

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

September 12, 2017

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Irvine (arrived at 7:20 p.m.), Ajay Prasad, John Hornor, Jason Kramer, Bob McDowell, Kass Sheedy, Sheila Smith, John Wessells

ABSENT: Kismet Hazelwood

STAFF: Tara Schiano, Deputy City Secretary

Mr. Prasad called the meeting to order.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JULY 11, 2017

MOTION THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 11, 2017 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Chajes introduced himself as the co-chair of the University of Delaware's Task Force on Sustainability. Mr. Chajes stated that the task force is an initiative within the University of Delaware Community Engagement Initiative. Mr. Chajes wished to see the Task Force partner with the CAC for transit issues, solid waste issues and clean energy. These efforts were ongoing. He noted that last year there had been an effort to come up with a sustainability plan for Wilmington that was led by UD's Center for Environmental Policy. A plan for Newark had been started as well. Mr. Chajes shared that there was some interest on campus in looking at the STAR Campus and doing some innovative projects for energy there. There had also been discussions about partnering with Newark to create a solar power plant. Mr. Chajes stated he had spoken to the mayor about this who had referred him to the CAC. Mr. Chajes advised he also served on Delaware's Sustainable Energy Utility Board and there was an offer to bring a zero-modular home, which was being built in Southern Delaware, to Newark to be shown as a model. Ms. Sheedy asked if someone would be there to show people through the home or if they would need to make an appointment. Mr. Chajes answered that his concept was to have students do schoolwork in there and to keep it open certain hours. He envisioned that any sustainability efforts be showcased there. Mr. Chajes hoped he could continue a dialogue with the CAC and the two groups could keep each other informed.

Mr. Prasad noted there had been a resolution passed in the faculty senate regarding this. Mr. Chajes said that was correct and that the resolution was to have the University look at the financial ramifications of moving toward using 100% clean energy by 2020. Mr. Chajes noted that on the City standpoint, they wished to see the City not be an energy buyer and seller, but an energy producer. They wished to do this at a more reasonable rate than residents were currently paying for energy. Mr. Irvine asked how he was hoping to

operationalize the partnership. Mr. Chajes answered that they were trying to set up a collaborative group and would like to have City representation on it. Mr. Irvine asked how it played in with Mr. Fortner's plan. Mr. Fortner responded that he would try to get it to it. Mr. Fortner said he had been working with Michelle Bennett. Mr. Chajes shared that they had been using STAR Communities which was a robust measurement technique. Mr. Chajes stated that the idea was for cities to be able to measure against other cities to see how much progress was being made. At least 60 cities had implemented this. Ms. Smith asked whether these two overlapped and whether they were developed separately. Mr. Chajes said they were developed separately. He had met with the City during its transitional period with the retirement of Carol Houck and so it had not gone much further. Ms. Smith felt the University's work and the City's work were complimentary and it would make sense to have them work together. Mr. Irvine asked what it would take for Newark to become a producer of energy. Mr. Chajes said he could provide a report. There was plan that showed exactly how the City could do that and students were working to update that plan. Mr. Irvine said he would look for volunteers for Mr. Chajes' committee.

Mr. Wessells introduced the second member of the public, Vicky Lam, and advised she owned a shop that provided promotional items. He stated that he had bought the CAC shirts from her. Mr. Wessells stated he had ordered about 80 t-shirts to give away on Community Day. Mr. Irvine noted that Ms. Lam had also brought pens made out of recycled bottles. Ms. Smith asked whether they were made from just one bottle. Ms. Lam explained that all the bottles were put together and crushed, then they made the pens. Ms. Lam explained that her business did a lot of eco-friendly manufacturing. Ms. Sheedy asked what the name of the business was. Ms. Lam said it was called Promo Victory. Ms. Lam distributed some business cards and jar openers made from recycled tires.

3. GUEST: PLANNER MICHAEL FORTNER – TOPIC: SUSTAINABLE NEWARK COMMUNITY PLAN

Mr. Fortner advised he was at the meeting to discuss the Delaware Sustainable Communities Planning Grant. He explained that the funding for these grants was from the cap and trade program that Delaware participated in. Part of the proceeds of that program went back to the states which would then use it to provide local cities with planning grants. DNREC had done that and developed a grant program, to which the City of Newark had applied, to develop a sustainable community plan. Mr. Fortner advised that the City had received \$80,000 to do this. The \$80,000 would go to a consultant. Mr. Fortner said that staff was in the pre-planning phase. They had developed a draft called the Plan for Planning. During the Comprehensive Development Plan process, there was a sustainability chapter but there was a criticism that there was not a lot of benchmarks and ways to measure progress. Mr. Fortner noted that the STAR community project that Mr. Chajes had mentioned would be a huge benefit. Mr. Fortner stated that the Comp Plan had laid the groundwork and the goals that the City wanted to achieve for this plan. The next step was a more detailed plan and a more participatory process with the community.

Mr. Fortner mentioned that he had known about the efforts UD was making. The "project team" on pg. 3 of his handout attempted to gather all relevant stakeholders and create a steering committee of sorts. He wanted to have some UD representatives included on that team. It would also include a representative from the CAC. He went through the other potential members including a DNREC representative. This committee would be responsible for working with the hired consultant. They would work to develop an RFP and to hire this consultant. Mr. Fortner referred to pg. 2 which included a list of categories that could be focused on. He advised there would be a number of public workshops to get the public involved and to understand what their vision for Newark sustainability was and what they would like to be focused on. Mr. Fortner said some of this outreach would begin on Community Day. He hoped to work very closely with the University. He also felt that CAC could be an oversight committee on this project and be updated periodically on how it was

progressing.

Mr. Irvine asked about the section for allowable types of projects. Mr. Fortner responded it was not limited to that. He noted that he had taken the bullet points on pg. 2 from the grant application. There were about 5 different things the City could apply for under the Sustainable Planning Grant. They had gone with the Sustainable Community. He clarified that it was open-ended but the application did ask that they focus on 3 of the points. Mr. Fortner felt that energy reduction, renewable energy use and green buildings and design were points that Newark could focus on but he added they were not bound to that.

Ms. Sheedy asked how specific Mr. Fortner thought the final plan would be. She asked if it would lay out metrics and deadlines. Mr. Fortner was hoping it would be specific. He felt the STAR rating would be useful for that. The obstacle was finding things that could be measured to see what the impact was. He felt the objective was to get as specific as possible. Ms. Smith asked whether the list of categories was by priority. Mr. Fortner said they were not prioritized but simply suggested topics. Ms. Smith also felt that some things needed to happen first before the others could be accomplished.

Mr. Irvine asked whether the public session run for the development of the Comprehensive Plan had given any information on how the public perceived the need to become sustainable. Mr. Fortner referred to pg. 3 and stated they had identified 3 components of their vision which was a healthy community, a sustainable community and an inclusive community. He advised that the “sustainable community” was defined as “a community that is sustainable, both economically and environmentally, for generations to come.” He read off the other bullet points that described the aspirations of a sustainable community. Mr. Irvine liked the idea of having a classic urban planning process with public participation, stakeholder participation and a transparent plan. He felt this was a limited opportunity because they could not go in all these directions at once. He felt that going with what they knew already could help narrow the focus and to achieve a doable outcome. Mr. Irvine asked whether the stakeholders had a sense of these bullet points and whether they could be prioritized. Mr. Fortner advised there would be a process but he had heard a lot about LEED building and light. Mr. Fortner said that most of these things were already being worked on, such as transit. He hoped that this committee could partner with the ongoing efforts within the City for topics such as these.

He clarified that this plan laid out 1 year but the City did have at least 2 years to complete this. He expected the first few months would be a start of narrowing down the topics. With a consultant, this would be narrowed down even further. Ms. Smith asked whether the Planning Commission already had a goal of working toward sustainability. She asked whether sustainability had been considered with all the recent development. Mr. Fortner responded that he thought it played a part. He advised the CAC was the first group to see this plan. Mr. Fortner said that the Planning Commission would also get this presentation and be a part of this process. They were currently looking at parking regulations and how to reform them. He felt that the Planning Commission could benefit from this process.

Ms. Sheedy noted that in order to have a sustainable community, Newark needed to have a sustained population. She did not see anyone representing housing needs. Mr. Fortner thought this was a good idea to add someone from the Newark Housing Authority or the State Housing Authority. Other options included a local developer who could give a different insight. Mr. Fortner noted that, as the Community Development lead in the Planning Department, he represented housing needs for staff. He pointed out this was not the final list of representatives and he was open to suggestions. Mr. Irvine asked when the committee would get together. Mr. Fortner answered there was no date set. He stated they may try to get the first meeting in by October. Ms. Smith said she was interested in serving as a volunteer on this committee on behalf of the CAC. Mr. Fortner noted the first item of business for the committee would be to complete the RFP. Ms. Sheedy

was also interested. Mr. Irvine asked if there was a shortlist of consultants. Mr. Fortner said there had been names floated but there was no shortlist. Mr. Irvine asked if the consultants would be prequalified. Mr. Fortner said they would have to have certain qualifications. Mr. Irvine asked Mr. Fortner what kind of poll questions he would ask on Community Day. Mr. Fortner said he was still working on that. He was thinking that they may provide additional information about the topics on pg. 2 and ask people to pick what they thought were the highest priorities. Ms. Smith suggested giving out dots for people to choose 3 topics they liked as a survey.

4. GREEN ENERGY FUND/ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM UPDATES

Mr. Prasad reported that the recommendation had been reshaped and polished with help from DEMEC. He had put all this together and it had been forwarded to Council. Ms. Schiano said it would go before Council on September 25, 2017. There was some discussion on who would be present. There was also some discussion regarding the presentation of the BNA at the same Council meeting.

5. GREEN ENERGY DASHBOARD PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Irvine updated that he had found interns that could work on this project and sent them to Mr. Filasky. Mr. Filasky agreed to move ahead. They were a little late to the start of this and, as a result, 2 of the 3 finalists had already received internship offers. Rather than proceed with just 1 person to interview, they had agreed to start the internship in January. Mr. Irvine felt that having Mr. Coleman back as director of Public Works and Water Resources would allow better oversight for the intern.

6. REVIEW OF PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

There was no comment.

7. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Wessells reported that he had gotten 100 bags from Acme to give away. He had not heard from Shoprite. He noted next year, he would start sending out letters to the stores earlier. Mr. Wessells explained where the CAC's spot would be. Mr. Wessells noted they still needed to come up with a question to ask people. Ms. Smith stated she had submitted 3 possible questions. She felt this was a way to educate people about what the CAC does. Her questions involved asking people if they had been aware that the CAC had been involved in different things. Ms. Smith felt that the CAC should be reviving interest in anti-idling as well. She had not seen anyone working on this in a while. Mr. Prasad explained there was no appetite for enforcing this regulation. Ms. Smith felt that if people were aware of it, there may be more appetite for enforcing it. Mr. Prasad said he would be interested in anti-idling question. He noted Ms. Smith's questions were more CAC-centric and he was not sure those were what they should be focused on. Ms. Smith suggested asking a yes or no of whether people were aware Newark had an anti-idling law.

Mr. Irvine noted that an open-ended question could bring forward topics they had not thought of while a targeted question would make them think of just that issue. Mr. Irvine was in favor of one of both. He felt the questions should have to do with community, for example, what mattered to them when it came to sustainability or conservation. Ms. Sheedy asked if there could be a poll of whether people would support increased enforcement of the anti-idling law. There was agreement this would work. Ms. Smith said she would bring the board with the question. Mr. Prasad pointed out it should include asking whether the person was familiar with the law. Ms. Smith suggested bringing literature on the anti-idling law. Mr. Irvine said he

would bring it. Mr. Irvine suggested that for t-shirt giveaways, they do a 5-question quiz on Newark conservation. Mr. Irvine also noted they could give them away. Ms. Smith suggested a suggestion box for Newark sustainability. Mr. Prasad suggested giving away a pen for the anti-idling question and t-shirt for the open-ended question. There was further discussion on when each member could run the information stand and shifts were worked out. Mr. Irvine asked whether anyone had a quick fact sheet about Newark's conservation. Ms. Smith felt they already had plenty of activities. Mr. Irvine felt the bicycle that would light up a lightbulb would be very popular and should be out front.

Ms. Smith asked for clarification as to whether the anti-idling provision was a law or an ordinance. Ms. Sheedy answered it was an ordinance. It was discussed whether to phrase the question whether people supported enforcement or increased enforcement. It was decided the question would ask whether people supported enforcement of the anti-idling ordinance. Ms. Smith also added points on why this ordinance was necessary to protect air quality. On the suggestion box, Mr. McDowell suggested writing "suggestions for a more sustainable Newark."

8. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is October 10, 2017.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Tara Schiano
Deputy City Secretary

TAS/sjc