

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

January 10, 2017

MEETING CONVENED: 7:05 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kismet Hazelwood, George Irvine (presiding), Ajay Prasad, Kass Sheedy, Sheila Smith, John Wessells

ABSENT: Jason Kramer, John Horner, Bob McDowell

STAFF: Renee Bensley (City Secretary); Tom Coleman

Mr. Irvine called the meeting to order.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON

MOTION BY MR. WESSELLS, SECONDED BY MS. SHEEDY: THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 13, 2016 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

AYE: WESSELLS, SHEEDY, IRVINE, PRASAD, SMITH

ABSENT: KRAMER, HORNER, MCDOWELL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. GUEST SPEAKER- RENEE BENSLEY, CITY SECRETARY

Ms. Bensley discussed the review of the CAC by the Boards and Commissions Review Committee. There were six points for review. The first recommendation was to take action to update the language in Section 2-152. This referenced the make-up of the committee, including staggered terms. This was updating language the committee found to be confusing. More specific recommendations for the CAC include amending the bylaws. Ms. Bensley referred to page 4 of the recommendation that members received before the meeting. In summary, the Board found that overall the CAC was well organized and functioning under the current leadership.

The second recommendation was to amend the bylaws to reflect the actual activities that the CAC is doing, specifically regarding reporting items. Currently the bylaws state the CAC will present a quarterly report to Council at a Council meeting, which is not being done. The timeline of completing the yearly review and submitting it to Council by March is also not being met. The recommendation was to either start meeting the deadlines laid out in current bylaws, or to amend the bylaws to reflect what is actually being done.

The third recommendation from the Board was to amend bylaws to reflect the election process. The current bylaws talk about electing the Chair by email, which is not being done. Instead it is being done at a public meeting, which is fully complaint, however, the bylaws should be adjusted to reflect what is actually happening.

The fourth recommendation was to pursue better outreach to get resources from the community outside of the formal committee. Ms. Bensley agreed that progress has been made on this front.

The fifth recommendation was remove the bylaw for the elected secretary role. This is redundant since Tara Schiano fills the role as secretary for the CAC and there is no need for another secretary.

The sixth recommendation was to implement a formal on-boarding or orientation process. Jason Kramer had mentioned that he came on and was not brought in formally. Ms. Bensley noted that if the CAC is interested, the City Secretary's Office could assist in developing a formal process.

Ms. Sheedy inquired as to the recommendation for formal FOIA training. Ms. Bensley clarified that the idea of formal FOIA training was uniform across many different committees and that it will be a joint process to make this training possible. FOIA and Robert's Rules of Order training will be formulated and all committees will be invited to attend. A training would not be held when every new member joined, however, the materials would be given to a new member when they joined. Mr. Irvine suggested that, along with these materials, there be added an organizational chart for the city and a copy of the bylaws, even though this items are available online as well. More specifically, Mr. Irvine suggested it describe how the city government functions and the roles and responsibilities of different positions.

Ms. Sheedy commented that the CAC is one of the most active committees in terms of community outreach. Ms. Bensley responded that community outreach could also mean getting citizens more involved in conservation-minded issues and getting them to participate not just as board members. She also stated that the review recognized the accomplishments that the CAC has achieved, but suggested continuing to seek improvement in terms of recruitment. Ms. Sheedy noted that when the Dashboard comes up, the CAC should get credit for being the first committee to utilize the Dashboard. She suggested that having the CAC's name attached to the project may help with getting the committee into the public's eye. Mr. Wessells shared that the first time he heard of the committee was from a next-door neighbor who asked him to join. Mr. Wessells suggested getting the word out to the average individual who may not know that the CAC exists. Ms. Sheedy asked if the suggestion for better community outreach was singular to the CAC or whether it was a suggestion for all boards. Ms. Bensley answered that because of the unique proactive nature of the CAC in comparison to other more reactive committees, the recommendation was meant for the CAC. Ms. Sheedy suggested that a way to better the committee's outreach could be to run an article in Newark Post. Mr. Irvine agreed but thought that possibly a quarterly article to update the community of goings on in the committee would be a better option. Ms. Hazelwood suggested the possibility of the Newark Post running an article about A Better Newark Award and adding some information about the CAC and the things it has accomplished in order to inform the public of its presence. Ms. Hazelwood also warned that the committee should be careful about taking on too much and becoming overwhelmed. She suggested that the committee start with its present projects and improve them. Ms. Hazelwood also suggested they publicize the meetings in the Newark Post and invite the public to attend. She also talked about the possibility of getting regular updates from students who are working on sustainability issues. *(Secretary's Note: Ms. Hazelwood left at 7:25 p.m.)*

Mr. Prasad agreed with Mr. Irvine's suggestion of quarterly updates in the Newark Post. Mr. Prasad also felt that, at minimum, the Annual Report should be publicized in the Newark Post in order to make the community aware of what the CAC does. Mr. Prasad addressed the recommendation about removing the role of secretary. Mr. Prasad stated that the issue of the internal minutes ties in with that elected role. He explained that the official minutes are not posted until a week before the next meeting of the CAC, which is farther away than some members would like. He advised that the action items allow the members to go over the points discussed at a meeting almost immediately. He acknowledges that the wording of "internal minutes" and "elected secretary" were incorrect. Ms. Bensley suggested that a solution to this issue would be to append the action items to the official minutes and submit them to the formal record. She advised that this would make the action items FOIA-compliant and part of public record. Mr. Irvine stated that the action items are useful to him in formulating the Annual Report. Mr. Prasad suggested that appending the action items to the official minutes would be redundant, as they essentially say the same thing. Mr. Irvine asked for clarification as whether there was an issue with storing items on the Dropbox. Ms. Bensley advised that if there was a FOIA request, the information had to be accessible. She said that because Ms. Schiano has access to the Dropbox, accessibility is not an issue. Mr. Irvine stated that because of the ease of accessing the action items on the Dropbox, most of the members prefer to keep them there. Ms. Bensley advised that it is important that the City Secretary's office is aware of any guest speakers to attend the CAC meetings in advance so that the speaker can be added to the agenda and the public can be notified. She also stated that there should not be policy-making discussion happening via email, but can only be done at a public meeting.

Ms. Sheedy pointed out that the CAC does not do a quarterly report. Ms. Bensley advised that per the CAC bylaws, the quarterly report is to be done during public comment. Mr. Irvine suggested that the CAC go back to practicing this bylaw, or possibly presenting a report during Council meetings to help with CAC visibility due to the high attendance for Council meetings. Mr. Irvine discussed the rank organization and realized that Mr. Prasad was both Co-Chair and Secretary. Mr. Wessells suggested that the committee could do away with the role of Secretary and instead assign the responsibility of action items to the Co-Chair. Ms. Bensley also pointed out that the recommendations were not requirements but submitted for the CAC's review. Ms. Sheedy commented that she likes the recommendation to have the annual report done by March. Ms. Sheedy and Mr. Irvine discussed delegating each board member a section of the Annual Report, so as to complete the review on time. Mr. Wessells agreed that keeping up on the Annual Report is important. Mr. Irvine suggested that the next meeting would be used to discuss bylaw amendments.

4. LED LIGHT REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Coleman advised that data is still coming in and savings are all stipulated. Project is complete in the sense that all lights are operational.

5. GREEN ENERGY DASHBOARD

Mr. Irvine advised that he sent the scope of the work to Michelle Bennett, the sustainability manager from UD. Mr. Irvine requested her assistance in finding a graduate or undergraduate student to start in their fall or spring semester. Mr. Irvine also shared the scope of the work with the Lerner Business College, who will post it and gauge the students for interest. Mr. Irvine thinks that these students will bring a knowledge of IT systems, qualitative data and quantitative data, though they may not have much knowledge of local government. Mr. Irvine stated that the goal is to have students working 20 hours a week for Mr. Coleman. Mr. Irvine inquired as to whether it would be an issue that many students applying are foreign students. Mr. Coleman advised that there should not be any restrictions further than the background and drug screening

all applicants must submit to.

6. A BETTER NEWARK AWARD

Ms. Bensley discussed A Better Newark Award and the confusion as to whether it would be presented by Council or the CAC. Ms. Bensley has been working to organize a meeting between DOW and Mayor Sierer to present the award. Ms. Bensley advised that the committee needs to work on a better process for giving the award and how it is presented at council meetings. She advised that when the CAC decides on a BNA recipient, they need to let the City Secretary's Office know who the recipient is, who will be receiving the presentation in advance and which CAC member will be present in order to do a small introduction for the CAC. The City Secretary's Office will provide the proclamation by filling in the information provided by the CAC. Mr. Irvine advised that the committee is not getting many applicants, which is causing some miscommunication when they do. Ms. Smith offered to be the contact person for the Council in regards to the BNA. Ms. Smith inquired as to whether the nomination form could be included in the press release in the Newark Post. Ms. Bensley suggested a follow up press release on the awardee and how to nominate someone for the award; she will work with the communication team. Ms. Sheedy suggested an application insert being added into electric bills. Ms. Bensley brought up the fact that those who get their bills online would not receive the insert. Mr. Irvine and Ms. Bensley agreed that Ms. Bensley would work on creating a better streamlined process. Ms. Bensley inquired as to whether there were any other BNA awards in the works. Mr. Irvine said no there are none now but they have some names in mind for future awards. Ms. Bensley suggested revamping the form; Ms. Smith agreed.

7. REVIEW OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Ms. Sheedy, Mr. Irvine and Ms. Smith concurred that the reports were very useful. Mr. Irvine brought up the issue of bringing attention to the historic conservation side of Newark, as opposed to focusing entirely on developing the city's future. Ms. Sheedy spoke to Tom Fruehstorfer and they decided that this falls under the purview of the Planning Department, Section 7-19, Article 10, 13-120, historic properties. Mr. Irvine inquired as to whether the code included any processes through which the city considers how it views historic conservation. Ms. Sheedy advised it does not. Ms. Sheedy advised the code is more reactive and does not include any holistic planning component; in other words, nothing happens unless someone makes an application. Mr. Irvine commented that the Comprehensive Plan also seems to be more general and does not have a thought process laid out in regards to historic conservation. Mr. Irvine expressed concerns that the city should be thinking about this, so as not to damage the historic character of current buildings and to protect their integrity. Ms. Sheedy offered to contact the Newark Historical Society and discuss mutual outreach. Mr. Irvine agreed but suggested that Ms. Sheedy speak to the Planning Commission first, in case they are already performing said outreach. Ms. Sheedy suggested that the workload of the Planning Commission is heavy and the CAC may have more time to work on a historic conservation project. Ms. Sheedy commented that Newark should take advantage of the fact that it is a historic town and expressed concern that, especially Main Street, is changing so much. Ms. Smith suggested asking if the Planning Commission has a list of historic buildings or buildings that may qualify.

8. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Irvine advised that the Annual Report should be finalized at the next meeting. Mr. Wessells will describe what the CAC did on Community Day. Mr. Prasad will discuss Green Energy activities, LED lights and Green Energy Dashboard. Ms. Smith will handle the BNA section of the Report. Ms. Sheedy will discuss the plastic bags project. Mr. Irvine advised he will handle the Executive summary and outreach to DNREC.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, February 14, 2017.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Renee Bensley
City Secretary

RKB/sjc