

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

March 8, 2016

MEETING CONVENED: 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Irvine, Chair, Kismet Hazelwood, John Hornor, Jason Kramer, Bob McDowell, Ajay Prasad, Sheila Smith, John Wessells

ABSENT: Kass Sheedy

STAFF: Tom Coleman, Director of Public Works & Water Resources
Tom Fruehstorfer, Planning & Development Department

GUEST: Katie Liming, Students for the Environment Club, University of Delaware

(Due to the late arrival of Chairman George Irvine, the meeting was called to order by Ajay Prasad.)

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 12, 2016

MOTION THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 12, 2016 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Fruehstorfer reported several City residents had expressed interest in raising chickens within City limits. He encouraged them to contact their designated Councilman. It is currently not permitted per City Code.

Ms. Katie Liming, Students for the Environment Club at UDEL reported there will be an upcoming "Trash Free Challenge" among UDEL students. This event will offer prizes for reducing trash consumption. This event will coincide with Earth Day. In addition, the club is hosting a screening of the movie "Bag It" on April 14th at 6:30 pm (location T.B.D.) Future events include inviting Delaware Legislatures to the UDEL campus to have a panel discussion regarding House Bill 202 (Amending Title 7 of the Delaware Code Relating to Recycling and Waste Reduction) and other issues relative to passing environmental legislation. The proposed date of this event is during the week of April 25th. The group is awaiting response from legislators. This event will be open to the public as well. Additionally, the group has been requesting changing the products used on The Green (UDEL property) to encourage the discontinuation of pesticides and utilizing "green products."

Mr. Irvine stated the Students for the Environment Club may wish to participate in the Reforestation Project which the CAC supports and recommended to Council when the opportunity presents itself.

Mr. Wessells reported the CAC is working on putting together a Green Energy Day for June 11, 2016. It will coincide with Newark Day/Night.

Haley Glos, an employee of Newark Natural Foods in attendance stated she will forward information to the Co-op members of the Newark Natural Foods regarding the Reforestation Project and the CAC in general. Mr. Irvine will contact the Newark Natural Foods to pass along information as well.

3. LED LIGHT REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Coleman reported the Electric Department wants to complete the project before any other additional major projects start. He believes the majority of the project is complete. Mr. Coleman reported the project is going well. The wattage of the LED lights are 143 watts and compare to a 250 watt light.

Mr. Hornor reported he had spoken with Mr. Vitola suggesting the Washington House as a potential location for solar panels. He further reported a UDEL student had done a plan for such a project. The City has a copy of the project and Mr. Coleman stated he is aware of the project as well. Mr. Wessells suggested Mr. Coleman compile a report of the savings of the LED lights and the environmental contribution so the CAC may use the data at Green Energy Day. Mr. Coleman reported McKees Solar Park has a website that gives statistics as well.

4. GREEN ENERGY

Mr. Hornor stated he had initiated research on the installation of solar panels by a leasing company. He had spoken with the Electric Department who indicated the Finance Department was the appropriate department. Mr. Vitola reported DEMEC initially did not want leasing company as they wanted to protect consumers. It is his opinion it is the involvement of a third party. Mr. Kramer will follow up with a neighbor of his who has recently installed solar panels.

Mr. Coleman stated the pump station revitalization is nearing completion. The last station remaining is a large station, but it does not run all the time. They are working on many project simultaneously and will complete this project when time allows.

The transportation alternatives project on Main Street to improve crosswalk safety which includes the installation of bike racks and benches is progressing. An agreement has been signed for the design phase. DELDOT is running the project and design will be underway in the next few weeks. Construction will coincide with the next resurfacing within the next year or so.

Mr. Irvine asked Mr. Coleman how much the anticipated cost would be to bury the electric lines on Main Street. Mr. Coleman stated it would be approximately \$17 million and would not be a realistic endeavor unless it was part of complete revitalization of Main

Street. Mr. Irvine asked when the pole lease agreements are updated. (i.e. Comcast etc.) It was his opinion maybe a portion of the pole lease agreements could be allocated to pay for the underground line project. Mr. Coleman stated it was his belief they were very long agreements (10-20 year franchise agreements). Mr. Irvine stated he will do further research when time allows. Mr. Coleman reported there is a task force for the Cleveland Avenue improvements that will be starting soon. The first meeting will be held at the George Wilson Center on March 15th. The committee will institute ways to improve the traffic and pedestrian walkability. He stated the committee is well represented by various groups located within the City.

Mr. Coleman stated they had received a petition from the NAACP for a crosswalk at McKees Lane by the new Alders Creek community to go across Cleveland Avenue. The complicating factor is that CSX Rail wants to close the underpass at McKees Lane.

Mr. Coleman reported the Delaware Sediment & Stormwater Regulations are under review. He mentioned there is a possibility that Reforestation as an approved stormwater practice and also creating a credit market. This means if a site is reforested the credits may then be sold to a developer. Mr. Coleman anticipated some progress in this project by summer end.

5. FUTURE GOALS

There was nothing new to discuss.

6. A BETTER NEWARK AWARD

There were no new applications. Mr. Kramer will have a new one to submit at the April meeting.

7. REVIEW OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENTS REPORTS

There was nothing to report.

8. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

- Plastic Bags - Mr. Irvine asked if CAC members had followed up with their prospective Council members regarding the house bill regarding plastic bags. Ms. Hazelwood reported she had spoken with Mark Morehead who referred her to speak with Representative Paul Baumbach. Ms. Hazelwood stated Mr. Morehead was supportive. Mr. Kramer stated he had spoken with Stu Markham. Mr. Markham reported he did not have a lot of feedback but the general consensus was that it was not a high priority and may be difficult to ban plastic bags. Ms. Smith reported she had spoken with Marge Hadden and she suggested to see what the outcome of the potential legislature currently in Dover. Mr. Wessell stated it was his opinion that he did not like the "wait and see" approach. He would prefer to be more proactive. Mr. Irvine stated he believed the CAC should continue to show support and encouragement to the proposed legislature.
- Mr. Irvine will continue drafting the Annual Report as the members provide their sections.

- Mr. Kramer reported the City had a special assessment in late 2015 and he received a bill with a return envelope for payment. He suggested the CAC encourage the City look into online property tax payments as they currently accept online payments for utilities. Mr. Coleman reported the taxes are billed through one program and utilities are billed through another program (Munis & Harris). He suggested Mr. Kramer contact Mr. Vitola.
- Ms. Schiano reported the Boards & Commissions Review Committee will be reviewing the CAC in April. Paperwork will be forwarded to the CAC when available.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2016 but will be rescheduled (date TBD).

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Tara A. Schiano
Secretary

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