CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 10, 2017

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Irvine, Ajay Prasad, John Hornor, Kismet Hazelwood, Jason Kramer, Kass Sheedy, John Wessells

ABSENT: Bob McDowell, Sheila Smith

STAFF: Tara Schiano, Deputy City Secretary

Mr. Irvine called the meeting to order.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

   MOTION THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2017 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

   MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

James Kelley advised he was asked by Tim Filasky to come to this meeting. Mr. Kelley stated he is the water resources engineer working on stormwater management for the Rodney project. Mr. Kelley asked whether his presentation could be added to the agenda. Ms. Schiano stated Mr. Kelley could speak briefly during public comment and a more detailed discussion could be put on the November agenda. Mr. Kelley wanted to speak briefly about the project and answer any questions. He had brought concept plans and added these were also available on the website. His group had been soliciting public comment and asking for support on this project.

He felt this was a unique situation. He explained they had been given the opportunity to purchase the Rodney dorm complex and be able to address the need for stormwater management. The current complex would treat more than 50 acres of heavily impervious area on the upstream side. They were planning to design a complex that would be a combined stormwater management project and a park facility. By acquiring this land and doing stormwater management, they felt they could address a lot of the flooding issues occurring downtown, specifically along South Main Street. They were also looking for water quality benefits in the Christina River. Mr. Kelley pointed out that Newark was in the Christina River Basin, split by the Christina River Watershed and the White Clay Creek Watershed. The importance of the Christina River Basin Watershed was that it served as a source for drinking water for about 400,000 residents in the area. He wanted to make sure that the community was involved in this. He showed 3 different concepts to the members and gave an overview of the different areas.

3. GREEN ENERGY FUND/ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM UPDATES

Mr. Prasad reported that he had been at the Council meeting on October 9, 2017 and was happy to say the resolution had passed unanimously. He pointed out that some things had come up in discussion by Council. The first item was that one of the people who had tried to take advantage of the Green Energy incentive was unable to do so because they did not own a south-facing home. Mr. Prasad was not aware of this provision. This person had shared with Mr. Prasad that he felt the issue with this incentive was not a lack of advertising, but that it was too restrictive. They had felt that if the restriction was reduced, it would increase the number of applications. Ms. Sheedy asked if this was City requirement. Mr. Prasad thought that the City would only give the incentive to a south-facing home. Mr. Irvine noted they did not know the origin of the requirement. Mr. Prasad felt that Scott Lynch may be a good person to ask about this. Mr. Irvine asked Mr. Prasad to follow up on this and see if it was a DEMEC rule or the City's choice. If it was the City's choice, the CAC would be in a position to be able to recommend that the incentive be expanded.

Mr. Prasad advised the second issue had been brought up by Councilman Markham. Mr. Markham had asked for clarification about renting versus owning option. His point had been that in rental properties, the renters typically paid their own utility bill. He had wanted to know how that factored in. The third point had been brought up by Dr. Morgan. Dr. Morgan had wanted Council to ban wind turbines in backyards because he felt they would be noisy. However, Council had decided to pass it.

4. GREEN ENERGY DASHBOARD PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Irvine updated that they were looking to hire the intern from the Lerner College of Business in the Spring to create the static dashboard based on the data Public Works had about energy savings.

5. REVIEW OF PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

There were no comments.

6. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Irvine advised that the recommendation submitted by the CAC to Council regarding water towers had been accepted. He stated Council was now taking the next step in looking to create legislative or regulatory language.

Ms. Sheedy asked if the City already had car charging stations on their radar. Mr. Irvine believed Mr. Coleman had mentioned that. Stu Markham, District 6, reported he was at this meeting to speak about the 3 items on the agenda: car charging stations, LED security lighting and LED solar lights in parking lots. Mr. Markham stated part of the reason he had sent the idea regarding car charging stations was because the State was offering rebates to install these and municipalities qualified. Mr. Markham felt that the City should be able to direct Green Energy funding or McKees funding toward putting in these stations. Mr. Irvine asked what the percentage on the rebates was. Mr. Markham answered that the DNREC website had an electric vehicle charging station rebate program frequently asked questions page. For residential, rebates were up to 50% or $500. Commercial properties were 75% or up to $2500. For workplaces, the rebate was 75% or up to $5000. A workplace was defined as 15 or more employees. Mr. Markham felt the City could fit in either the commercial or workplace category. Mr. Irvine felt this was a good rebate. Mr. Markham stated the rebate required level 2 chargers. It seemed to him they could use Green Energy funds and apply for a rebate. The hard part to him was choosing where to put it and making sure someone did not use the charger all day. Ms.

Sheedy asked how long it took to charge an electric vehicle. Mr. Prasad answered that it depended on the distance the person wanted to drive.

Mr. Markham noted that people who drove to work and parked at one of these stations could charge their cars for 8 hours. However, he felt that if they wanted to make this a destination for people considering electric cars, they should limit the time. Mr. Markham advised cars themselves varied in how long they needed to charge. Mr. Markham suggested putting a charger in the municipal lot and getting a City electric vehicle. Mr. Prasad shared he had contacted a professor at UD to ask how much it would cost to install a charging station at the municipal building. The professor had estimated it would cost about $1600 to purchase the unit and $400 to install it if a City electrician was used. Mr. Irvine asked if the charging station took up more than one spot. Mr. Markham believed it was only for one spot. Mr. Irvine asked how many levels of chargers there were. Mr. Markham explained there were 3 levels. Level 1 was 2-5 miles per hour of charging, level 2 was 10-20 miles per hour of charging and level 3 was called DC fast charging which was 60-80 miles per 20 minutes of charging.

Mr. Irvine asked if there was any data as to how many electric cars currently existed in the City. Mr. Markham was not sure. Mr. Irvine wondered if any City staff drove electric cars. Ms. Schiano thought there were a few but would gather that information. Ms. Sheedy asked whether the City currently owned any electric vehicles. Mr. Irvine said they did not. Mr. Markham suggested that the CAC recommend the use of electric vehicles. He felt there were some situations where they would be sufficient as transport. Mr. Irvine asked if there was a volunteer to form a subcommittee to research this. Ms. Sheedy and Mr. Kramer volunteered to do some research.

The next item that Mr. Markham wanted to discuss was LED security lighting. He explained that Dover was doing security lighting in areas that they felt were problematic. The police in Newark did not have this program but Mr. Markham felt they could do some solar or LED security lighting. He advised these were not expensive. This would require communication with the police to decide where these could be put and it could be funded through Green Energy funding. Mr. Markham felt that installing solar lights that cost nothing to run would be easier for lower income communities. Mr. Prasad asked what targeted areas Mr. Markham was considering for this project. Mr. Markham said he would defer to the police on this. He would ask the police where people were congregating and they should not be or where there was suspected criminal activity. Lighting was excellent in discouraging crime. Mr. Irvine thought this was a good idea.

Mr. Markham noted that the CAC did not have to act on all these suggestions at once but the rebate program for charging stations ended in June 2018. Mr. Markham said the suggestion for LED solar lights was specifically for the municipal lot. He felt it would be straightforward to put in panels and LED street lights. Mr. Irvine liked this idea as well. He asked who managed those lights. Mr. Markham believed it was the Electric Department. Mr. Irvine asked if there were any developers in town using LED solar lights in their lots. Mr. Markham said he was not aware of any but this was another idea that could be added to their LEED checklist. Mr. Irvine asked if there were any developers putting in car charging stations. Mr. Markham responded that he had not seen them anywhere in the City. Mr. Prasad noted that UD campus had a few.

Mr. Markham asked where the CAC stood on the Emerson Bridge. Mr. Irvine stated they had not taken a stand on this either way. Mr. Markham noted that the lighting of this bridge had been questioned during the presentation. He felt this was another opportunity for LED or panel driven lights. Mr. Irvine asked if there were lights in the plan now. Mr. Markham explained that the design phase had not started yet. Mr. Markham gave some background on how the project had come forward. Mr. Prasad asked exactly where the bridge would be. Mr. Markham said it was upstream, near the dam. It could not be attached to the bridge. He

stressed that there was a decent partnership for it including the federal level, state level, county level, the City and the University of Delaware. Mr. Irvine liked the idea of figuring out lighting for this bridge. Ms. Sheedy asked what kind of support Mr. Markham was looking for. Mr. Markham suggested that CAC recommend this be a green project. Mr. Markham advised that CAC had influence over Green Energy funding and this was something they could direct.

Mr. Irvine shared that UD had done studies looking at cities with sizes similar to Newark where rather than purchase solar power or alternative energy from a vendor, the City would produce it and sell it. Mr. Irvine felt this was an intriguing idea but needed to see the numbers. Currently, the City was buying energy from DEMEC and selling. This was a bold and ambitious idea, but Mr. Irvine had wanted to share it with the members. Mr. Markham thought this was interesting and had wanted to look into this years ago. He felt that Main Street could be lined with solar panels and the City could have the potential to supply a good amount of energy. Mr. Irvine advised he would explore this option. Mr. Markham wondered whether it was more efficient than the photovoltaic energy. Mr. Irvine said he would look into that.

Mr. Irvine thanked Mr. Markham for his ideas. He felt they should start with the car charging station due to the deadline for the grant. He asked Ms. Sheedy and Mr. Kramer to have some data together for next month's meeting. Ms. Sheedy felt the first thing they should look at was an example of what other cities did. Mr. Kramer said he would try to find how many systems existed in Newark and whether they were open to the public. Mr. Irvine added they should research DMV data about electric cars and car dealerships that sell electric cars. Ms. Schiano advised that Ms. Bensley would be attending the November meeting with the hopes of discussing the CAC funds that had been allocated for Green Energy. She would discuss potential options and expansions of parameters where the money may be spent. Mr. Del Grande may attend as well. Mr. Irvine thought this would be beneficial.

Mr. Wessells asked if there was any feedback from Community Day. Mr. Irvine was not sure what the results were as Ms. Smith had collected the feedback. Mr. Irvine explained that the result had been about half and half for the poll asking whether people were aware Newark had an anti-idling ordinance. The question that asked if people would be in favor of an anti-idling ordinance had been about 98% in favor. Mr. Irvine suggested writing up a summary of this data and sharing it with the police. Ms. Hazelwood noted that there was signage in the parking lot of Newark High School that prohibited idling but people did not obey it. Mr. Irvine felt this was a place to start a conversation with the police. He understood this was a low priority in some ways but felt it was a quality of life issue. Mr. Irvine reminded everyone that at the November meeting they needed to discuss the Boards and Commissions Review Committee recommendations to improve the CAC's bylaws.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is November 14, 2017.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

Tara Schiano
Deputy City Secretary

TAS/sjc