

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
May 18, 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, Town Manager Wendy King, Solicitor Benjamin Forman.

Minutes from the April 20, 2023, meeting were accepted via from Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Vice Mayor Spencer. Minutes from the April 20, 2023, reorganization meeting were accepted via motion by Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Mayor MacDonald. All ayes.

Town Manager's Report – Property tax invoices were mailed out. Newport River Trail information session was held at Minquas Fire Hall. Total cost \$25 million and that funding has yet to be secured. Community Redevelopment Funding grant application was submitted for \$93,000. Ella Johnson Park track asphalt replacement, fencing around the municipal building, roof replacement at the municipal building, and camera system at the boat ramp were the projects to be completed if funding is approved. Remington Vernick and Beach engineers were asked to provide current cost analysis for swale work at Ayre Street and Stonehurst and the repaving on Ayre Street. Liability insurance paperwork was completed for renewal with Strategic Insurance Partners. Annual MS4 stormwater report was submitted to DelDOT and New Castle County. Annual report on condition of loaned artifact (gunmount) was submitted to the Navy along with current photographs. Concrete base is cracked and should be replaced.

Police Chief's Report – April, 2023, department statistics. Sergeant Dillon Kashner will be given an award by the District Attorney for a case he was involved in – Mexican cartel and kidnapped person. Chief Wohner is meeting with a web designer to build a new, forward-looking website for the police department. Twelve people have turned in applications. Sergeant Mitchell has resigned and will move to Cheswold Police Department. Corporal Betsch should be returning from military leave at the end of June. Commissioner Joswick asked about the boat ramp cameras and shouldn't they have been installed by now? Chief Wohner said there was not enough money left over from the lighting work that was done. The total given to us in the bond bill was \$30,000 and \$25,000 of it was used on replacing the lights. The quote we have for cameras is \$26,000 and that was applied for as part of the Community Reinvestment Fund application. Mayor MacDonald asked how long application process takes. Chief Wohner said it all depends. If it's a certified applicant, the process can be pretty quick depending on how long the applicant has been out of policing. If it is a new recruit, it depends upon the next available academy class, which is in August.

Alderman's Report - \$27,784 court fines.

Maintenance Reports – Code enforcement sheet was located at the end of Robert Harvey's report. Mayor MacDonald thanked maintenance (Joey) for patching the holes on E. Christian Street near stop sign and other holes and that it was done quickly. Commissioner Banks advised there were a lot of cars being parked at the end of West Ayre Street again. The same cars and some pickup trucks are there

every day. Code Enforcement can sticker the cars and notify police. They are parking at G. Fedale's across from Dave Tiberi's place.

Solicitor's Report – There is nothing to report, but to advise that N. Christopher Griffiths was appointed by the governor serve as a Supreme Court Justice. Solicitor Forman thanked council for the opportunity and looked forward to working with everyone.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor Spencer went to League Day and met Lori Spagnolo. There is so much money out there. She coordinates grants and sent him an email which he will forward to the town manager. The second meeting of the comprehensive plan update was held earlier. He spoke to Representative Cooke and Senator Lockman about the industrial park and they will be providing some assistance with a matter there.

Mayor – Mayor MacDonald will be resigning as Mayor. She feels that there are things she is unable to attend because of various things in her schedule and believes the town should have another mayor. She discussed it with Vice Mayor Spencer and he was on board. This will be her final meeting as Mayor. She would not mind being Vice Mayor and continuing her work with DDD, CCED, and the transportation plan, but feels she currently is not giving enough of her attention to the town as Mayor. Commissioner Capriglione made a motion to appoint Michele as Vice Mayor. Vice Mayor Spencer said that he would be the one to appoint her per the charter as he becomes Mayor and the mayor would appoint the vice mayor. New Oaths of Office will take place next month. Mayor MacDonald welcomed the town manager back from leave and thanked her for the work she did while out on leave. She thanked Chief Wohner and Court Clerk Graff for their assistance in keeping the town running in the town manager's absence. Vice Mayor Spencer thanked Mayor MacDonald for her service especially from April, 2021, to April, 2022, and for putting focus on things like the Downtown Development District and moving the town forward.

Public Comment – Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna & Associates, congratulated Solicitor Griffiths on his extraordinary appointment and look forward to his confirmation and we are in good hands with his successor. He thanked Mayor MacDonald for her leadership and looks forward to continuing to work with her in the future as commissioner and Vice Mayor. He noted how well council is working together and thanked all for their public service. He reminded council of last November their approval of an application for Downtown Development District and moving forward with assistance from Rick Ferrell and thanked council for authorizing unanimously the boundary district for DDD. He met with Rick Ferrell to see how the narrative was coming together and it is in three pieces – biographical sketch of the town, economic climate and vision/impact. There were a few questions Rick had that he could not answer, so Mr. Ferrell will be reaching out to the town manager for her assistance. Progress is being made. Hopefully, draft will be ready in June. Wrap-up prior to Labor Day.

Alicia Battaglino, owner of 4 Copper Drive, asked if there are permits and variances on a property, who keeps that information. Permit applications are kept a minimum of five years. Variance decisions are recorded. She said that her grandfather kept everything and said her grandfather had a variance for the 20 foot water easement in the back of the property. She said that all property owners on Copper were part of a water easement. She wanted to know what the process was. Town Manager King asked if there were drawings and she said it was a written letter. She said that there are plans from 1977 that McBride and Ziegler drew showing it and the town manager has the same plans and spoke to someone from DNREC about those drawings. The drawings show no easement, but that swales were intended for the back of the property but noted that some owners did not want to lose 10 feet of property. She just was not sure if she should keep everything property-related. Vice Mayor Spencer advised that she

should keep whatever she has and possibly share the information with the town manager to ensure the town is aware of the documents she is referring to in light of the senators trying to assist with the drainage issues on her property. A lot of what was done in the industrial park back in the day was done without permits. She says she has tags that were issued by someone who could have been an office person and has lots of photographs.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.