

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

**MICROSOFT TEAMS
MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON**

**OCTOBER 15, 2024
7:00 P.M.**

Present at the 7:00 P.M. meeting:

Commissioners Present:

Willard Hurd, AIA, Chair
Alan Silverman, Vice Chair
Karl Kadar, Secretary
Scott Bradley
Alexine Cloonan
Chris Williamson
Kazy Tauginas

Staff Present:

Renee Bensley, Director of Planning and Development
Tom Coleman, City Manager
David Del Grande, Director of Finance
Paula Martinson, Director of Parks and Recreation
Tim Filasky, Director of Public Works and Water Resources
Bhadresh Patel, Director of Electric
Jessica Ramos-Velazquez, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Eleanor Vigliotta, IT Lead Desktop Support
Katelyn Dinsmore, Administrative Professional I

Staff Virtual:

Josh Solge, Planner II
Michael Fortner, Senior Planner
Jeff Martindale, Chief Purchasing Officer

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Review and consideration of the 2025-2029 Capital Improvements Plan

Chair Hurd: I don't have my spiel...you ready? Ok good evening and welcome everyone to the Tuesday, October 15th special Planning Commission meeting for the CIP and for the presentation from the UD Office of Student Life. I'm just reminded that this is a special meeting of the Commission and so those are the only two topics on the agenda for consideration and discussion tonight. I didn't bring any of my notes, so I don't have any of the spiel for how to do this digitally, because everyone here knows what we're doing at this point, I think. So, we're just gonna roll right into presentation and whoever is.... ok, Tom's going first all right.

City Manager Coleman: Alright. Well, thank you for hosting us this evening. Dave and I are happy to be here tonight to share highlights of our recommended 2025 to 2029 Capital Improvement Program. Our departments have been working to identify the needs of the community and feel that the five-year capital plan presented this evening meets those needs while balancing the fiscal constraints on the City. The plan you'll see tonight attempts to find a balance between spending various sources of grant and outside funding while reserving our own cash to be used as leverage for potential grants from the state or the feds to the extent possible. The CIP will serve as our guide for the next five years. Each of our department Directors who have a project in the CIP budget should be either in person or online this evening to answer any specific project questions you have, if you have any. If anyone has questions on a slide that I cover quickly, please don't hesitate to ask in real time. Otherwise, we can handle them at the end. Next slide.

So, this slide details the charge of the Planning Commission with respect to the Capital Budget, with the pertinent sections bolded. Ultimately, the Planning Commission has a responsibility to review the recommended CIP, then advise Council on expenditures for capital projects that refer to a matter covered by the Comp Plan or the official map of the City. Next slide.

In developing the capital program, our departments begin by reviewing projects that were previously approved or are underway from earlier programs. We confirm completion levels, and discuss modifications to projects that may become necessary as we progressed further into them. Likewise, staff have an eye towards the out year projects identifying new needs, regulatory requirements, and confirming the continued need for projects originally planned for the out years in the budget. They also incorporate Council and community feedback where appropriate. These efforts are completed with a focus on how each project supports the provision of existing services today, or how it can move the City's vision forward for tomorrow. The capital program presented in the 25 to 29 CIP aligns with the vision elements, noted here on these slides, the City's belief that a healthy, active, sustainable and inclusive community resonates with all who are committed to Newark's continued success. The capital program is the backbone of the City's work as a local government. This year's CIP again keeps us primarily focused on our infrastructure, maintaining our utilities, and ensuring that all who reside or work in Newark receive the regulatory compliant electric, water, storm water, and sewer service that they require. Lastly, we must safeguard the financial strength of the City via prudent investments and decision making. Newark's utilities and parking funds make up 3/4 of the City's revenue. So, properly maintaining our assets is critical to the long-term financial strength of the City.

So, following the successful referendum in 2018, along with a recent update to our charter, this has allowed us to pave the way for the incorporation of the state revolving loan program into our capital plan. So now, with federal and state support these have been the keys to the City's ability to meet our capital spending requirements. In past years, we would primarily use our reserves and current revenue to fund long term projects, and all of our projects were competing for the same dollars, which resulted in the delay of many of them, especially large projects. Repeatedly pushing them out into future years, deferring maintenance on our facilities and utility infrastructure often results in higher future expenses as infrastructure continues to deteriorate. It can also lead to lower levels of service for our customers due to more frequent service interruptions. Lack of resources resulted in the five-year capital plans that changed frequently beyond the first year, as it was uncertain how the projects would be funded. Since the City only has a limited amount of cash available each year, projects that were over \$1,000,000 stood almost no chance of being completed, unless they were the only project in the budget after paying for equipment and street paving. Now the City has a more secure funding mechanism for much needed projects, which has enabled us to stick to our out-year capital plans. In addition, with the state revolving loan program as part of our capital portfolio, we can now access state grants and principal forgiveness through the state revolving loan program which we previously were not eligible for.

Great examples of this are the more than \$600,000 in principal forgiveness we received for the water tank rehabilitation project, and another \$1.6 million we received for the carbon treatment at South Wellfield Water Treatment Plant. Having these additional funding resources enables us to effectively plan and accomplish the projects we set out to do and the time frame that was originally intended. Lastly, the use of ARPA over the past few years has given us the ability to hold off on a second referendum. We'd originally planned to do that in 2023. Funding for ARPA has come to an end this year, unfortunately, and all ARPA funding has to be encumbered by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026. We are on track to meet those deadlines, so now I'll hand it over to Dave.

Director DelGrande: Thanks Tom. So, this slide represents the proposed 25 to 29 Capital Improvement Program, which has been presented to Council in our departmental hearings over the last two months. When we look at the CIP program over the five-year period, our capital plan totals \$138.2 million, with 61% of our projected spending coming in 25 and 26. The side concentration in the next two years is coming from utility infrastructure projects as \$74.8 million of the \$84.8 million requested are for city utilities. We use a variety of sources to fund our capital projects for 25, \$3.38 million or 11% of the CIP will be funded via City funds. Over the five-year plan, \$26.7 million or 19% will be funded via City funds and our reliance on the state revolving loan program or any other grant funding helps us fund our much-needed capital needs. And that's what keeps the burden on our residents as low as possible year over year.

Here we see seventeen of our largest projects and 89% of our 25 CIP, which collectively total \$30.3 million dollars, 88% of the funding for our larger projects are coming from grants, the state revolving loan program, state funding or conduit financing with only 12% or \$3.3 million coming out of the City's capital reserves or current resources next year.

Not included in 25 but will impact our future years' budgets are the final funding for the new electric substation, the PFASPFAS project at the current water treatment plant, and our annual street program. Which one change we did make this year, actually between our presentation to Council two weeks ago and today, is we did cut \$1.5 million out of the street program. In order to balance the budget with the hope that PILOT money will come in July to fund that difference.

Now when we look at our 25 projects, 80% of the funding for the Capital Improvement Program is coming from non-city resources, which totals \$24.2 million out of the \$30.4 that's requested. We usually fund electric projects only using City funds but due to the size of the substation project, we need to find secure financing to pay for this project, which is a reason that 91% of Electric's capital program is funded via non-city dollars. Due to our success in the state's revolving loan program, which finances large water, sewer, and storm water projects at low interest rates, which includes loan forgiveness in some cases, 91% of our water and 87% of our sewer projects are intended to be funded via non-city resources. This allows us to complete much needed infrastructure projects without needing to use our cash or burden current residents and businesses for projects that have useful lives greater than 20 years.

This is a visual presentation of our 25 funding sources, and it summarizes what we saw in the last slide. This chart illustrates that we have many tools to fund our capital projects as they become larger and more complex in nature. Obtaining the use of these funding sources have required some years of work with our Council, our local and federal legislators, and the education of our residents and customers on the importance of these projects and how it impacts them individually. Most years, our utilities drive our capital spending almost 93% or \$28.1 million of the gross capital spending next year is earmarked for water, sewer, stormwater, streets and our electric projects. These projects aren't glamorous, they're not pretty to most, but they are the backbone to the City and often go unnoticed until an issue arises. The infrastructure projects in our CIP keep most unforeseen surprises from occurring, making our utilities reliable and efficient for our customers.

City Manager Coleman: Alright, so each of you were provided a copy of the full CIP, which includes detailed sheets for each project. So, I'll move through these relatively quickly. We'll be happy to answer any project specific questions after each priority or at the end of the presentation altogether.

The projects listed on this table represent those that have been identified as priority one projects by the respective department directors. By definition, priority one projects are currently underway or have grant funding. The individual CIP sheets will provide further detail as to the funding sources for each project. Funding for all priority one projects total \$3.8 million in 2025 and the largest part of this amount are projects N2302, N2304, and S0904 which are the municipal center master plan, police impound lot improvements, and the annual line renewal project for sewer. The two facilities projects are 100% grant funded. Next slide.

So, this slide summarizes all equipment sinking funds spending across each separate fund. As you can see, we have 13 separate sinking fund accounts where we track spending separately. We're proposing to replace equipment valued at just over \$615,000 in 2025. The lion's share of this is for two bucket trucks in the electric fund. In the past two years, the City's been proactive with equipment replacements, accelerating orders to maintain our service levels due to the long lead time we're seeing for vehicles. Basically, we've pulled vehicles forward in the budget to purchase them earlier because they take sometimes two to three years to come in, depending on the type of vehicle. So, this is a good time to remind the Commission on how the equipment sinking fund works. Each piece of equipment in the fund is tracked separately with an amount of money deposited over the expected life of the asset equal to its purchase price. Of its 10-year expected life and \$100,000 cost, we put \$10,000 into the fund each year. So, what this means is that when the equipment needs to be replaced, there's not enough money in the sinking fund to cover the replacement due to the inflation and regulatory requirements, increasing equipment costs over the life of the original vehicle. To make up the difference, we use current resources or capital reserves from the fund within which the vehicle exists. When we push a vehicle out from the year it was originally set to be replaced, we do save money in the near term by avoiding one year's depreciation expense, but it results in a larger differential between what was saved for the replacement and the

171 final replacement cost. So, if we keep that 10 year vehicle 11 years, we didn't have to put \$10,000
 172 away in that 11th year, but the vehicle might have cost \$5,000 more than it would have, so the
 173 savings isn't what it would you would expect.

174 So, in order to make it into the current year for a replacement, each piece of equipment is evaluated
 175 by our mechanics with a report provided to the Public Works Director for review with the respective
 176 department directors. Vehicles that can be retained for another year are generally only pushed one
 177 year in the CIP at a time. As directed by Council, staff also evaluates each replacement to see if an
 178 EV option is viable. Generally speaking, EVs have higher upfront costs, which can be mitigated over
 179 the life of the vehicle in saved fuel and maintenance costs. Unfortunately, most of our vehicles are
 180 fairly low mileage compared to your car that you have at home since they generally stay within town
 181 and they don't put many miles on them each day even if they are used daily, so the return on
 182 investment going with an EV isn't as good as most people's personal vehicle.

183 The recent move towards using a lease purchase program, especially for larger vehicles, provides
 184 us with another budgeting tool to incorporate these vehicles into future budgets, smoothing out the
 185 cost of the vehicle over several years. However, vehicles purchased with lease financing will not
 186 exist in the sinking fund.

187 So, priority two projects are the highest priority projects that are new to this year, have not been
 188 started, or don't have grant funding. Funding for all priority two projects totals \$22.9 million in 2025
 189 and many of these projects would normally have fallen victim to being bumped in previous years,
 190 but were able to stay in the budget this year due to the state revolving loan fund program and our
 191 use of conduit debt for the electric substation. Our headline projects fall into this category,
 192 specifically the new substation. The PFAS forever compound treatment at the Curtis Water
 193 Treatment Plant and the annual street program are all Level 2. And just as a reminder, we did
 194 remove \$1.5 million from the street program as Dave mentioned previously.

195 Priority three projects are a medium high priority where the department directors determine that
 196 the City would be taking a calculated risk in deferral of a project. We have \$995,000 of priority three
 197 projects in this year's budget, \$385,000 of that is for the installation of EV charging stations across
 198 selected city parking lots, pending grant approval. That is a federal grant program that we've applied
 199 to and not been selected previously, but we're hopeful that we'll get it this time.

200 All right, priority four projects are considered needs, but they are projects where there's not
 201 considerable risk from deferring the project. We have \$1.9 million in priority four projects in this
 202 year's budget. The largest project on the list is W2303. That's a water main conditions assessment
 203 and that project would assess the condition of the City's water mains using the latest technology to
 204 give the remaining useful life for all of our pipes in the ground. We can then use this data to better
 205 target future replacement projects to ensure we aren't replacing pipes too early like what could
 206 happen if you replaced solely based off installation date and material type alone. Our objective is
 207 to pause our replacement program in 2025 in order to complete this assessment and funding for
 208 this investigation is proposed to come from the state's revolving loan fund program.

209 And lastly, priority five projects are projects that can safely start in year two or later of the CIP
 210 without any risks to the City. We only have \$95,000 in priority five projects in this year's budget. And
 211 that wraps up the presentation for this evening, we're happy to answer any questions we have.

212 Chair Hurd: Alright, thank you. We'll begin with Commissioner Bradley.

213 Commissioner Bradley: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you everybody for coming out making this
 214 presentation. We're gonna bounce around a little bit, before I start talking about spending money,
 215 I'd like to bring up a possible saving money idea. Every month I get two of these, the storm water
 216 management invoices. They're not a whole lot of money, so I pay them at the beginning of the year
 217 with one check and I've always asked every year, if they can just stop sending me these things to
 218 show the credit on my account and every year, I get a no. Back envelope calculations. It's \$0.54 to
 219 send each one of these just using 20,000 properties. I know 30,000 residents approximately, but
 220 20,000 properties. Figuring there's apartment complexes and stuff like that. That's over \$10,000 a
 221 month and over \$120,000 a year. Is there any reason why they can't just make this a once a year,
 222 bill? And save all that...postage and paper and stuff?

223 City Manager Coleman: So, my initial thought is not everybody's that small. So, some of our larger
 224 property owners will get ones that are 6 figures.

225 Commissioner Bradley: But they could, they could request a payment plan. I mean, if you allow to
 226 pay monthly, they can request that on their own instead of automatically sending these. I mean,
 227 does every resident, regardless of how much their bill is get one every month?

228 City Manager Coleman: So generally, it goes on there, their utility bill. So, it would, you'd be getting it
 229 anyway.

230 Commissioner Bradley: Ok, because I don't get a utility bill from you guys.

231 City Manager Coleman: Yeah.

232 Commissioner Bradley: Ok, that makes a hell of a lot more sense now. Ok.

233 Director DelGrande: And just to add our utility customers can opt out of receiving paper invoices.

234 Commissioner Bradley: But I'm not a utility customer so I can't opt out of that, ok. Well, you burst
 235 my bubble.

236 Director DelGrande: Sorry.

237 Commissioner Bradley: I thought I had a good idea there, oh well. Ok, on to the meat and potatoes
 238 of this thing. Just bounce around here...the email.gov, for the .gov conversion \$45,000 in, I think it
 239 was 26. What's the difference between .gov and .de.us? What's the main reason for making that
 240 that change?

241 Director DelGrande: It's primarily for additional security purposes that we have as a government
 242 entity versus listed as a .us or a .com or any of the others. So, it's just more ability for us to have
 243 access to better tools for safekeeping for our, for our data.

244 Commissioner Bradley: Ok, thank you. You say the ARPA funds run out in 24, have to be used by the
 245 end of 25. After 25, do you guys see any big issues without having those funds in hand or in play
 246 anymore?

247 City Manager Coleman: So, all the projects that are in this in this budget don't have it in it already.
 248 So, I think between state revolving loan fund for our water, sewer, stormwater projects and generally
 249 we cash finance for the electric utility, except for the substation because it's a large. I think where
 250 we'll run into the largest challenge is in the general fund, so street paving is a consistent challenge
 251 year after year. It tends to be the project that when we balance the budget, we take a little out of the
 252 street fund.

253 Commissioner Bradley: You said you did that this year?

254 City Manager Coleman: Yeah. And so, to give a little explanation on why we did that this year, so as
 255 part of the state's budget that was approved at the end of the legislative session, they included and
 256 thanks to UD for helping us to get this, they included \$2,000,000 of payment in lieu of taxes. But it
 257 was a one-time allocation. So, we basically had a choice. Do we assume that we'll get that again
 258 next year or do we not? And in years past, we've gotten \$450,000 for the last few years, so really it
 259 was \$1.55 million that we're we were talking about. So Council decided that it made more sense to
 260 assume that we're not going to get it, budget conservatively and we'll take it out of the street fund.
 261 And then if we're successful in Dover, we'll add the street funding back in. One issue, the downside
 262 of having the hard deadline of having to have everything encumbered by the end of this year for
 263 ARPA was that, you know, for better or worse, we got a lot of ARPA money. So, we had a lot of
 264 projects that we needed to get done. Most of them were in Public Works' wheelhouse. So, they
 265 were really strapped, so we're running a little behind on street paving anyway. So, our project for
 266 this year's budget is probably not going to happen until next year anyway. So, if we have to delay
 267 and then you know, if it ends up getting cancelled, we're still doing a street project next year. It's
 268 just this year's because this year's we're doing last year's, and we got a little behind.

269 Commissioner Bradley: Since you got the \$2 million PILOT money, and that was a one-time only. I
 270 think was that part of the reason why the UD student fee was kind of dropped for this year?

271 City Manager Coleman: Yeah.

272 Commissioner Bradley: And that may come back, I guess depending on?

273 City Manager Coleman: It is a live issue, and it's obviously it's Council's prerogative, whether they
 274 push it, you know our hope, so one of the other things that came out of the last legislative session

275 was Resolution 167 created a PILOT study group and, we're, Mayor Clifton is on that, and I've been
276 attending as well, along with the Mayor of Wilmington, Dover, Georgetown. Senator Darius Brown is
277 the Chair, Cyndie Romer, Representative Romer is the Vice Chair, along with Brian Pettyjohn from
278 Sussex County and Postles, I think from Kent County? I can't remember the other ones, but either
279 way the whole, the charge of this group was to look at the PILOT program, identify who should be in
280 it, how much money should go towards it each year. When I presented to Council last Monday, I
281 was more optimistic than I am after this past Friday. It was a pretty frustrating meeting. We're still
282 hopeful that we'll be able to do something, but it, you know, I think we're shifting our position to be
283 maybe let's try to formalize that one-time payment method that they gave us this past year as
284 opposed to trying to get into PILOT because, I just don't think that's gonna happen. And Caitlin
285 probably agrees there's a lot of institutional inertia keeping it how it is and resistance to change,
286 which is unfortunate.

287 Commissioner Bradley: Well, it's good that the UD student fee is still a live issue.

288 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, it's a live issue.

289 Commissioner Bradley: You have money in here for an elevated water tank?

290 City Manager Coleman: Yes.

291 Commissioner Bradley: Is there a location for that at this point or is that something that's replacing
292 it existing?

293 Director Filasky: Sorry, good evening, Tim Filasky, Director of Public Works and Water Resources
294 So the elevated water tank was something that we had looked into a couple of years ago when we
295 were...we don't have enough storage in the area. You know, we don't have enough water in the air to
296 serve the needs of the City for, you know, an extended period of time so we started looking into the
297 feasibility on that. We have a few locations in in in play, however the PFAS project at Curtis now has
298 kind of taken a front seat to that and the and the PFAS project at Curtis may involve additional
299 storage and pumping to eliminate the need for the additional elevated storage tank. So, in a perfect
300 world, we'd do it all one time and have just one larger project. But should the PFAS project not be
301 as large or we not need to make such a large capital expenditure, we could go back and look at the
302 elevated storage tank, so it remains in there, but the odds of us completing that project before
303 anything happens at Curtis are pretty low.

304 Commissioner Bradley: Ok, thank you. Looks like we have about 3/4 of \$1,000,000 allocated for
305 electric for the STAR Campus and it says that the customer/developer is paying for that.
306 Looks like it's over five years, I guess. Is that, that 3/4 of a million is that money that we're spending
307 up front and then they're reimbursing us through the years or is that...they're spending a buck fifty
308 or whatever works out to be every year?

309 City Manager Coleman: The latter, it's a placeholder in the budget and if the project doesn't
310 happen, we don't have any money out of that. So, they would pay it, and we have a similar, it's new
311 lines and services, \$100,000 a year, it's the same thing. It's just there so we don't have to do a
312 budget amendment when the money comes in, we can do it automatically.

313 Commissioner Bradley: Ok. Curiosity question. Why do ballistic vests expire?

314 City Manager Coleman: So, they are only good for so many years. They're only certified for; I think 5
315 years?

316 Commissioner Silverman: They have a shelf life.

317 Commissioner Bradley: I mean, is there actually something in them that wears out or I mean
318 chemical or just that's how it's been?

319 Commissioner Silverman: We have the same thing in EMS.

320 Commissioner Bradley: Really?

321 Commissioner Kadar: Kevlar gets brittle.

322 Commissioner Bradley: Does it? Oh ok, interesting.

323 City Manager Coleman: And I believe we're reimbursed. There's a program that covers half the cost
324 for our ballistic vests so...

325 Commissioner Bradley: I think that's it. Thank you.

326 City Manager Coleman: Thank you.

327 Chair Hurd: All right, thank you. Commissioner Cloonan.

328 Commissioner Cloonan: Yeah. Thanks for answering so many of my questions at the time.
329 I have sort of two overarching ones, one is I appreciate the need to have these different buckets for
330 electric and sewer and roads. But it seems like in the past we've missed a lot of opportunities of
331 coordinating those different services. And I'm thinking of Barksdale Road and Elkton Road. And you
332 know, water lines running down the middle of right of ways so we can't plant trees or, you know,
333 electric that could have been buried when we were repaving. Is there some mechanism in place
334 now that sort of brings, you know these different groups together to review projects before the
335 money is spent?

336 City Manager Coleman: So, funny you should bring that up. On city streets, if you go back to 2011,
337 so when I first started, we had the Public Works Department and we had a Water Wastewater
338 Department and they were separate silos and inevitably whenever we were getting ready to replace
339 a water line, we noticed the cones out and they were paving the street, and it was it was a mess.
340 Nothing was coordinated, so in 2012 we combined the departments, and it became Public Works
341 and Water Resources. So, we don't have that issue internally anymore. So when Public Works, when
342 they evaluate streets for paving, we hire a company that comes in and they have a vehicle and they
343 drive all the streets and it's got radars and lidar and it scans the roads and it spits out, a conditions
344 assessment for all the different road segments and then we run this through an optimization
345 program called Agile Assets and it puts out, this is your optimal paving plan if you wanted to be the
346 most efficient you could. And then we take that plan, and we look at the, you know, where do we
347 need to do sewer repairs? Where do we need to do water repairs? And items like that and we
348 shuffle things around from this year into next year in the and years out. Where it gets a little trickier
349 is the roads you mentioned in particular DelDOT streets. So, we don't control when they're paved.
350 DelDOT controls when they're paved, so there's not the same level of coordination, but for example
351 with Elkton Road, the first Elkton Road project. So, what's now the South Main portion. They did
352 replace our water lines and up upgrade our sewer line, so we did some, pulled in place, pipe
353 bursting. For our sewer lines in that project, so they do coordinate some, they'll replace in kind.
354 Anything that's beyond what was there, it becomes a betterment and the City's on the hook for
355 paying for that. I know there was a long discussion about burying the power lines on South Main at
356 that time and the decision was made not to. I think because of the cost. I'm not too familiar with
357 any other ones outside of obviously Main Street and on Main Street, I did have a pet project for
358 Director Patel to look into pricing out basically, a section that we think would be the least expensive
359 to bury the electric lines just to see. Because we haven't done a real cost estimate in probably 15-
360 20 years on burying power lines. And you know, for better or worse.
361 Some people will probably think it's a conspiracy and we're trying to help the University, but the
362 section we're looking at is where there aren't many services which just happens to be kind of
363 between Grotto's and Deer Park. And that would probably be the most, the easiest section to put
364 underground. So that's the section we're gonna look at first, and that is the reason it's just because
365 it would be the easiest. But we do try to coordinate and DelDOT's gotten a lot better over the last
366 few years with the Utility Coordination Group where they try to work all these things out, you know
367 years ahead of when the project's gonna happen. And they did a lot better job for the second
368 phase of Elkton Road, where all the utilities were moved ahead of the project, they created a utility
369 corridor where they put everything in one section, they got it all out from underneath the roadway,
370 which is bad for trees, but it's good for maintaining the utilities in the future that have to close the
371 road. It's all trade off, pros and cons.

372 Commissioner Cloonan: Alright. Well, you know, my focus is on street trees. So yeah.

373 City Manager Coleman: You'll note there is a project, unfortunately, it's level 5, but it is the Main
374 Street, replacing tree pits on Main Street. One of the challenges we have on Main Street is the pits
375 that are out there now are so small that we can't put a reasonable size tree in it. Or we couldn't, our
376 new Arborist has identified they're basically trees that come in pots. You can get a much larger
377 caliper in a smaller size bottom. So, if you if you look on the south side of Main Street, we've
378 replaced a number of those in the existing pits and they're already up in the wires, which is not
379 making Bhadresh happy, but they're big enough where the, you know, oftentimes late at night
380 leaving the bars, people snap our little twig trees off. These ones are big, you're not going to break
381 them off in anywhere. And anywhere where we can't do that, we're going to look at making the pits

382 a little larger and like the ones that were put in when DelDOT redid Main Street, they're 6-foot pits
383 and you could put a really big tree in those.

384 Commissioner Cloonan: Ok. My second question concerns saving for future improvements and my
385 concerns date back to like the 70s when we sort of missed the opportunity for a bypass around
386 Newark because we had no, I think part of the problem is we had no mechanism to save for a huge
387 capital expenditure like that. And now I'm looking at the Country Club and I, I realize the City of
388 Newark probably couldn't afford to buy the whole thing. But you know, if the Owner came back in
389 10 years and said, we're looking at developing it, would you be willing to buy you know 25 acres for a
390 park or something like that. Is that something that has to come through City Council as a direct
391 request to you?

392 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, that would come through Council. And realistically, you know, one of
393 the challenges with public budgeting is that people don't like approving tax and rate increases when
394 you have a pot of money that's sitting there. So unfortunately saving in advance tends to not work
395 very well politically, it's more likely that if we're approached with something like that, depending on
396 how big the cost is, we would probably borrow for it. And kind of like what we did with Hillside Park,
397 potentially it involves a referendum. You know, we feel pretty strongly, I think they still do that, well,
398 I guess now with state revolving loan fund no longer needing a referendum, it's a little different. But
399 prior to that, that change where we no longer need to go to referendum for state revolving loan fund,
400 our thought was that really every five years we should be doing a referendum for capital to renew for
401 the for the next plan. You know, I think for the Country Club it was purchased by you know, probably
402 our biggest Developer in in Newark. You know, they have they have an agreement with the club
403 where it can renew...is it 10 years? And then 10 and then 10?
404 So theoretically, up to 20 years. So, we have some time, but you know, if Mr. Lang is, is listening,
405 you know, we'd be happy to talk to him about having a discussion around a master plan for that
406 location, you know, right now it's zoned, I think pretty similar to Nottingham on the other side of
407 273. Is that the proper zoning? Probably not. I've said this a lot, I don't think we should be building
408 more single family detached homes in the city. It costs us more to provide services to them than we
409 make off them in utility and tax revenue. And honestly the densities we have too much housing
410 need to be building something that low density. It'd be my preference to have a discussion about
411 clustering you know if the desire is to preserve open space, do a cluster development at the top of
412 the hill and preserve kind of the, the hillside slope that backs to Country Club and Delrem Drive.
413 But you know that's a discussion, obviously Council's gonna have to be pretty heavily involved in
414 anything like that. I can't do it alone. That's a policy decision for them, but we're happy to have
415 those discussions if the property owner's interested.

416 Commissioner Cloonan: That's all I have.

417 Chair Hurd: Ok, thank you. Commissioner Kadar.

418 Commissioner Kadar: Thank you. I know you have to do this every year but thank you anyway for
419 putting it together.

420 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, you're welcome.

421 Commissioner Kadar: All right. I'm gonna say this again. And you've heard me say this before, and
422 this will probably be about the third time. When I run through these projects here, I see words,
423 mostly capital improvement projects and maintenance. Maintenance is not capital improvement
424 projects unless it's significantly extending the life of the asset. Could you next time just one slide
425 definition, this is maintenance, and this is capital improvement and if it's maintenance, you won't
426 see it in here. If it's capital improvement you will. All right? And I mention that because I look at
427 words in here like I understand parking lot surface maintenance. Yes, it significantly extends the life
428 of the parking lot, probably by about 20 years. 15 to 20 years. It could be called resurfacing, and no
429 one would say a word.

430 City Manager Coleman: You definitely have brought this up before, sorry.

431 Commissioner Kadar: And then I see...there was another one. There was a maintenance fund.
432 Which...where is it? I'm trying to find it here in your charts. Yeah, here it is on page 5, the 2025 to 29
433 recommended CIP Maintenance Fund.

434 City Manager Coleman: So, that's our fleet maintenance, facilities maintenance.

435 Commissioner Kadar: It's almost near the bottom of the first quadrant there.

436 City Manager Coleman: So that's the name of one of our enterprise funds.

437 Commissioner Kadar: Poor name.

438 City Manager: Mostly they are doing maintenance mostly.

439 Commissioner Kadar: Just saying, alright, I also saw in here and I and I think I have, I understand
440 what this is. When we talk about funding sources for CIP, you have an item called vehicle and
441 equipment replacement as a funding source. I'm assuming that that's the residual value of
442 whatever vehicle that you are trading in?

443 City Manager Coleman: So that's that equipment sinking fund contribution. So, the money that we
444 set it, so if you think of depreciation expense, we actually, we depreciate the vehicle and then we
445 actually put that amount of money into a fund for when that vehicle needs to be replaced. And then
446 when that vehicle's up for replacement, we'll take that money out of that fund, which will cover
447 some portion of it, and then we'll put extra money in to cover the difference.

448 Commissioner Kadar: Yeah, I was asking that because I may be interested in a new vehicle and I'm
449 trying to figure out how I can get funding out of my old vehicle.

450 City Manager Coleman: So, when we do most of the time, when we, when we sell a vehicle or trade
451 it in, we end up taking that out of that slice that we use for current resources. So, if we need 20,000,
452 we get 10,000 for trade in we only end up needing 10.

453 Commissioner Kadar: Alright, that works...and there was oh. I had a question about page 3 in your
454 charts. The goals of the CIP? Do you make any attempt to prioritize those or are they all equal?

455 City Manager Coleman: So, they are not-

456 Commissioner Kadar: In other words, if everything is top priority, then nothing is top priority.

457 City Manager Coleman: So those are taken straight from the Comp Plan. So those are the four....

458 Commissioner Kadar: And do these, do these play into your identifying priority 1,2,3,4,5 projects?

459 City Manager Coleman: Somewhat, but if you, so when I was going through priority 1,2,3,4,5, so a
460 lot of the priority ones are either underway or have some sort of grant funding associated with them
461 that we would lose if we didn't do it. Priority two are, you know, critical projects that the city would
462 be taking on significant risk if we delay. So, say replacing a roof on a building would be a priority two
463 project because we didn't start it already, we probably didn't get grant funding, but if we don't do it,
464 it could ruin the building. Sump pumps, that sort of thing. You know, important critical
465 infrastructure stuff's gonna be a two, you know, a three might be, you know, doing equipment
466 replacement or maybe fixing a sidewalk or repaving a street. Those are, you can delay them. It's
467 not ideal, it might cost you a little more, but more, but it's not going to damage something else as a
468 result of not doing it and kind of goes down the line to five is a nice, it's a need, but it's not critical. It
469 can get pushed off, nothing bad's gonna come from that. So, you know, if it's like, this is going to be
470 a bad example, but it's the first one that came to my mind, like a pavilion in a park. If there's an issue
471 with that, we just take it down and we'll just live without a pavilion for a year or, you know, we can
472 something like that is, it could be like a priority five.

473 Commissioner Kadar: Ok, well, once again, thanks for all your work. Even though you have to do it.

474 City Manager Coleman: We'll try to remember the maintenance in the coming year, sorry that's
475 twice now.

476 Commissioner Kadar: Thank you.

477 Chair Hurd: Alright, thank you, Commissioner Silverman.

478 Commissioner Silverman: Your presentation is well done. It has grown over the years, and I think
479 you found the sweet spot. I particularly like the use of aerial photographs, when one illustration
480 tells me in a snapshot where activity is and you've identified that by your areas. That was an
481 addition that was put in a couple years ago and I think is very effective for those of us who are more
482 visual rather than trying to read columns and numbers. With respect to your presentation and goals
483 of the CIP, the first bullet of projects will seek to advance Newark's vision elements. That's kind of,
484 part of the fuzzy speak that's used today. There needs to be a very clear statement that the purpose
485 of the CIP is to implement the adopted comprehensive plan, that's the purpose of it. If you don't

486 build out the electric, if you don't maintain the sewer, then the underlying principles of the
 487 comprehensive plan simply cannot be met, because the infrastructure is not there. So those words
 488 kind of in my mind need to be in there.

489 One of the points that you made during the presentation was talking about timing and carryover.
 490 And I do understand exactly what's involved there. Over the last several capital programs, one of
 491 the highlights of the capital presentation was this is what we want to do, but there are supply chain
 492 issues, there are delivery issues. Has that resolved?

493 City Manager Coleman: We're certainly not back to pre-COVID lead times on items, especially large
 494 trucks. Large trucks are just brutal. How long did it take our trash truck coming, was it three years?

495 Director Filasky: Just over two years.

496 Commissioner Silverman: Yeah, we find in the fire service, we're looking at aerial ladders
 497 replacement and it can go out as much as four years.

498 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, I think it was an electric line truck that hit three for us

499 Commissioner Silverman: So, we won't be surprised if some of the things that we see, in the "we're
 500 going to do it" column really don't show up in the parking lot for another two- or three-years kind of
 501 thing?

502 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, the two line trucks that we're ordering, I don't anticipate we'll have till
 503 2026.

504 Commissioner Silverman: Ok, and how about material for sewer and water rehab? I know you had a
 505 valve inspection program. Are those kinds of things on the back burner production wise?

506 Director Filasky: So, we're in the middle of about a \$4 million project that was mostly COVID, or
 507 ARPA funded, and we were surprisingly able to get the material, and maybe that's just because it
 508 was a larger project and you know, the company was able to secure a pretty large order of duct liner
 509 pipe. When it comes to individual items you know smaller brass fittings, smaller valves and things
 510 like that. That's that may be where most of the, it wasn't really the availability a lot of times it was
 511 the cost. It was available for a cost and obviously when somebody needs something you need it,
 512 and you pay for it. So, I think I put together something for last year's budget that showed, you know
 513 100, 150, 200% increases on some pretty, you know valuable items for us, some things that were
 514 that were indispensable that we had to buy. So, and we can't really keep so much stock that we're
 515 that we're overstocked, so we end up, you know we buy as we need it, and we pay the price that it is
 516 on that day. So, but generally, we've seen those prices start to creep back down, but I don't see
 517 them coming back down any time soon.

518 Commissioner Silverman: So, market forces will affect your implementation.

519 City Manager Coleman: So, the place where we're still seeing the biggest impact is electric
 520 transformers are still really, really high, and I think we're down to what like, 36 weeks? Which is....

521 Director Patel: (inaudible)

522 Commissioner Silverman: Yeah, you're going to lose it to the hurricane.

523 City Manager Coleman: It used to be a month or two. Then it was a year and a half, now it's back
 524 down to, you know, 2/3 of a year and the prices have come down some. They were up 900% at one
 525 point and they've started to back down. You know, it's tough to have that conversation with a
 526 builder, you know, Briar Creek North, think they went from like 20,000 for their transformers for the
 527 houses to 128,000 for the, yeah. And that was with a year lead time. Bhadresh?

528 Commissioner Silverman: Will that begin to affect some of the desire to put things underground for
 529 specialized kinds?

530 Director Patel: For the substation transformer we used to buy them under a hundred 500,000. Now
 531 they are over a million or close to \$2,000,000 for substation transfers, so those are the kind of price
 532 increases that we have seen. Same thing with bigger breakers and transformer lead times. Vendors
 533 have been telling us that you have two to three years on a lead time for a big transformer or bigger
 534 breakers.

535 Commissioner Silverman: Ok, thank you.

536 Director Patel: And all the domino effect comes to all the cable, rubber goods, and everything as
537 well.

538 Commissioner Silverman: Thank you, I'd like to move into another area. Although initials were
539 thrown around tonight...PFAS, I still like to call them forever chemicals. As forever chemicals, the
540 awareness of the impact and the effect of forever chemicals found in the blood, they pass through
541 the placenta as hopefully people become aware of this, particularly the funding sources from the
542 feds and the state. Do we have other opportunities to gather more monies to deal with our
543 immediate cost? Because I think last year you were talking in terms of \$30 million?

544 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, it's still up there. You know, there is money out there, but it's nowhere
545 near how much money is going to be needed. So, we got \$1.6 million out of what was the total cost
546 of the PFAS project for Southwell?

547 Director DelGrande: So, the Southwell, the Southwell field project that we just completed or nearly
548 completed close to about \$4 million for that for 2 million gallons a day. We have upwards of
549 6,000,000 gallons a day at our Curtis treatment plant. It doesn't actually scale to, you know, it's not
550 a direct scale from 2 million to 6 million, three, you know three times. Creek water is much, much
551 different and has different qualities, different properties than well water. Once you have well water
552 kind of tuned in, well water stays the same for you know, any number of years. So, with the
553 treatment plant on the Curtis side, we're looking at a much bigger process, but for what Tom says
554 about 30 million if we're 25 million at Curtis and about probably 5 million all in at Southwell Field.
555 And when Tom mentions the funding that is out there, most of the funding that's come through the
556 either the bipartisan infrastructure law or ARPA has been funneled through the state revolving loan
557 fund. Unfortunately, we don't, we did get some loan forgiveness I don't foresee us getting a ton of a
558 ton more of loan forgiveness. We are very proactive, we're one of the first ones in the state to take
559 advantage of that funding to actually put treatment in place. But unfortunately, I don't think we're
560 going to get a ton more forgiveness. But the money is out there. If we want to loan it, it's still low
561 interest, it's still, you know, 2 and 3% from the state revolving loan fund, which you're not gonna get
562 from a commercial bank at this time. But generally, we're in good shape. We're just gonna have to
563 borrow the money and pay the money back at some point. So, our neighboring utilities, the private
564 for-profit utilities, Artesian and Veolia, they're each putting treatment in place at a significant cost.
565 And their rates through the Public Service Commission have been increased upwards of 20% each.
566 We're not looking at that increase at the moment, I would probably advocate for it so that again, we
567 could have that money when we need it rather than hit it all at once, but that's a decision that, you
568 know, Council's going to have to make.

569 City Manager Coleman: The real cost of this is going to be the long-term maintenance costs. So,
570 they regulated it before there were clearly...we know a way to get it out of the drinking water, we
571 don't know that it's the most efficient way to get it out of the drinking water, we're pretty sure it's not
572 So they basically everyone's using carbon or resin to take it out. The more time we have we there,
573 there are other technologies that they're learning that are able to break down, you know, enzymes
574 and use electrolysis, they can break down this chemical, knock the fluorine off the end of it, and it
575 falls apart. But the regulation didn't give us time and it went nationwide irrespective of the
576 concentrations that you have in your drinking water. Everybody's got to have it in place by the same
577 time, which is crazy when they set it at detection, 4 parts per trillion. So, at Curtis, half the time we
578 test, we get zero half the time we test, we get 4, 4.5... So, but we're competing with some of these
579 Michigan towns that have 180,000 parts per trillion: we're competing for the same equipment, the
580 same dollar, on the same timeline. So, the process has been very frustrating, and Dave reminded
581 me that we are party to the class action lawsuits over this. It's gonna be a drop in the bucket.
582 Maybe a million, two, \$2,000,000 out of you know when we're looking at 30 million in capital costs
583 and probably a million and a half dollars a year in operating costs forever, as long as that system's in
584 place. To Tim's point, we are looking also at probably a 20 to 25% water rate increase once
585 everything's in place, just like all the peers around us are. And frankly, if they haven't picked it up in
586 your water system yet, they haven't looked hard enough because it's everywhere, you know it's
587 coming down in snow in Antarctica, it's in umbilical cord blood like you mentioned, it's everywhere.
588 So, they'll find it eventually.

589 Commissioner Silverman: That that's part of my comment about, people are becoming very, very
590 aware of it because it's one of those things. You don't see it unless you look for it, and they're finding
591 it. Thank you very much.

592 Chair Hurd: Thank you, Commissioner Tauginas.

593 Commissioner Tauginas: That was pretty straightforward, I don't have any questions or comments.
594 Thank you.

595 Chair Hurd: Ok, Commissioner Williamson.

596 Commissioner Williamson: Evening, and kudos again with the others on the amount of detail and I
597 trust you all do this with the best of information, and I have no doubts about the quality of the work
598 you're doing, I would remind maybe people listening that were these not public agencies doing
599 these things you'd probably never see a document like this from private companies. I'm not sure,
600 but I would think the process of would be less transparent. It's always interesting to realize how
601 much of local government is the basics of streets, waters, sewer and electricity sometimes. I've got
602 a series of sort of umbrella questions and short answers are fine by all means. Just wondering
603 whether, don't panic, artificial intelligence is even on the CIP radar in any way?

604 City Manager Coleman: So, we've actually been implementing a lot of AI use, just we've been using
605 it for probably about a year now, but in the last month or two, we've started ramping up a little bit.
606 If anyone noticed, we've had some more videos on our social media pages those are AI generated
607 videos using...can't remember what the something 5? Yeah, I can't remember the name of the
608 program off top my head, but...Lumen 5 there you go, is what we're using to create the videos and
609 we've been using ChatGPT, the enterprise version, to generate scripts. We've been using it in
610 personnel investigations, we've been using it to review, provide summaries of minutes and analyze
611 summary data out of you know, spreadsheet data we feed into it. So, we're starting to use it more,
612 it'll probably not end up in the capital budget. We're looking at the enterprise copilot through
613 Microsoft 365. Not for all users, but for select users. I mean it, it is clear that it, I don't know that it's
614 gonna supplant any positions in the near term, but people are gonna have to learn how to use it
615 because it's a very powerful tool.

616 Commissioner Williamson: We don't have to build a data center for a billion dollars, right?

617 City Manager Coleman: No.

618 Commissioner Williamson: Ok, next question, and again short answer's fine, since the electric
619 system utility is a big part of the city's income, you know, we rely on it quite a bit. I'm guessing I'm
620 sure you've done sort of vulnerability assessments to...and I'm speculating here losing customers
621 to self-generated power or batteries or other technology changes that might change the model that
622 we've been used to on customers and rates? Is that?

623 City Manager Coleman: So, funny you should bring that up, on Monday we'll have a presentation at
624 Council with our rate consultant where we are looking to make change to our rate design and we're
625 not looking to go all the way there this time. But you know, in the long term, we're looking to
626 implement residential demand charges and we're trying to, our long-term strategy is where we don't
627 make, we won't make money off the KWHs, so like the volume of power that you need to buy, we're
628 gonna make our money off how much you need to power instantaneously, so the demand charge.
629 So long term is volumetric rate will be equal to our wholesale rate, the plan and then our demand
630 charge because demand is what results in the needing certain size wires, certain size transformers,
631 all that stuff is driven by instantaneous demand. So, our long-term strategy is to switch to
632 recovering our costs through the demand charge and recovering our DEMEC costs through the
633 volumetric charge. So that is something we're looking at. Director Patel has, we brought in a
634 consultant to look, to evaluate our entire system to determine by feeder how much capacity we
635 have available for electric vehicle charging, distributed generation DEMEC is doing a DEMEC wide
636 review at the feeder level for circuit capacity to host solar. So, we're looking at it both from a behind
637 the meter, you know an individual wants to put a rooftop on and that meter, and somebody wants to
638 do a utility scale within our within our system that could potentially offload some sales. So yeah,
639 we are looking at that and incorporating it into our planning.

640 Commissioner Williamson: Kind of related to that is, I'm sure you're familiar with the Inflation
641 Reduction Act, the investment tax credits that are significant for this kind of energy stuff. So,
642 whether some of that can somehow be passed back to the city through the, you know through the
643 contractors because they're getting big ITCs.

644 City Manager Coleman: So we are, through DEMEC, so DEMEC's our wholesale power provider and
645 we have to buy all of our power from DEMEC. We can self-generate up to our facility load, but
646 anything above that we have to buy from DEMEC either directly or through our PPA If we wanted to
647 build something, power purchase agreement. So, through DEMEC we've identified...can't

648 remember it's three or four and the board has given approval for DEMEC to enter into three or four
649 different new generation projects using those investment tax credits and other funding from the
650 feds. One of which is a floating solar complex in Middletown on their wastewater lagoons, we're
651 going to float panels on top of their lagoons. We've got a hydroelectric plant in...it's either Maryland
652 or North Carolina. I can't remember, and then some additional solar out in, and a battery in Milford
653 as we're looking into battery, ironically that we need the battery Milford because the Milford Solar
654 facility there is, while it was fine when it was built, it's very large, I think it's like 12 megawatts since
655 rooftop solar has started to increase penetration in there they've gotten to the point where their
656 load has gone negative. Or they're over generating solar, so they've had to shift load around in their
657 system. And, you know, if we don't put a battery in to, to absorb, kind of solar soak, that extra power
658 up during the day and put it back in overnight they're going to have to start taking panels offline,
659 which is not ideal. So, we're looking at that as well.

660 Commissioner Williamson: Thanks. Two more. One switching to water, noting that it hasn't rained
661 much in the last what two months...how does this city plan for? Do we have droughts, I mean?

662 City Manager Coleman: We do and that's why we have the reservoir, so the drought of 1999 coming
663 out of that, the governor appointed a task force, and the task force reviewed northern New Castle
664 County specifically because that's where surface water's more involved. They made a host of
665 recommendations, one of which was the Newark Reservoir. The other one was the South Wellfield
666 iron removal facility. Both of those were constructed and online. So, with those in place, we've
667 been in pretty good shape. We're about as low in the reservoir as we've been since it was built right
668 now. If you go up and look, it's down probably about 15 feet or to the max?

669 Director Filasky: It's down about 9 feet and we have about we have plenty of water for now just to
670 make sure everybody's ok. There's plenty of water for right now and we continue to use our wells on
671 the South Wellfield Plant. However, there is a project in here that's been a little bit delayed because
672 of the funding, the ARPA funding that we want to use that we wanted to use before the end of this
673 year. It's been a little bit delayed, which is the Laird Tract Wellfield basically reinstatement. So,
674 we've had these wells on Laird Tract for 20 to 25 years, but they've been offline for about since the
675 South Wellfield went on, went online. So, bringing those back online would allow us when we can't
676 draw from the creek, we would still be able to take the wet with water from those wells, send it to
677 the reservoir and have it in the reservoir and keep the reservoir high. Continue to draw from the
678 reservoir, but also continue to feed the reservoir so we wouldn't see it get as low as it is now, and it
679 would essentially double the amount of time that the reservoir would last which the design is about
680 150 days of max usage so. If we have to, we'll drain it dry and then we'll, you know, we'll be in a
681 different discussion, but hopefully we'll get some rain before that and it's really not looking for
682 another two weeks before we see really any rain in the forecast. So certainly, keeping an eye on it,
683 but it's something we have planned for, and we do have contingency plans in the form of
684 interconnections with both Artesian and Veolia.

685 City Manager Coleman: Yeah, it's worth noting that all the utilities in northern New Castle County
686 are interconnected now. Not necessarily everybody with everybody, but you can get water from
687 Wilmington to Newark via other carriers as necessary. And then that governor's task force made
688 recommendations for all of them, interconnections was one, but they also have plans in place, let's
689 say the salt line is moving up to Christina and Suez now Viola, would have to turn off because
690 there's too much water and too much salt. They can actually make releases from the Hoops
691 reservoir that make their way into the Christina to help push the salt line down so they can continue
692 to dry out. So, they've done a lot of work and over the last 25 years, water demand in northern New
693 Castle County is lower. So, all these plans were put in place when demand was higher, so now that
694 there's lower demand, they work even better.

695 Commissioner Williamson: That's all, thank you.

696 Chair Hurd: All right, thank you all. Thank you, guys, again every year this is one of my favorites. I
697 think reading this plan and the old administrative report was a great way to kind of learn what's
698 going on in the city and what's happening, what's going on. So really appreciate the work put in by
699 the Directors and everyone else for it. I don't have any actual questions. We can open this up to any
700 public comment we received. Any public comment by e-mail?

701 Ms. Dinsmore: No, Mr. Chairman.

702 Chair Hurd: Ok, there anyone online who wishes to give public comment? Anyone present who
703 wishes to give public comment? Ok, closing public comment. And we can move to the resolution
704 the amendment, the not the amendment, the motion, unless we have any further questions or
705 comments.... you got it? We have the recommended motion on page ii which is after the table of
706 contents.

707 Commissioner Kadar: **I move that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council**
708 **approve the 2025 through 2029 Capital Improvement Program as presented to the Planning**
709 **Commission on October 15th, 2024, and that the City Council takes into account the**
710 **comments that have been recorded during this meeting.**

711 Chair Hurd: All right thank you. Do I have a second?

712 Commissioner Silverman: I'll second.

713 Chair Hurd: Thank you. Any discussion to the motion? All right, we can do this by voice vote
714 because I think it's easy enough, it's not land use. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

715 All Commissioners Present: Aye.

716 Chair Hurd: Opposed say nay...all right, motion carries. Thank you everyone.

717 **Aye – Silverman, Tauginas, Cloonan, Williamson, Bradley, Kadar, Hurd**

718 **Nay – None**

719 **MOTION PASSED**

720

721 **2. Presentation and discussion regarding student housing with representatives from the**
722 **UD Office Student Life**

723 Chair Hurd: Welcome University.

724 Ms. Olsen: Do you want me here, or there anywhere?

725 Chair Hurd: Whatever's comfortable, I mean, that's got a live mic.

726 Ms. Olsen: Alright, we'll start here then.

727 Chair Hurd: Ok.

728 Ms. Olsen: Good evening, everyone, I'm Caitlin Olsen. I do Government Community Relations for
729 the University of Delaware, I apologize, I don't get to see you very often in person. I am the Vice
730 President of The Newark Partnership, which meets at the same time, but I do listen to your meetings
731 and if you ever want the joy of, or a quick laugh you can always listen to the meetings at double
732 time, which if you've ever heard Renee speak, means it's very enjoyable. It's one of my favorite
733 tasks. So, I brought a few people with me, not just Student Life. You know, they were throwing each
734 other on the fire, so they just didn't want to come alone. So, we have Jose-Luis Riera from Student
735 Life, we have Peter Krawchyk from Facilities Real Estate Auxiliary Services and then Rodney
736 Morrison, he knew where to go, he was just in Wilmington helping students fill out FAFSA. It is that
737 time of year seems to always be that time of year for poor Rodney. But I did want to thank you for
738 having us.

739 So we could talk a little bit about how we make plans, break plans, start and stop every once in a
740 while. I do want to start with a little disclaimer though. I know that Josh is in the room and that this
741 is on the record, but I do want to say that sometimes things change at UD. We are currently
742 interviewing Deans for Engineering so that person could come in and say, I need this, or I need that.
743 Philanthropy is another avenue for changes. And then the state, I don't know if you know this, but
744 they asked everyone to look into a medical school so that changes things too sometimes when the
745 state looks into things. Not that I'm saying, Josh, I'm not announcing a medical school or anything,
746 but those are the things that come into our world, kind of shake things up and we have to make
747 decisions based on the information we have at the time. So, as we kind of go through things, I just
748 wanted you to know that if we say we don't know, I'm not playing games with you, we genuinely
749 don't know sometimes. And none of this kind of happens in a vacuum, as you're still dealing with
750 issues from the pandemic and long lead time, some things we are as well so. I was told my
751 PowerPoint was a little verbose, so we can do this a couple of ways. We can go through slide by
752 slide, or we can...I know it's heavy, Mr. Silverman, I had to tell you everything. So, we can go through

753 things that you have specific questions on. I can answer questions...how would you like to do
754 things?

755 Director Bensley: I do think we have some members of the public online who may not have
756 reviewed the presentation in advance.

757 Chair Hurd: Yes, so, let's sort of, yeah, sure. The structure may not read every slide at least,
758 Ms. Olsen: You got it.

759 Chair Hurd: But then then we'll at least get these topics out in the open and then we can circle
760 back.

761 Ms. Olsen: Perfect, ok.

762 Chair Hurd: I'm not going to open this up to questions now, we'll never get off the first slide.

763 Ms. Olsen: Ok you can switch to the first one then...or do you want me to? Do you have a clicker?
764 As I talked about, we do have challenges, opportunities, all of that, like I said, we have an
765 enrollment plan. We have campus planning, we have student experiences, Board of Trustees,
766 student federal influence and you may have heard about our hydrogen hub. Things like that pop up.
767 So that's the only reason I have that there is just to remind you that changes as we go. Next couple
768 slides I believe are just introductions. I didn't give you their whole history, I just told you how they
769 run their offices, right? So, they've got a little bit of everything, like I said, Rodney is Vice President
770 for enrollment management, that's everything from pre pre-application FAFSA all the way through to
771 registering for our classes and beyond, right? So, we have very specific people who focus on
772 Delaware, they're talking to counselors, they're working with Delaware students to be on campus
773 before they even apply. So that is all out of Rodney's camp.

774 Next up we have, Peter oh man, Peter has got a little bit of everything, so I think the important thing
775 here is that we are constantly working on our buildings, grounds. It's all happening at once, and so
776 when we talk about capital planning and maintenance, there's a little bit of everything going on.
777 Deferred maintenance is a big topic of conversation, just like for you, it is for us and then of course
778 we have Jose. Jose got another title today, so now he is also the Head of our Diversity and Inclusion.
779 But Jose's office really handles how you know the students are living on campus and how that
780 changes. So, the UD that I experienced many years ago is not the same way that we look at campus
781 living now. So, as we look at those things as the people who come here change and their needs
782 change and we learn more about mental health, wellness, community, that's how all of that gets
783 updated is through Jose's office.

784 All right. So, I can talk a little bit about enrollment. I don't know, Rodney. Do you want me to? Ok,
785 so in the past, it was you wrote a check, you filled out the form, and you sent it in a little bit different
786 now. We have free college enrollment month, and you just click right on all those names, and it gets
787 sent to everyone. So, when you see those articles that come out and say, "the biggest admissions
788 yet", it doesn't necessarily mean they're all coming here, right? So, we see that as our admissions
789 numbers are very different than what you see mid-September and our enrollment numbers, right.
790 So that has changed a lot over the years. Now, currently this year was a little bit weird because of
791 the FASFA stuff, right? So, you saw that across the nation, the feds put out a new system, maybe it
792 didn't work as well as they planned, so we kept everything open. So, what that means is you were
793 able to still enroll, enroll, enroll as you figured out what your packages were from other schools for
794 scholarships. So that really changes even if they said yes, and they sent us a deposit and said
795 they're coming it doesn't mean they picked up a key. So that's a little bit different than the old days.
796 Now in the future, I just wanted to talk a little bit about the enrollment cliff because it is shocking to
797 know this, but there were less children born during the recession in 2008, and somehow, they're
798 going to be 18 soon. So somehow, we are there, and so what that means is that not only do we have
799 less people born in Delaware, we have less born in New York and New Jersey. And so those
800 colleges are also looking at these numbers and thinking, well, Delaware might have more people so
801 we could poach those high schoolers as well.

802 So, as we look at enrollment numbers and how we make our budget and how we make these plans
803 moving forward, we have to look at those different avenues that you're getting students now. So not
804 only do you have the FAFSA issue that we had, we had post pandemic learning loss and you know, I
805 love our Associate's in Arts program, I love that, you know, the state is very generous with helping
806 that program be free through the SEED program. It's one of those things where if you need an extra

807 math class to get you over the hump, it really helps students come in who are maybe on different
808 levels because, let's be honest, they were online for a long time. So, the other thing we have to
809 remember is the international political uncertainty, right? So, whether it's wars or who's in charge,
810 bringing students here may not as be as easy as it was in the past, and so for the next one, I think we
811 have some of those numbers.

812 So, this is something Dr. Assanis shared recently, and as you can see, while we're bringing in more
813 applications, and while we're still offering that admission, you're not seeing as many people show
814 up. So, this is part of how we plan for the future, how we talk about housing so that's just why I bring
815 it up and show you those numbers. You can go to the next one. So, this is a really good example of
816 how the numbers change over time, so I'm sure when you're walking on Main Street, it doesn't feel
817 like we have less people, we have less of the same type of people. We may not have as many first
818 year, first semester, first time students showing up in the fall, but we're having transfers come back.
819 We're working on students who maybe were a couple of credits away from graduating. How do we
820 get them back in, just to finish that degree? How do we work on full time graduate students? Part
821 time graduate students who may be online, right? So, they're not even showing up in Newark.
822 But that all matters as we look at that total number, next one.

823 So, this one I think also shows that really well. So those first-time students as we talk about those,
824 those are the ones that we have in the dorms that first year, whether they're going through the SEED
825 program and doing two years in in Wilmington or Georgetown. Now the SEED program has
826 expanded to that third year, so they are able to get funding to be on campus that third year go for
827 that bachelor's degree. And so, are we going to see more transfers from that program? We hope so,
828 we want that that message to get out, that they can come in and finish a bachelor's degree. And like
829 I said, bringing them back to campus to finish up. So, the way we look at those numbers, even if
830 you're seeing it go up, it really is important to show who's coming through and how they're getting to
831 us. Next, I talked about the SEED. We can skip that one, that's the same thing. We talked about the
832 enrollment cliff and the poaching.

833 So that population is really expected to shrink over the next several years. So that all goes into
834 planning, as you know that we have to kind of think about. The size of our campus, how we're
835 building, what we plan to build when we see these numbers coming in. So, you can do the next one.
836 Again, this is something that Dr. Assanis shared, like I said the surrounding states are going to be
837 looking at the Delaware students to make their enrollment numbers just like we are. So just to keep
838 that on your minds, go ahead. And as I said, connecting those programs in and making sure that
839 we're pulling students not just from, you know, the high schools, we want associate's degrees, we
840 want, you know, first time full time. We want dual enrollment, which means that you're getting
841 college credits in high school and then you're coming in maybe as a, you know, you're 18, but you're
842 coming in as a first semester sophomore based on how many credits you have. So that's something
843 that we look at as well. Want me to keep going? Ok. Do you want to pause for each? I have
844 Enrollment, Planning, and Student Life.

845 Chair Hurd: I think let's go through and then I'll do the usual, go around each Commissioner.

846 Ms. Olsen: Perfect. Ok, so campus planning, 2019 obviously we didn't COVID was coming, but we
847 did a group effort across campus to talk about what everyone needs. Are we efficiently using our
848 buildings? Are we talking about how you can get from place to place? You have 15 minutes
849 between class. And really, this idea that it is one campus we talk about South Campus a lot we talk
850 about, North, Laird Campus. The idea is that it is supposed to be connected both top to bottom
851 and from side to side. Now when we talk about the learning hubs, you're thinking of, my research is
852 at the corner of, you know, Academy and Delaware ok, so most of my classes are across the street.
853 I'm also doing a double major with IPA, that's a little bit down the street. So, we have to think about
854 how we're moving these students around, how we have our faculty and then as we opened up
855 things on the STAR Campus, it became places where PT students were working with, you know, bio
856 students were working with OT. And so, you also have these areas where they can all kind of work
857 together. So that's what we brought everybody together to talk about is how are we going to use the
858 space that we have? How do we move people throughout but then also have that interdisciplinary
859 idea in each space? We want full open working spaces where students are working on their projects
860 out in the open. Of course, this was pre pandemic, so things slowed down a little bit, paused. The
861 campus planning has to take into account increased construction costs. It has to take into account
862 less students, you know, more scholarships having to go out, things like that. So, we still use these

863 main ideas through that campus planning where we're creating these communities. But it is, it's
864 just something that we slowed down a little bit. You can go to the next one.

865 So, STAR Campus, when we originally got the land, I was always told it's a 50-to-100-year plan,
866 right? That's a lot of land and things change, right? So, it when I was at school here, we were not
867 talking about biopharmaceutical engineering, manufacturing, none of that. As you kind of look at
868 this map, it looks like a lot of green, the way you have to think about it is creating this ...hub of
869 research this innovative area where we have to be agile enough to bring in these things that don't
870 even exist yet. I talked about the hydrogen hub. So, we have to be really mindful of how we set
871 things up. How do people eat on STAR Campus? How do the buses move around? How do we
872 work with companies like Chemours to make sure that our students are getting internships?
873 They're becoming managers, they're working right out of school. So right now, we have a couple
874 areas that are connected. So, the reason I mentioned that is because opportunities come up or the
875 state will come to us, and we don't have full shovel ready parcels here. So when we talk about
876 working with the City of Newark and we talk about going together to the state for infrastructure
877 funding, it's because we want to bring economic opportunity into the town, but also that water
878 flows through you, that electric is going to you, so making sure that we are able to connect into the
879 town and make sure that it is beneficial for all of us, especially just the state in general. You can go
880 to the next one.

881 Like I said, there are these little areas that we think about as hubs. What could go where? Does it
882 make sense to have mixed-use near the train station? You get off the train, you grab a cup of coffee,
883 you go to work at Chemours. So that's the way we see it, but those things change. Building sizes
884 change, building heights change. So, as we kind of move around, we are also working with outside
885 entities like Fintech or Chemours, or BPG who may need certain amounts of space in certain areas,
886 and it makes sense for them. The next one. This gives you an idea of the sizes of things, where they
887 might land, and I'll be perfectly honest with you, I still don't understand biomanufacturing research
888 or education, but that's why I was political science major. But a lot of that, you have to understand
889 is, you know, there's a federal push for these things, so the state is matching funding that is coming
890 from the feds and we're matching that with our own people and space and time. So, this is, these
891 are big impact areas with a lot of groups throughout the area, whether it's other universities that are
892 also using that space, but it's been really interesting to see how that area grows and how it brings
893 more economic development to our area. Go to the next one.

894 So, housing. When we talk about housing, we talk about student life, Jose and his team are very
895 focused on our students' well-being and how they exist when they come to campus. So, there is the
896 difference between our first-year students who, if they are within a certain radius, do not have to
897 live on campus for the first year. But most of the time they are in these areas that they weren't
898 before. So, in the old days we used to have people come off 95, go up and split off. So, some would
899 go to East Campus, some would go to Rodney and Dickinson, now we're swerving all to that one
900 side, right? So that is why we have changed, how we do check in and traffic. But as we think about
901 that, we don't want students to feel isolated. We want them to feel that they are within a
902 community, that they're supported, that they have access to wellness and food and study spaces.
903 So, when we think about where they are, that's all the things that go into making those decisions.

904 Grad housing. So, when we talk about grad housing, there's different types of graduate students, so
905 when I was in grad school at UD, I know it's blasphemy, but I lived in Pike Creek. Some people have
906 children, some people are right out of school, some people are coming back. So, there is a wide
907 variety of needs when we talk about grad housing. So, we've done a couple of, I would call them
908 pilot studies where we did some off campus, we did kind of a master lease. You know who would
909 need some housing. This year we did some housing on, at the University Courtyards, that seems to
910 be working well, that's obviously it's a little bit different of a building model than the main dorms.
911 But let's just say, my mom lived in Smith, and I think it's her room is still there. So, there are those
912 buildings and dorms around campus that are aging and as you see the new ones go up, they are
913 built different. They are built so that we can kind of flex the space you could have two, you could
914 have three, because we see that melt in the fall it's a little bit different than the years past.

915 And then sustainability, obviously you have a sustainability plan, but we also have a sustainability
916 plan. So, as we talk about these buildings that are sucking up energy or water resources that
917 comes into account as well. Mobility is obviously a big part of it. How are we moving them
918 throughout campus? You can go to the next one. This just gives you an idea as you saw those
919 dorms kind of around the Harrington Turf go down and be built back up again. For our first-year

920 hauls and then use kind of see the other ones, Ray Street, Courtyards, and then the ones up at Laird
921 are more of our upper division. So, you see them kind of move out away from the main campus as
922 they get more comfortable with UD, with learning here and living here.

923 This, I apologize if you're color blind, I'm not a graphic designer, but as you can see, when we talk
924 about these spaces, the green are the residence halls are all kind of around the central space
925 where students can gather, whether it's the turf or the dining hall. It's building these communities
926 that are connected into our main space. The next one is Central Campus, which is a little bit harder
927 to read, but you'll kind of see how East Campus is greener than the old days when we had Rodney
928 and Dickinson on the other side of the tracks, right? So, we have these main educational buildings
929 and then we have all of these dorms that we've kind of either redone over the years or built up like
930 the Academy Street Residence Hall. Next one. And then that one doesn't have any green on it, so a
931 lot of the athletics, and then agricultural and STAR, you're seeing changes. Worrilow Hall is getting
932 upgraded, you're seeing changes on the outside, and then you're seeing some buildings that may
933 have federal support or philanthropic support over on STAR. So, as we kind of talk about this area
934 and what that means in the future, it's all up for discussion and I think I sped through that for you.
935 Ok.

936 Chair Hurd: Yes, thank you.

937 Ms. Olsen: Sure.

938 Chair Hurd: And we'll begin again with Commissioner Bradley.

939 Commissioner Bradley: Thank you for the presentation, really no questions just good, thorough and
940 insightful. Thank you.

941 Chair Hurd: Ok, Commissioner Cloonan.

942 Commissioner Cloonan: What's the housing at STAR Campus? Who's that intended for?

943 Ms. Olsen: That is...oh go ahead.

944 Mr. Krawchyk: Hello, it's Peter Krawchyk, that is market rate housing by Buccini Pollin so it would be
945 a completely private housing complex. It's not meant for any, you know it's not assigned to anyone
946 from the University community.

947 Commissioner Cloonan: I think that's it.

948 Chair Hurd: Ok, Commissioner Kadar.

949 Commissioner Kadar: Thanks for spending some time with us and I hope throughout your
950 endeavors, all of your planning processes that you, you bear in mind the fact that what we're slowly
951 seeing on Main Street because of the fact that student housing is at such a premium is that we are
952 slowly building a canyon. And I'm not so sure that that's a good thing, so just keep that in mind.
953 You have a lot of buildings you say you're working on renovating and restoring and keeping them, I
954 don't know that I see a lot of activity in that. I see a lot of new construction I don't see a lot of old
955 refurbishment, so give it the proper attention and focus that it needs so we don't get into according
956 to the builders that we deal with on a regular basis, we're at least seven years away from reaching
957 equilibrium. And that says a lot considering the fact that your plans indicate enrollment is going
958 down, so. Thank you.

959 Chair Hurd: Ok. Commissioner Silverman.

960 Commissioner Silverman: I'm gonna date myself if I say topsy and turvy does anyone in the room
961 know what I'm talking about? Ok. I like that the University is refocusing on the learning hubs. How
962 is the University integrating its student moving transportation system to accommodate these ideas?
963 Believe it or not, at one time there was discussion of a monorail running on College Avenue to
964 connect the Laird Campus down to the Ag farm even before STAR was on the horizon. So, I read the
965 last report from the parking group, the university controls something like 9000 parking spaces.
966 How's the University dealing with that incoming traffic? Is there still a philosophy of parking on the
967 perimeter? Parking remotely and then student movement by student provided bus type
968 transportation.

969 Mr. Krawchyk: Yeah. Thank you, that's exactly our approach. What is interesting, as all of you know,
970 the pandemic really changed the model for the University in terms of traffic counts because we
971 have many students now who have online learning, we have a lot of employees, like for myself, I'm

972 on campus three days a week, so we have many people now who are on a hybrid working schedule.
973 In terms of the transportation system, our primary goal is always to get students to classes. That's
974 really the first, you were mentioning about ranking priorities, that's where the first priority for the
975 transportation system on the campus. The next one is obviously the graduate students to their
976 workplaces or their classes. They tend to be more out into the City of Newark because they tend to
977 live in apartment complexes, not in-residence halls, but one fact to know is the transportation
978 system goes to the apartment complexes is partially funded by the owners of the apartment
979 complexes. We do not necessarily stop at every apartment that has a graduate student or is on the
980 route. It's really a sort of not I'm going to call it on demand, excuse me, but it's really, it's really a
981 voluntary program for certain apartment owners if they deem it valuable for their tenants to have
982 that service to the University. Now the other thing about the transportation system is the geography
983 of the city. As everyone knows, we don't have a grid system throughout the City. When we did the
984 earlier version of the master plan back in 2016 the consultants did a very interesting metaphor for
985 the City of Newark, and they said it's really like a medieval town and what they meant by that, it
986 wasn't a disparaging comment. What they meant by that was because of the railroads that are
987 surrounding the downtown area, there's really only six or seven portals of way that traffic can
988 access the City. Obviously South College is one of them and we have one small bridge that handles
989 all the traffic back and forth. So, in some ways with our transportation system, we are constrained
990 by the geography of the streets and the traffic patterns and how quickly we can move our students
991 between areas of the campus. If you can see that image again of the campus map, we're very linear
992 campus, we're stretched North to South but we're very thin East to West, so we have to take into
993 account all of these factors in terms of how we move students, where we park people, so on and so
994 forth. Obviously, we're also dealing with personal preference, everybody wants to park outside the
995 door of their office, that's just human nature. So, we all obviously have to, you know, work with that
996 as well, but your first assumption of thinking, you know, we really try to park on the perimeter, we
997 keep the land for the University buildings central to the core and try to try to get people to stop
998 before they reach the downtown to try to minimize traffic.

999 So, for example, one of our largest commuter lots is at the football stadium. That is, that is one lot
1000 where we have a lot of the staff and the workers. That's where they park, and commuting students.
1001 And then they take the bus up to campus to go to their workplace or their classes or things like that.

1002 Commissioner Silverman: Ok, one of the topics that's come before this board in working with
1003 WILMAPCO and in speaking with DelDOT is improving the link from Library Avenue to 896 to South
1004 College by improving Farm Lane, and actually making a boulevard through there to complete the
1005 lack of loop that you're talking about is that on the horizon with the University?

1006 Mr. Krawchyk: It is not. The only study that I'm aware of where we're coordinating with DelDOT is on
1007 the South College study that is underway. And I think that's really more improving, is a combination
1008 of improving the traffic flow, accommodating future growth, but also a beautification project for the
1009 City and the University.

1010 Commissioner Silverman: Ok, thank you. I'm glad to see that the use of the STAR property is finally
1011 coalescing, at one time it was going to be another node of some sort with its own West Bank kind of
1012 promenade, graduate student offices, street scape through there and now it looks like it's being put
1013 to much more from my point of view as a city resident revenue producing arrangement with the
1014 University and the private partnership with groups coming in and building the structures. And the
1015 other thing I see, unlike a lot of the specialty-built buildings of old on the university campus, the old
1016 laboratories and all, the buildings appear to be much more in the flex space model. So, a tower
1017 floor can literally be cleaned out and turned into a research laboratory for a contract period and
1018 then back in the office space, 10 or 15 years later. So, I'm glad to see that kind of thinking is
1019 involved. My final question, and I warned some of my colleagues I was going to bring this up,
1020 President Assanis was cited in the newspaper, an article that dealt with the, what had been private
1021 residential structures throughout the City. Of talking about their obsolescence and where they're
1022 going to sell them to somebody or we're going to demolish them. I hope this is being considered in
1023 light of the impact it will have on the city. It doesn't help a neighborhood to have multiple vacant
1024 lots where we as a group here and other public interest groups are working on housing affordability
1025 and it's relatively speaking a lot cheaper to take an existing property and have a shell to work with to
1026 develop or redevelop modern housing than it is to start from scratch. So, I hope that idea of, yeah,
1027 we really don't want to be responsible for it, we can't maintain it, is looking for somebody to take it
1028 over and maintain that as housing stock in the City of Newark. And that's my closing comment.

1029 Chair Hurd: All right, thank you, Commissioner Tauginas.

1030 Commissioner Tauginas: Hi. That was very insightful, thank you for coming by. I just had just some
1031 questions, just in terms of I guess really their enrollment, right, this this potential 15% drop. And it
1032 says as much as 15%, but then they expect that to just be like a lower number indefinitely without
1033 any type of potential like expansion like what was mentioned like doing like a medical school or
1034 adding some kind of additional schools that would potentially bring additional students in? I was
1035 just curious if you have any more information that you could share regarding how this is going to
1036 come into play in the next few years.

1037 Mr. Morrison: Yeah, Rodney Morrison, Vice President for Enrollment Management. So, I think about
1038 the enrollment pretty much every day. And so, this has been something in the works for many, many
1039 years. So, there's lots of research out there and looking at births looking at, and I think in in you
1040 know one of the two of the slides that that Caitlin didn't put in, we talked about sort of even further
1041 just where the cliff is coming from. So, we're, you know, from our perspective at the university, I
1042 mean, we'd like to maintain at least with the freshmen, the incoming freshmen about where we're
1043 at, but that it's important. And as Caitlin mentioned a few times, the lost learning and how students
1044 have just reacted, and we really want to meet students where they're at. And so, you saw the
1045 different pathways to a UD degree. And so, for us, we're hoping that we'll be able not necessarily be
1046 a safety net, but a way to catch some of those students who may be...they're not quite ready when
1047 they're eighteen or graduating from high school, and so the trend, it looks like for the next few years
1048 it depends on by state. So, we have, we have information by state, so here in Delaware, it looks like
1049 in the next few years that that downward trend is going to level off a little bit, right in terms of the
1050 population. But that doesn't factor in things like, well, what's happening with the learning in the
1051 state and other states so. What I mean by that is, so what we look at other different factors. So how
1052 many students are not necessarily just in in high school or in a senior class, but how many are
1053 actually graduating right and so that number fluctuates as well. We look at things like, you know, for
1054 those that take a standardized test on SAT or an ACT, you know, how are those numbers factoring?
1055 Are students doing better, are they doing poorer? So, we've got a lot of different factors that we're
1056 looking at and we crunch those numbers and say ok, so it looks like this is how many students are
1057 going to be college ready from the state and then from other states. And so, you know what's clear
1058 to us is, is that, you know, in the next few years, while we're seeing a little bit of a downturn, at least
1059 in our surrounding states and in here in Delaware, that should we be looking at again, not just, and
1060 this is for freshmen. Should we be trying to expand a little bit of our range in terms of where we're
1061 recruiting at? But then at the same token, it's like, let's make sure that. For the Delawareans that
1062 were not, you know, that may not be ready, that we're doing a lot of pre-college work. So, pipeline
1063 programs, summer programs to help get them more ready. So that's really what I what we're
1064 focusing on. So, access for students and getting them more prepared earlier so that we can kind of
1065 mitigate some of that that cliff that we're seeing is that help at all?

1066 Commissioner Tauginas: Yeah.

1067 Ms. Olsen: One thing I wanted to add that I did not mention that you mentioned in your e-mail is
1068 that, and this sounds so awful, but as other higher-eds don't make it. So, we had marketing out
1069 there, information out there for students who were maybe at DCAD. So, the School of Art Design in
1070 Wilmington or the Philadelphia School of Art Design that, their schools dried up, right? So, we have
1071 a pathway for them to kind of come to our art department and make their way onto our campus and
1072 we wanted to make that as easy for them because it's traumatic for their school to close.

1073 Mr. Morrison: Yeah. So, we created a website, really, it just it made it easy as possible for those
1074 students to say, here's your steps. We, you know, feel horrible about what happened but here's, you
1075 know, here's the pathway to transfer to UD if you so choose. And we had counselors available. The
1076 school, our arts and sciences were ready to talk to, to students and families, and we didn't have
1077 many that reached out. We did have a handful that that did that did wind up transferring, but again
1078 it was we had to, we wanted to make sure that we marketed and said we're here for you, if you think
1079 UD might be a good, good option. So again, it's about those different pathways and trying to make
1080 sure that families, you know, know that they can come in regardless of what point, not just for the
1081 traditional pathway, but really alternative pathways is what we're trying to ensure that that are
1082 available, so that's a good point.

1083 Commissioner Tauginas: Gotcha. So, I mean, that's how this that you all are dealing with right at U
1084 of D, but is based, this is like a national, trend that's going to affect every school across I mean,
1085 potentially the world right? Like I think, birth rates in most Western countries have dropped as I've

1086 been reading and continue so. Just to satisfy my own curiosity, do you happen to know how many
1087 of the 23,000 enrolled students now actually live on campus?

1088 Mr. Morrison: And when you say live on campus, do you mean in campus housing?

1089 Commissioner Tauginas: I mean, like actual campus University of Delaware Housing.

1090 Mr. Riera: So, Jose Riera, Vice President for Student Life. Our housing system accommodates
1091 anywhere from probably about 6,700 to 7,200 students, we have just around 7,000 on campus
1092 currently. So, we call that elasticity in our system that's different than like a Lang property, they're
1093 not going to change a double to a triple, we will. And we, as we built new buildings, we've designed
1094 them to be able to do that. And that gives us the ability to expand and contract within, you know the
1095 actual structure, but right now we're around 7,000.

1096 Commissioner Tauginas: Around 7,000 ok. So then, those out of out of, so that 7,000 that live
1097 actually on the campus, do you have any numbers in terms of like who is commuting and then
1098 those that live, that are living in Newark but live technically in off campus housing? I'm sorry I'm
1099 just asking.

1100 Mr. Riera: No, it's a great question. We asked this question too, because we actually don't
1101 specifically track it is something that, we've kind of initiated a project to figure this out. We don't
1102 specifically require students to report their off-campus addresses, and so most students, most
1103 students' permanent mailing addresses, is their home address. That doesn't really help us because
1104 obviously it's all over the country, all over the world kind of thing. What I can tell you is out of our
1105 first year population, so every first year student, because we do have a live on requirement for first
1106 year students, every first year student must fill out a housing application, whether they're living on
1107 campus or to be released from the live on requirement showing that they live within 30 miles radius
1108 with a parent or guardian, that's how you get released from your contract. So typically, we're
1109 housing about 95% of the first-year class, that's over years. You know, just as an average over years.
1110 And so if you, you know, put that on to the entire population, it's that that's probably about your
1111 percentage that are, I would say, true commuters. Now that changes, I would say there are students
1112 who live on campus or first year and they decide to go home. If they live in the area, it obviously
1113 saves money, but the other students, you can kind of subtract the other students are like what I
1114 affectionately call resi-muters, which are, you know, residential but commuters in the sense that
1115 they're not living in traditional campus houses.

1116 Commissioner Tauginas: Got it, got it. So you have that that 6,700 to 7,200 as kind of like a flexible
1117 accordion style marker? So, like essentially at 7,200, you would be at your capacity technically
1118 then, because the accordion would be stretched as far as it can go.

1119 Mr. Riera: Correct, yes.

1120 Commissioner Tauginas: Ok, that's just something to think about as more and more buildings get
1121 put up on Main Street for housing, knowing that there's a 15% expected drop off for enrollments
1122 around the country. So, thank you.

1123 Mr. Riera: Yeah.

1124 Chair Hurd: All right. Commissioner Williamson.

1125 Commissioner Williamson: Thank you, I'm sitting here reminiscing 50 years ago when I was in
1126 college and I've spent my whole life on college campuses, teaching and otherwise. Last year I
1127 taught adjunct, had no trouble parking because the parking fees definitely allows spaces to be
1128 available. I kind of grumbled, but it did work, so good on that. And just another compliment that of
1129 the many campuses I've been on, this is one of the nicer ones. So, you, those compliments. What I
1130 was hoping to hear tonight and I'm hoping I'm going to suggest a way to get to it and it's following up
1131 on these other comments was this reassessment of what is almost a blank check for apartment
1132 buildings in Newark, and the argument is you know, students need them, students need them, and
1133 you had. Yet we have some beginnings of some contradictory information, right? And not, and
1134 relying on a 10-year-old study at least, which was probably relying on even older data and a
1135 different model and so forth, could Student Affairs send out an anonymous survey through the
1136 campus student e-mail system and maybe the City gives them a free parking coupon as an
1137 incentive to respond and try to find out, not only not an address, but just do you live in town? Do you
1138 live in a student...where do you live now? Would you live in town if you could get an apartment? You
1139 know, just to get a sense of unmet demand of people who are not here now, who would want to be if

1140 there were more apartments at presumably some affordable rate. Is that feasible? If could
 1141 something like that be done? Maybe have to think about it, but just as a way to get a sense of the
 1142 pent-up demand or just what's, what's going on out there? Anonymous, no cost, maybe some
 1143 parking coupons.

1144 Mr. Riera: Yeah. So I was, and Peter, if you have any thoughts about this, feel free to chime in as well.
 1145 But in our most recent, what was called the Student Experience Master Plan a couple years ago, I
 1146 mean, there are consultants that come in and they are able to calculate demand without needing to
 1147 e-mail students and so they do that through data collection through focus groups. You know,
 1148 understanding what, what the interest is to live on campus versus and taking into account like all
 1149 the, so when we did that study, they actually met with the Planning Department to understand like
 1150 what are the projects at that point that were approved obviously that's something you have to kind
 1151 of continue renewing over time and so certainly that's something we could renew in in the coming
 1152 years as we think about our planning.

1153 Commissioner Williamson: When was the last time that was that would have?

1154 Mr. Riera: That would've been....23? Yeah, 2023

1155 Commissioner Williamson: Oh, that's recent, ok. Alright, so maybe that information's available
 1156 that'd be.

1157 Chair Hurd: But that that was for housing on campus, not housing within the City, correct?

1158 Mr. Riera: Right. So, it looked at what's the demand in the City, what's the demand on campus. So,
 1159 in the City, based on the projects that were approved, the demand on campus obviously looked at
 1160 our enrollment and our enrollment projections, which I mean this is what's hard and I think on that
 1161 first slide. The words volatile market was written there, and Rodney could speak much more to this,
 1162 our enrollment situation is very different than it was in 23 to be honest. I mean it really, there are
 1163 some changes...that's not to say that we're not going to you know, be able to maintain a steady
 1164 level, but there are certainly more threats, and that makes the market more volatile.

1165 Commissioner Williamson: Is that a document available public document that we could? Has it
 1166 been shared with the city that recently?

1167 Mr. Riera: We certainly shared some version I think of the student experience master plan, but we
 1168 can talk about getting whatever data we have.

1169 Commissioner Williamson: And my last comment is looking forward as a don't underestimate and
 1170 it's not a good thing, the potential climate change, refugees, people moving north getting out of the
 1171 south, getting out of Phoenix, you know because it's only going to get hotter and worse. It's kind of
 1172 the bad news.

1173 Chair Hurd: Thank you. Hi there, I had a couple of sort of more specific and then sort of general
 1174 questions. Commissioner Silverman talked about the single-family sort of parcel houses. How
 1175 many of them actually are there? Because I know that like, some seem to be converted, some are
 1176 offices, some are maybe filtering back out.... if what the Commissioner was talking about, was the
 1177 rental houses that we have, we have about 47 of them.

1178 Chair Hurd: Ok.

1179 Mr. Morrison: There's only a few in Wilmington, the rest are in the City of Newark. They're scattered
 1180 around the City, but they're generally located, they're sort of located in, I'll call them clumps, for
 1181 lack of a better word. One is on South College, on the east side of South College, right after you
 1182 cross the railroad bridge.

1183 Chair Hurd: Ok.

1184 Mr. Morrison: That first long block, we own almost every piece of property there, we own a couple
 1185 across the street from there. We own almost every house on Wyoming Road that's west of Chapel
 1186 Street, so if you kind of go to that backdoor campus where RTC is in the residence halls, we almost
 1187 own every house there and then we own a few houses around Dallam, around the ELI building, that
 1188 large mansion property those are really the locations, we own a couple along North College. So,
 1189 they're they tend, they aren't scattered through the town so to speak, that's sort of been...I think
 1190 we've had them for a while in my, in my estimation they were purchased within some strategic
 1191 thought in mind, for example, the Wyoming Road properties to try to lock in that area of land so the

1192 campus could expand eastward. On the North College to make the connection between Laird and
1193 the Arts Building, for example, so on and so forth. So that that's some idea and what they're used
1194 for. It's really part of a program that's meant for faculty and staff relocation housing. So, it's not
1195 student housing, it's really for incoming faculty and staff who, for whatever reason or other had said
1196 we'd like to rent a house on a temporary basis rather than purchase a property or sign a long-term
1197 lease. The period is a one-year lease which can be added for additional year, but we need
1198 approvals from Dean levels because our rent is somewhat below market. We try to market these
1199 around 15% below the current rate in Newark. So, there's obviously an appeal to save your dollars
1200 there, but we also allow people to leave those houses on 30 days' notice. Unlike, I'm sure many of
1201 the apartment owners in terms of the student population on campus.

1202 Chair Hurd: Ok.

1203 Mr. Morrison: We have difficulty, they're older, they're not modern housing, they're not modern
1204 houses. So, we have a large, deferred maintenance backlog that we need to have, plus they just
1205 don't have many of the modern room sizes, configurations that I think many people expect for
1206 today.

1207 Chair Hurd: Right, Ok. So, and excuse me, they're kind of sort of sitting in limbo, kind of, you're not,
1208 doesn't seem like you have plans to like, modernize them or improve them or...

1209 Mr. Morrison: Well, not quite true. So, we just gave a presentation to our trustees in September
1210 where we presented a draft rental housing strategic plan which was I think the gentleman was
1211 referring to, of trying to lay out for the trustees what are, what's the best strategic path forward.
1212 We're going back in November with more information to them to say this is how we think a
1213 reasonable plan would work, it balances various needs. Honestly, we don't currently have the
1214 demand to fill all 47 houses with faculty and staff.

1215 Chair Hurd: Ah, ok.

1216 Mr. Morrison: Part of that is because we're not hiring the number of faculty and staff that we may
1217 have hired 10 years ago in terms of turnover, not necessarily a total number, but just in the turnover
1218 rate. So, we're seeing what we think is a correct approach and we, but we're going to request
1219 approval or modifications from the board of trustees in November.

1220 Chair Hurd: Gotcha, ok. And then I had a question about what, you sort of at least in the 2019 plan,
1221 had about what you sort of indicated as redevelopment or infill sites, because obviously some of
1222 those are existing buildings, some are open spaces and such. Is that just sort of because of the age
1223 of the building, you sort of said that that might be a redevelopment or what was the logic when you
1224 when you looked at sort of designating that?

1225 Mr. Morrison: If it's an existing building site, the answer is yes. Due to the age of the building or the
1226 fact that the building may no longer meet modern needs...but the other sites that may not have an
1227 existing building, it really is more to densify the campus.

1228 Chair Hurd: Ok.

1229 Mr. Morrison: Because I think there are plenty of opportunities from a campus planning perspective
1230 to add additional buildings to the campus, which means less expenditure, you know, infrastructure
1231 burning carbon in terms of moving people around the campus, those sorts of things.

1232 Chair Hurd: Right, ok. And then I guess this is sort of more for Jose, but I think it probably falls into
1233 Peter's thing too. Are you finding...because obviously, you know, housing choices have changed,
1234 what people are expecting has changed and such. Are you finding that as you're as you're bringing
1235 new underserved populations into the college experience, are they coming with different
1236 expectations or needs in housing and are you having trouble meeting that, or have you? Are you
1237 finding that that's working, ok? Or are you sort of looking ahead? It's kind of an open-ended
1238 question, but I'm just sort of curious is like as the college experience diversifies, how are we
1239 accommodating those in a community that that you know, that they feel they can belong to.

1240 Mr. Riera: No, it's great. It's a great question. So, we, you know, I think very different than our, you
1241 know, colleagues who are landlords. We don't have residence halls because we're in the housing
1242 business, we have residence halls because we want students to graduate, I mean they're tools of
1243 student success. And you know, live on, a first year live on requirement is, I can give you lots of
1244 articles to show it makes a difference in helping a student really establish in their first year

1245 understand, you know, become part of a community, get a sense of belonging and engagement,
1246 and ultimately proceed to their second year, which is what we want. We do want and we do price
1247 our buildings, you know, there're moderate differences again, it's not like what you would get you
1248 know an apartment building maybe on the outskirts of Newark versus one that's being built, you
1249 know, next to Homegrown or something. I'm sure those are very different, we don't have those
1250 types of gaps, but we do have buildings that don't have air conditioning, we have buildings that are
1251 air conditioned, we have buildings where you could have a single, we have buildings where you're in
1252 a double. You have buildings where it's four people to a bathroom, or you have buildings where
1253 there's forty people to a bathroom. And so those are priced differently, right and so part of that is to
1254 meet the socio-economic differences that students, we want them to have some choice and desire
1255 and what their desired living experience is. There is a very strong culture I think built by the
1256 apartments off campus of that experience while you're at UD, I mean, that's become kind of a
1257 cultural hallmark, which is what kind of, you know, fuels this drive to want to get into the
1258 apartments off campus, So that is definitely something that lots of students are looking for is that
1259 apartment type living. But right now, for our first-year residence halls were, you know, either a very
1260 traditional residence hall, what we call racetrack residence hall, so community bathrooms,
1261 doubles, maybe triples or a suite style where you might have two doubles attached in the middle
1262 with a semi-private bathroom between the four.

1263 Chair Hurd: And then I guess to build on that. Is there any housing or any additional sort of housing
1264 things you could be doing that would help keep people in school even further, or you find that that
1265 first year is really the critical one or?

1266 Mr. Riera: So yeah, I mean we are, we do prioritize sophomores in the upper division. So, when you
1267 think of sophomore, juniors, and seniors, you know, probably I don't know, 10 years ago we used to
1268 prioritize seniors and then juniors and then sophomores. We do prioritize sophomores that's a
1269 really important year for us. You may have heard of this like colloquial concept of the sophomore
1270 slump but there is actually some research behind that. It is a time when you're starting to say, wait,
1271 is this the major I really wanted, you know, one minute you're in organic chemistry and all of a
1272 sudden, you're having an existential crisis about med school and you're thinking, oh, you know,
1273 English sounds much better. And so, we want to provide the support, and we can push those
1274 supports out in the residence halls. And so, you know, one of our desires is to continue, I would say
1275 increasing the proportion of sophomores that we have in our system and to be able to give more
1276 sophomores the ability to live on campus if they want to do so.

1277 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I guess what it seems like is that sort of once the requirement is gone, a number
1278 of your students sort of flee to living independently and such. And I didn't know if there were ways
1279 that you could entice them to kind of stay in, in University housing or if that's going to just always be
1280 a hard sell.

1281 Mr. Riera: No, I think there are and we're, and we are having those active conversations for sure.
1282 I think what I would really love to do as an educator is to, lessen the anxiety that I think first year
1283 students, I mean, we have first year students signing leases by September 15th with people that they
1284 think are their friends and it's not an uncommon story and literally less than a month later, they're
1285 not talking to any of them and they have a lease and they think that they can go to the landlord and
1286 say, well, we don't want to live together and landlords won't just say oh let's just rip up the lease.
1287 Like, they're in a legal document, right, that's legally binding. So, my goal would be to continue
1288 working towards lessening that anxiety for students, so they don't feel that kind of pressure to run
1289 out and lease. And that's a delicate balance between what our availability is, what we're able to
1290 guarantee for students, but those are the types of initiatives that we're working on in terms of the
1291 actual system and where students live.

1292 Chair Hurd: Gotcha, ok, thank you. We're going to take chair's prerogative to extend the meeting to
1293 9:30 and then I will open this for public comment, if there's any...doesn't look like it. Is anyone
1294 present who wishes to give public comment? Ok, closing public comment. Well, don't have to take
1295 any action, any follow up questions or comments?

1296 Commissioner Kadar: May I ask one more question?

1297 Chair Hurd: Yes.

1298 Commissioner Kadar: Just out of curiosity, and I don't know if you've looked at this or not, this chart
1299 right here, see that one? There it is, ok. I haven't done a mathematical evaluation, but the first

1300 chart, which is the application should indicate that there's a strong, still a very strong level of
1301 interest in the University of Delaware and the applications are up year after year. Take a look at the
1302 offered admissions and based on the fact that the applications are up year after year, the offered
1303 admissions are up year after year. Then I look at the offers accepted and for the first four years fall
1304 of 2020 to 2023 the acceptance level has been around 18 to 19%. And then all of a sudden, in the
1305 fall of 2024, it dropped to 16, that's a 16% decrease in acceptance, has anyone looked at that?
1306 What is it that the school is not offering that that it should or?

1307 Mr. Riera: So, it, it's, we don't have all night, but I'll give just a couple of, so part of the complexity is,
1308 you know my job is really, hinges on the decision making of 16,17 and 18 years old, right? And
1309 particularly with the fall 2024, there were because of the delays and FAFSA and, what that meant
1310 was no university could get the financial aid packages to students in a timely fashion. And so, in
1311 other words, we weren't sure....Well, we, you know based on sort of years of data we have a good
1312 sense of what happens in state no matter what because the those the financial aid we give whether
1313 it's through our First State Promise program, which used to be called Commitment to Delawareans,
1314 that's been fairly consistent, so most Delawareans have a decent sense. But a lot of the growth in
1315 applications has come from out of state, and so the further away you start to get interest in the
1316 further away students are, so outside of your New Yorks and Marylands and New Jersey area, the
1317 yield does tend to go down, that's with every school. So, the further away from home the less likely
1318 students are to come. That that's one.

1319 Two, the competitiveness in terms of the type of students, so we a lot of those applications were
1320 coming from stronger students academically as well. So, we're beginning to compete with some
1321 really strong academic institutions. Not as well as we'd like to because the numbers are going
1322 down, but at least we're seeing candidates from and, because we see many of them will tell us
1323 where they wind up going if they don't come to University of Delaware. So, so we're seeing a trend of
1324 more students applying to some of the most selective schools, some of the Ivys. And we're losing
1325 more than we'd like to, but that's certainly a strategy we want to try to work on and correct, but
1326 that's why in part. So, it's the type of students who are applying is slightly changing, but that's
1327 gonna, in the in the further way, so that, that all factors into to the yield.

1328 Commissioner Kadar: I'm not implying that there's a crisis there because that's only one data point.

1329 Mr. Riera: Yeah no, but I can talk that all day. But I just wanted you to know we do, we absolutely do
1330 factor in all those things.

1331 Commissioner Kadar: I was just curious thank you very much.

1332 Mr. Riera: And I will say again with the enrollment cliff 15%, that doesn't mean there's going to be
1333 15% less at every institution there's going to be some winners, and there's going to be some losers,
1334 right? So that, so the volatility that, that's really something we have to really keep an eye on, so, but
1335 thank you.

1336 Chair Hurd: Alright, thank you all, thank you for coming. And hopefully we can do this more
1337 frequently or more annually or something.

1338 Mr. Morrison: Do you mind if I just had one point? Maybe it would help, there was a request about,
1339 do you have access to the Student Experience Master Plan for example. All of you should know on
1340 the Facilities website if you go to the Planning and Project Delivery area of that website, we post all
1341 of our campus master planning documents. So, you can go there and link onto documents from
1342 2012, 2016. So, I think that might you know, help you not only just gather more information as you
1343 do your good work but also give you some context as well of what, or how things may have
1344 developed, or what one idea is carried through for a decade or something like that.

1345 Chair Hurd: All right.

1346 Mr. Morrison: So, it would be, if you go to facilities.udel.edu and on the home page if you scroll the
1347 bottom, you'll see different departments that report to, into the organization. The one to look for is
1348 Planning and Project Delivery, and in that area, you'll see when I'll say Campus Planning or Campus
1349 Plans, you click on that, and you'll see a list of campus plans.

1350 Commissioner Silverman: Thank you very much.

1351 Chair Hurd: All right and with that, we are adjourned.

1352 **The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.**

1353 Respectfully submitted,
1354
1355 Karl Kadar, Secretary
1356 As transcribed by Katelyn Dinsmore
1357 Planning and Development Department Administrative Professional I