

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
October 19, 2023

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Michael Spencer 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 Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Stephanie Banks, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Town Manager Wendy King, and Solicitor Benjamin Forman. Commissioner John Joswick and Police Chief Mark Wohner were absent.

Minutes from the September 21, 2023, meeting could not be approved because of attendance, but the minutes from the August 17, 2023, meeting were able to be approved via motion by Commissioner Capriglione, seconded by Commissioner Banks. All Ayes (Vice Mayor MacDonald).

Town Manager's Report – Meeting with safety director from Air Liquide because they would like to place a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon light at their parking area on Water Street. We maintain the road, but it would affect traffic on James Street, so as a courtesy, DelDOT should be made aware. Optimal timeline would be after the opening of the bridge and paving of the area underneath 141. DelDOT Traffic Division was notified and wanted no part of this since Water Street is a town-maintained road. Cost estimates for the sign run anywhere from \$75,000 to \$250,000. A less expensive way to get the sign is to order through the manufacturer and hire a contractor to place it like Fenwick Island did. Air Liquide is fully on board to pay for the sign and everything needed to place it. This was initiated because an employee was injured by another employee crossing Water Street to get to the parking area. Commissioner Capriglione said his issue was that the speed limit was not a 25mph residential area but a 30mph industrial area so the trucks having to stop would be an issue. There could be other options than stopping traffic. We could look into lowering the speed limit first. Representative Cooke should be made aware of the situation. Kevin Haigh thought that the sign there said "Pedestrian Crossing" and you were supposed to stop. If there are any comments about the Downtown Development District narrative, please have them by the end of October. That includes the incentives the town intends to offer. Impact fee information was provided to council last month and council should decide to move forward with passing an ordinance. These are one-time fees that can offset strain on resources that development can create. FY2024 General Operating Budget will be presented next month. Mayor Spencer and the town manager met with team members from Waste Management to discuss some service issues. Peniel Methodist Church will now have a dumpster because of the amount of trash they accumulate. Fall Cleanup – October 21; DEA drug takeback - October 28; Peniel Methodist Church Trunk or Treat – October 28, Apex Engineering did a property survey at the municipal building in preparation for the fence and found that some fences of the homes on N. Marshall Street backing up to our parking lot are actually on our property. Pettinaro's sign is also on the town's property. It's not the intention to have them move their sign – both our maintenance and their maintenance take care of the grass. When the survey comes back, council can review and determine what the next steps could be. Commissioner Capriglione asked about the water tower and the easement. Per the easement, we are not allowed to cut off the water company's access to the tower, which the fence would not. Mayor Spencer asked about the people on Augustine Street whose home is 8 feet on the town's property did anything and they did not. Mayor Spencer asked that commissioners review the impact fee information so an ordinance can be developed in the next couple of months. There are also incentives that should be considered for the Downtown Development District and there was

discussion about what we could offer. Vice Mayor MacDonald asked about the \$20,000 for Mark Savino leaving and wanted to know if we had to apply to get the money. We don't have to apply – Chief Wohner will arrange payment. Commissioner Capriglione said he had heard that the County Police were offering a \$25,000 bonus for lateral transfer. Many departments are giving bonuses. Commissioner Capriglione spoke to our Sgt. Jones and he said that we could probably draw from the state retirees. Vice Mayor MacDonald asked if there was anything other agencies get paid for or are offered that we do not pay for and do we pay the officers to go to court. Commissioner Capriglione said that the town could not afford things for the police if it were not for grants for like the Cares Act. It will be different when development starts.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly department statistics for September, 2023.

Alderman's Report - \$18,264 in court collections for September, 2023.

Maintenance Reports – no questions. No code report because follow-ups were being done.

Solicitor – Nothing to report.

Commissioners – Commissioner Banks said that Ella Johnson Park looks good. Vice Mayor MacDonald mentioned that the street was cleaned and asked if it was us. It was not. DeIDOT had run down route 4 prior but Kevin Haigh mentioned that it could have been when wires were cleared of the branches, they came back to clean up. The town manager asked if the streetlights were repaired on W. Ayre and along the railroad that Commissioner Banks reported last meeting and she believes they were.

Public Comment – Kevin Haigh, Augustine Street, had a question about taxes and an error made by a buyer of a property putting the wrong parcel number on the settlement sheet and the county's website had not made the correction. (Update – it's still not corrected.) The town's records are correct.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Capriglione seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.