

Town of Newport  
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners  
September 19, 2024

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Stephanie Banks 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 Stephanie Banks, Vice Mayor Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Lisa Spencer, Town Manager Wendy King, and Solicitor Max Walton. Vice Mayor Michele MacDonald, Police Chief Wohner and Commissioner Michael Capriglione were absent.

Minutes from the August 15, 2024, meeting were approved via motion from Commissioner Chatburn and seconded by Commissioner Spencer.

Town Manager's Report – Vinyl wrapping company inquired about locating in town. He would do some auto, but he also does commercial signage and is contracted with the FAA. Received training from the state benefits office for the NEBS system. DelDOT indicated they would not be renewing the lease after the time period for the maintenance yard. The lease is 20 years with a 5-year extension. Lease origination was April, 2010. Fall Cleanup Day is Saturday, October 19, 2024. Charter amendments were signed off on by the Governor. Attended the DMA 9/11 Ceremony. Delaware Greenways event at the Museum of Natural History. S. Walnut sinkhole update – Chief Wohner reached out to DelDOT after remembering a DelDOT employee being hospitalized from gas exposure. The representative came out and he was told that the town only has surface water and nothing underground. The person said he would have the area filled with crush and run until more investigation could be conducted. Ayre Street project plans were in the packet for the commissioners to look at. Mayor Banks asked if the town could break the lease with DelDOT. We are not really interested in paying to demolish bays and either bring the current structure to code or demolish what is there and put a pole barn there just to have DelDOT take it back. Robby Brown from DelDOT did indicate it was “current administration” so there is always a chance the future administration may feel differently. Commissioner Chatburn asked when the five-year option came into play (2030). In the short term, if we stayed at the property, the state could assist us with demolition permits and provide us the environmental studies of the property. We have already remediated asbestos. Solicitor Walton suggested reaching out to the governor's office in February or March to get a final decision that will guide us forward. There will be a new cabinet secretary and there may be different needs/priorities. There was discussion about the vinyl wrapper and no one was opposed. Commissioner Chatburn asked about chemicals but there are none that would need to be disposed of.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly department statistics for August. Chief Wohner included the salary study for council review to be discussed next month.

Alderman's Report – Court collections – \$21,202 for August, 2024.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted with no questions. Mayor Banks asked about Santillanta's (106). They will be issued a court summons if they do not get their license.

Solicitor Walton had no report.

Commissioners – Commissioner Chatburn had some neighbors voice concerns about people that don't live on Christian Street sitting in their cars parked in front of people's houses playing games and smoking pot. He spoke to Chief Wohner and he reviewed that statute with him and there is nothing that can be done if they are legally parked and not blocking someone's driveway. If they are smoking marijuana as minors, they can do something.

Mayor's Report – She is getting complaints of speeding up and down W. Ayre Street. Both cars and work trucks. Nails being left on the street.

Public Comment – Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates, asked if the town considered speed bumps on W. Ayre. There are speedbumps already. He wanted to second everything Solicitor Walton said about Washington Street maintenance yard. The town needs to determine the desired outcome and work from there with the new administration. There will be an upcoming conference call with DelDOT about the James Street bridge and there not being any lighting. It is possible that the bid went out without lighting being addressed. There was an interagency meeting regarding the Newport River Trail. It will not be a simple project. There will be 11 different permits that will need to be issued from many different agencies. Thanks to the town manager, Commissioner Chatburn, Commissioner Capriglione and former administration for updated the zoning areas, conditional uses and solar energy. Joe Valiante, Walnut Street, advised one-way sign at corner of Walnut and Market Street was removed and as a result, some cars were going up Walnut the wrong way. He nailed a sign to the telephone pole to stop cars from doing that. Kevin Haigh, Augustine Street, asked if was Newport's responsibility to put the signs back up. It was DelDOT's project and they removed the signs and should put them back up. If they don't, of course we will, but the work is not completed yet.

Commissioner Chatburn made motion to adjourn. Commissioner Spencer seconded. All Ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.