

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

September 9, 2008

MEETING CONVENED: 7:00 p.m., City Manager's Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Bennett presiding, Steve Beard, Tom Fruehstorfer, Ann Morrison, Fred Stiegler

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wayne Casanova, Steve Dentel, Ajay Prasad, Kass Sheedy

STAFF PRESENT: Charlie Emerson, Parks & Recreation Director

GUESTS PRESENT: Councilman David Athey, Jean White, Reid Rowlands

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON MAY 13, 2008

MOTION BY MR. STIEGLER, SECONDED BY MS. MORRISON: THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 12, 2008 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. VOTE: 5 to 0.

AYE: Bennett, Beard, Fruehstorfer, Morrison, Stiegler.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: Casanova, Dentel, Prasad, Sheedy.

(Note: It was the consensus of the members to change the order of the agenda.)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Reid Rowlands, a member of the DNP Design Committee, reported that the Design Committee was working on sustainable design guidelines, and he questioned whether the CAC was working on the same thing and to what level, i.e., green building guidelines. Mr. Emerson advised that Council recently established a LEED Energy Conservation Program for the City. The Building Department conducted a 90-day trial period for obtaining data regarding the LEED certified checklist but did not get significant information from that trial period. Because the checklists were voluntary, only one developer participated. It was obvious that the checklist would have to be mandatory and made a part of the building permit process.

Mr. Fruehstorfer added that the CAC considered several recommendations including: requiring the builder to hire a LEED certified architect; requiring the builder to fill out the checklist; and requiring that a score of 12 points be met.

Mr. Emerson also pointed out that the International Building Code, adopted by the City, was constantly being updated to becoming greener.

Mr. Athey said it was his recollection that Mr. Dentel was to meet with City staff to discuss incentive programs to encourage more compliance with the LEED objective. For instance, in Arlington, Virginia, a developer who met the LEED standards qualified for increased density and was moved toward the front of line through the permit approval process. Both of those examples would probably not work in Newark because an increase in density would not be popular and there was no long wait for a developer going through the permit approval process in the City.

Mr. Rowlands suggested considering a transfer tax or electric abatement incentive. He also believed more points should be required – no less than 20 points. He strongly advocated that the Building Department should make score sheets mandatory.

Mr. Fruehstorfer stressed that the best approach with the LEED program was to do it slowly because there was not a lot of support for it in the community. It was Mr. Rowlands' opinion that the City and the University were really behind on this aspect, especially when compared to what cities in the south were doing in this regard.

Mr. Rowlands emphasized that the DNP Design Committee was working on sustainable guidelines, and he did not want their efforts to duplicate the efforts of the CAC. It was suggested that Tom Sciulli meet with the Design Committee and report back to CAC. It was also suggested that any materials the CAC referred to City Council on this subject could be shared with Mr. Rowlands, and that he should talk with Steve Dentel who had taken the lead on this subject. The CAC has discussed LEED over the past four years and minutes from their discussions were also available for Mr. Rowlands to review.

B. Mr. Athey advised that there would be a Council workshop on Tuesday, September 16th at 7:30 pm in the Council Chamber to discuss the City's Comprehensive Plan. He also reported that several months ago the White Clay Wild and Scenic organization hired professional planner, John Gadt, who critiqued the Comprehensive Plan and the City's ordinances and offered detailed recommendations. He hoped that a representative from the CAC could attend the workshop to offer the Commission's perspective. Mr. Gadt's report was sent to Mr. Dentel in May, but it was not forwarded to the other members. (It was noted that the Comp Plan was on the City's website in PDF form.)

Mr. Bennett questioned Mr. Athey as to what involvement the Commission should have with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Athey felt there were many ideas such as stormwater management, impervious surfaces, screen buffers, etc. that the Commission has reviewed

over the past several years which tied into the Comp Plan. The purpose of the workshop was to receive public input.

Ms. Jean White, 103 Radcliffe Drive, commented that there have already been three workshops on the Comprehensive Plan throughout the review process. The Plan went before the Planning Commission and received their approval. She supported the opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed Plan as well the CAC weighing in on environmental issues.

C. Mr. Bennett suggested that Steve Dentel should be recognized for his 10 years service as chair of the Commission. Mr. Emerson suggested that information listing Mr. Dentel's accomplishments as Chair be forwarded to the City Secretary's Office for a possible resolution by Council.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Bennett, who presently serves as Vice Chair, advised that when his term expired in March of 2009, he does not wish to be reappointed because he felt it was time for his district to get a new voice on the Commission. He agreed to serve as Chair until March. In the meantime, it was suggested that members think about whether they would be interested in serving as Chair beginning next March.

MOTION BY MR. STIEGLER, SECONDED BY MR. FRUEHSTORFER: THAT BOB BENNETT SERVE AS CHAIR UNTIL MARCH, 2009.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. VOTE: 5 to 0.

AYE: Bennett, Beard, Fruehstorfer, Morrison, Stiegler.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: Casanova, Dentel, Prasad, Sheedy.

4. COMMUNITY DAY

Ms. Morrison noted that Messrs. Dentel and Bennett met with her last Saturday to discuss plans for Community Day. The display will feature cloth recyclable bags. They are seeking donations of recyclable bags that will be raffled on Community Day. To date they have received over 100 bags from Happy Harry's, two from Super Fresh, 15 from Acme, 16 from Office Depot, and they were waiting to hear from Pathmark. It was noted by Ms. White that Super Fresh will pay customers a penny or two cents if they bring back their plastic or paper bags for recycling. Mr. Bennett thought it would be helpful to produce a flyer explaining how to shop with a cloth bag. Ms. Morrison added that there would be a poster on display about the bags and the details of the raffle. There was a brief discussion on how often the bags would be raffled and the number of bags given away at one time. Those details still need to be finalized. The space for Community Day is #616. The following schedule was agreed to:

Steve Beard – 10 am to 12 pm and 3 pm to 5 pm
Tom Fruehstorfer – 10 am to 12 pm
Bob Bennett – noon to 2 pm

Ms. Morrison pointed out that they had no printed material to give to the public that advertised the CAC and its purpose. Although Mr. Dentel has a banner that reads “Conservation Advisory Commission,” it did not mention the Committee was part of the City in any way. Ms. Morrison said she would send an email to all members to determine when everyone can volunteer their time to work Community Day.

5. PROGRESS ON GREEN BUILDING INITIATIVES

This discussion occurred under Item #2. It was Mr. Stiegler’s understanding that Mr. Dentel met with Mr. Sciulli in August and would be reporting the results of their meeting to the Commission.

6. PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING

This discussion occurred under Item #4.

7. CONSIDERATION OF ANTI-IDLING ORDINANCE

The state ordinance regarding anti-idling was emailed to members by Kass Sheedy. The Commission previously discussed requiring the same standards to all vehicles, not just commercial vehicles. It was suggested that this item be place on the next agenda to hear comments from Mr. Dentel and Ms. Sheedy.

8. CARBON INVENTORY FOR NEWARK

This item will be placed on the next agenda. Members in attendance were not sure of the status of this item. Mr. Bennett said he would contact Roy Lopata to discuss the role the Commission might have regarding carbon inventory for Newark.

9. REVIEW OF PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS RE POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Stiegler commented on the August 29th Planning Department report regarding the White Clay Creek Watershed Management Committee’s review of Newark’s regulations for protection of the White Clay Creek and Christina Creek floodplains and tributaries against the City’s regulations. A report on their review was being prepared. Mr. Bennett said he would check into whether a report was done because he was very interested in White Clay issues.

Mr. Stiegler also noted that he read in one of the August reports that considerable time was being spent on researching bike sharing programs. He suggested following up on what the research has found. This project was raised by Councilmember Stu Markham.

These types of programs are normally sponsored by a corporate entity, and it was believed the volume of use in Newark did not warrant a program. Ms. White said she opposed a bike sharing program that featured advertisements on the bikes which she considered “sight pollution.” It was also noted that most people in town who wanted to ride bicycles had their own.

Mr. Beard will draft a letter to Councilman Markman to advise him that the Commission does not feel a program was practical for Newark at this time. Mr. Stiegler reiterated that he thought it would be appropriate to ask the Planning Department for the status of their research on bike sharing. Mr. Beard said he would email his draft letter to the members for their comments.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Bennett said he was doing some research on the 2002 federal study of the Christina Watershed. Mr. Emerson interjected that he just heard the funding was pulled for continuing that study.

11. A BETTER NEWARK AWARD

Ms. Morrison advised that Kass Sheedy was coordinating with Dana Johnston from the City Manager’s Office and the stores that offer cloth recycled bags to get a group picture taken. Ms. Morrison will send an email to Ms. Sheedy to find out the status of this award.

Mr. Beard commented on the packet of pictures that was supplied by local landlord Robert Bruner. Previously the Commission decided they could not give the award to all of his properties, and none of the improvements warranted giving the award to any particular property. Mr. Fruehstorfer said recent awards were given for conservation measures rather than for beautification.

There was a short discussion on whether it was appropriate for someone to nominate their own property. It was agreed that if they met the standards, there was no reason why a property owner should not be able to nominate their property.

12. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mr. Stiegler distributed an article regarding a partial zero emission vehicle.

B. Ms. Jean White complimented the bike racks at the new transit hub. The fact that riders can put their bikes on the buses, she believed, added to the possibility of getting more bicycle riders to use the transit hub. Mr. Bennett has seen a tenfold increase over the past five years with students who use bicycles. Mr. Beard believed once the Pomeroy Trail was completed, there would be an increase in bike ridership. Mr. Emerson added that a proposal was put together at the federal level that could make a potential \$50 million available to certain regions of the country for projects such as bike trails.

WILMAPCO applied for some of those funds, and if they were awarded any funds they planned a regional effort to connect Newark toward Wilmington and toward the Maryland line and Elkton. Mr. Emerson said there was a great deal of competition for the funding. He also noted a lot of work had been done in the state parks in the City of Wilmington with trail connections.

With regard to the Pomeroy Trail, Mr. Emerson stated that the City was working with the contractor to get the semi-final plans together, and construction will probably begin in late 2009 or early 2010. Mr. Beard questioned what was being proposed for crossing Cleveland Avenue and was told it would be a surface crossing with a push button light.

13. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:45 PM.

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