

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
April 17, 2025

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 Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Lisa Spencer, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor Max Walton

Minutes from the March 20, 2025, meeting were approved via motion from Commissioner MacDonald and seconded by Commissioner Spencer. All Ayes.

Town Manager's Report – Spring Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, April 19. Met with the contractor and engineer to walk the length of Ayre Street. The contractor distributed door hangers. Many of the homes do not have driveways and parking will be an issue, so the town manager will reach out to the Masonic Hall to see if parking in their lot would be an option. The town was awarded an energy grant for \$124,000. The ribbon cutting ceremony for Dill Dinkers will be on April 22. APRA annual report is due on April 30. Second reading/public hearing and adoption of the noise ordinance amendment is on the agenda. The flashing beacon light at Air Liquide was not discussed last month so it's on the agenda for discussion. Commissioner MacDonald asked if the energy grant could be used for other things like ARPA and it is specific to what was applied for and if the other funding opportunity is available, we would find another way to spend the money as long as it was an appropriate use. Mayor Banks asked about parking underneath the bridge. DelDOT owns the lot across from Marshall Street and they have Greggo Ferrara employees parking there. The town manager asked Solicitor Walton about a "hold harmless" agreement, but he said that we should get permission before we worry about agreements.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly statistics for March, 2025. He attended Richey School Community Resource Fair and it was well-attended. He and the town manager had a meeting with Flock, a company who has a camera system that can ingest third party videos. He thinks it probably would need to be put on the back burner for now until long-term funding could be worked out. He also wants to look at another vendor. It would be \$20,500 to set up and \$18,100 per year thereafter. He and the town manager met with DelDOT about the red light cameras they are going to be putting at Justis and Marshall Streets. There was a study done in 2022 and that location was 17th on DelDOT's list for violations and collisions. They need to get a project completed downstate but anticipate the lights installed by July. The way it works is that the vendor would send violations to the police department and an officer would determine if a violation occurred, send it back to the vendor who would mail it out to the violator. Violator either pays or contests. If the violation is paid, the vendor forwards the money to the state and the state pays for the camera and we would get any amount over what it costs to operate the camera. If the camera does not pay for itself, the state pays the vendor for the camera. Commissioner Capriglione asked if we would be reimbursed for the officer's time and we will not be. To pay for the camera, 40 violations would need to be issued and paid. DelDOT did do a study and from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm there were 340 violations in a day.

Alderman's Report - \$26,464 fines collected for March, 2025.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted. Code enforcement will be on a separate report going forward.

Solicitor's Report – Nothing to report. He apologized to Chief Wohner for an outstanding item.

Commissioners - Commissioner MacDonald asked about the police equipment line item and it's the body-worn cameras. Commissioner Capriglione asked about a firepit at the corner house at Marshall and Highland. It's right in front of the house and they have a truck parked on the grass. There is no ordinance against the firepit but the parking on the grass can be addressed. They have been out on the weekends. Mayor Banks asked about the equipment removal at Ella Johnson Park. Equipment will be removed when the ground dries out a bit. Also, there is a stump from a tree that fell down that is sticking up.

Public Comment – Kevin Haigh, resident, thought the noise ordinance was 10:00 pm. He asked if there was anything out in the public describing what would be happening on Ayre Street because people don't seem to be aware of what streets are going to be affected. The door hanger described what was happening and where. The door hanger that was distributed and the plans were posted to the website in March. The contractor is still working out details and he has not provided an exact start date yet. We are also awaiting a detour plan from them and that will be posted online as soon as it's received by the town manager. Jordan Seemans, Government Affairs and Community Relations Manager, Harvey Hanna & Associates, announced that on April 22, Dill Dinkers Pickleball, one of their tenants, would be having their ribbon cutting ceremony, at 500 Water Street. Afterwards, the facility would be open for some pickleball.

New Business – Second Reading/Public Hearing for Ordinance 2025-001 Amendment to Noise Ordinance that disallows refuse collection before 7:00 am. Mayor Banks opened the public hearing to hear any public comment on the ordinance. Kevin Haigh, resident, commented that there may be an issue with traffic because the trash trucks stop cars traveling on his street. There were no further comments so Mayor Banks closed the public hearing. She called for a motion to adopt Ordinance 2025-001. Commissioner Capriglione made the motion; Vice Mayor Chatburn seconded. All Ayes. None opposed. Mayor Banks appointed Michael Spencer to the Board of Adjustment. All Ayes; Commissioner Spencer recused herself from the vote. None opposed. Flashing Beacon Light at Air Liquide – Air Liquide first brought this to council's attention over a year ago and at the time, council thought it would impede traffic too much on James Street. They were willing to develop and pay for the project. Commissioner Capriglione asked if there were any failures as there have been on Milltown Road. Chief Wohner advised that this all began as a conversation at the Newport Monitoring Committee meeting and that there were no mention of failure but the need to coincide with the Newport River Trail that is to be developed at the same location. There is a lot of heavy traffic. The purpose of the beacon is for visibility and he doesn't seem to think it will back up traffic. The county would have to be involved to a point because of the upcoming trail. Vice Mayor Chatburn asked if Air Liquide wanted the officers to enforce compliance and Chief Wohner did not think so. Solicitor Walton said that he did not think a motion was necessary but it would not hurt to have one. Vice Mayor Chatburn made a motion to support Air Liquide in their placement of a flashing beacon at their crosswalk at their expense. Commissioner MacDonald seconded. All Ayes.

Mayor Banks made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner MacDonald seconded. All Ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

