will these people run a cable to their car where there is street parking. Commissioner Capriglione said that ShopRite is putting up charging stations right now. He also noted that households with several cars could not be charged at the same time. If everyone is going to have to have one, the grid will not be able to handle it. It will have an impact on moderate to lower income households because electric service may not be updated. There are many issues not thought out. There was supposed to be additional supply to Delmarva to have occurred two years ago that has not happened yet. Commissioner Banks noted that the grass had not been cut at the park. There was a death in Joe Dierolf's family and Bob Harvey was on vacation. Chief Wohner commented that the mower also went in for service. Vice Mayor Spencer questioned why the mower did not go in for service knowing he was going to be out on vacation so there would be no lag when he returned. Commissioner Banks asked what the town ordinance was for barking dogs. Chief Wohner responded that it was 30 minutes consistently and unprovoked. Commissioner Banks said that the dog in question was out from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Vice Mayor Spencer asked if animal control would get involved. Matters like that have always been deferred to the county because they have the vehicle and equipment to respond to animal matters. He noted two loose dogs in Woodcrest. Commissioner Capriglione said that he remembers that the town manager would send a letter and usually that matter would be taken care of. Commissioner Banks also mentioned dirt bikes in the park. Chief Wohner said they were going up and down Route 4 as well. They are without tags. She said that there are kids on her street riding the dirt bikes and their parents are letting them. Commissioner Capriglione mentioned that there was an increase of kids in the area playing basketball after dark and the school should maybe put signage around saying the play area is closed at dark. Large group of kids chased his son on their bikes. He doesn't know where they are coming from.

Mayor's Report – Mayor MacDonald said that Emily and Chief Wohner were keeping the town going in the town manager's absence. She and the town manager attempted to go to the skatepark anniversary on the Saturday before and realized it was Sunday. She did not attend, but the town manager did.

Public Comment – Kevin Haigh, resident, congratulated the newly sworn-in commissioners.

New Business – Resolution 2023-001 Adoption of Proposed Downtown Development District (DDD) Boundary. There is a copy of the revised boundary map on the back. Vice Mayor Spencer appreciated the detail of the map and thanked Harvey Hanna and Associates for providing that. Commissioner Capriglione questioned the mapping of R2 and Joe's Car Stereo and Larry's Used Cars running their businesses. The zoning can be changed as part of the comprehensive plan update and that will have no bearing on the passing of the resolution to determine DDD boundaries. Vice Mayor Spencer explained the maximum acreage of the boundary and that the resolution only designates half at this time in the event expansion is desired in the future and explained the incentive to redevelop within that boundary but that the town has to be designated a DDD. Grants are not open. Possibly at the end of the year. There are only a few spots left. Vice Mayor Spencer made a motion to accept Resolution 2023-001. Mayor MacDonald seconded. All Ayes.

Commissioner Joswick made a motion to adjourn. Vice Mayor seconded. All ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

