

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 10, 2024

MEETING CONVENED: 7:02 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Cambron, Helga Huntley, Andrew O'Donnell, John Mateyko, George Irvine, Sheila Smith

STAFF: Jordan Herring, Administrative Professional I
Jeff Martindale, Chief Procurement & Projects Officer

Dr. Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 13, 2024:

MOTION BY DR. HUNTLEY, SECONDED BY MR. CAMBRON: THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION (CAC) APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 13, 2024 MEETING.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6 TO 0.

AYE: CAMBRON, HUNTLEY, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, IRVINE, SMITH.

NAY: 0.

ABSTAIN: 0.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

John Miser asked if there is a direct email address specific to the CAC.

Dr. Huntley advised to correspond with Jordan Herring, Administrative Professional I, about sending information to the commission.

3. UPDATES FROM THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE – JEFF MARTINDALE (10 MINUTES)

Jeff Martindale, Chief Procurement & Projects Officer, estimated the rough draft of the revised Sustainability Plan will be ready to be shared with the CAC in October. When the CAC receives and reviews this draft, they can advise Mr. Martindale on items that need to be edited, updated, or changed at the following meeting.

Ms. Smith asked if the revised plan includes details on what has been accomplished, is ongoing, or has received attention from City staff.

Mr. Martindale stated the outline of the draft currently includes an introduction, key successes, major challenges (such as the pandemic), and line-by-line analyses of the Sustainability Plan's goals that note if they are in-progress or completed.

4. BUDGET STATUS REVIEW – JEFF MARTINDALE (10 MINUTES)

Mr. Martindale stated the CAC has allocated \$63,000 of their total 2024 budget. The allocations have been designated but not yet fully encumbered. He noted that at the beginning of the year, the CAC often discusses the previous year's allocations that were only partially or not at all encumbered. The CAC has \$37,000 remaining in the budget if all their allocations are encumbered, and two meetings remaining before encumbering any funding will become a substantial challenge.

Dr. Huntley believed it would be beneficial for the CAC to allocate the rest of their budget in October to give the City time to encumber the funds and implement their ideas. While November is the last opportunity for the CAC to spend their funds, it is not optimal and will still be difficult to ensure their allocations are encumbered. She asked if the CAC-funded Christianstead Bridge repair project has begun.

Mr. Martindale stated the funding has been at least encumbered.

Dr. Huntley asked if there are still funds remaining in the CAC's allocation for the tree giveaway program.

Mr. Martindale confirmed, noting the CAC's allocation covered both the spring and fall giveaways.

Dr. Huntley asked when the fall tree giveaway is scheduled to be held.

Ms. Smith stated it is scheduled for October 10th.

Dr. Huntley noted the funding allocated for the Newark Center for Creative Learning (NCCL) has been encumbered. She asked about the status of the allocation toward the Community Development/Revenue Sharing program.

Mr. Martindale did not have any updates; however, the money was designated for the program. He could not recall the exact provisions of the allocation.

Ms. Herring recounted the CAC voted to use their \$20,000 allocation to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)/Revenue Sharing fund toward HVAC electrification and insulation projects.

Dr. Huntley stated the CAC's decision was that whoever administers that program can allocate the CAC's contribution towards applicants for electrification grants. However, it was uncertain how many grants this amount would provide.

Mr. Martindale stated he would investigate and provide an update in October.

Dr. Huntley noted any unencumbered funds in the CAC's budget will return to the City reserves to spend on other projects, but they may not necessarily be conservation-oriented. If the CAC wishes for this money to go toward conservation projects, they should work to allocate that funding in October. She asked for the other members of the CAC to share their ideas and proposals on how to spend the remaining \$37,000 of the budget. She asked for clarification whether the CAC's funding could be moved from the

operating budget to the capital budget for a particular project, and whether that funding would still count as being encumbered even if it is not spent until the next year.

Mr. Martindale stated if the City authorizes a capital budget amendment, it would roll over into the subsequent year. The City's fiscal year follows a standard calendar year.

Ms. Smith asked if the funds are encumbered, how far into the next fiscal year can the money roll over, or must the purchase order already be submitted.

Mr. Martindale stated unless the funding is being transferred to the capital budget, the money needs to be spent by December 31st.

Mr. Irvine asked for Mr. Martindale to describe an allowable capital budget expense.

Mr. Martindale explained these typically are infrastructure improvement or vehicle replacement projects.

Mr. Irvine suggested spending the remaining \$37,000 in a capital project, since it can roll over and would not burden staff to spend the money by the end of the year. The ongoing tree/meadow inventory project in Parks & Recreation may be a good allocation, since it is already enacted, has been endorsed by the CAC in the past, and would complement the City's tree canopy. He noted once the City receives the data from the inventory, there will likely be a recommendation or realization that may need funding as a result of the inventory. It could be beneficial to allocate funding in anticipation for this result.

Dr. Huntley asked which of Mr. Irvine's suggestions would be eligible for the capital budget.

Mr. Martindale stated most of Parks & Recreation's maintenance efforts are included in the operating budget because they correlate to the department's day-to-day expenses. However, staff could argue inventory-allocated funding could instead be allocated in the capital budget.

Mr. Irvine asked if a tree/meadow inventory project could be used as an item to pay for follow-up work from the tree canopy inventory.

Mr. Martindale believed that would qualify as part of the operating budget. He noted the City's FY2025 budget process is underway and there is currently no indication the CAC will not receive \$100,000 for their budget. The tree canopy inventory is estimated to be completed in March or April 2025.

Ms. Smith wondered if the Parks & Recreation Department could ask the CAC for funding assistance if they have a project that aligns with the CAC's goals, such as purchasing more trees or funding extra employee pay to complete their tree canopy tasks. She suggested reminding the department they can request funds for such circumstances.

Mr. Irvine wanted to keep tree canopy inventory follow-up projects in mind as potential initiatives for the next fiscal year, as that data could show some patterns the CAC could act upon with their funding and either City staff or third-party assistance. He believed next year, the CAC should explore the possibility of micropower generation from water in the city. He noted Newark was founded around power mills. He had been researching federal grants related to this initiative but had not yet found any that are a perfect

match for a municipality like Newark. The CAC could set money aside and leverage other funding opportunities for this initiative.

Dr. Huntley wanted to discuss this issue when the Electric Department speaks at the next CAC meeting. While this discussion will not be comprehensive, it will begin conversations about this topic for the future.

Ms. Smith asked if there are other methods to generate power from moving water besides dams and mills.

Mr. Irvine stated power can be generated from microgenerators made of turbines that are protected from the water and debris in the water through small physical infrastructure built off the shore. He was looking forward to discussing this initiative with the Electric Department.

Mr. Martindale noted this will involve the Public Works & Water Resources (PWWR) Department as well, but staff will likely be focused on PFAS mitigation for the next two years.

Mr. Irvine believed funding could be used for this initiative as a small-scale demonstration project, such as using creeks or rivers.

Mr. Cambron agreed with moving funding into the capital budget. However, it is difficult to do so without knowing what capital projects are eligible and feasible.

Mr. Martindale believed that would be a better discussion to have in 2025. He noted the CAC 2023 allocation toward an electric van for the Parking Division is an example of an allocation that turned into a capital expense. The vehicle was not purchased until 2024, but the CAC's contribution supported that conversion and was therefore rolled over through the capital budget.

Mr. Cambron understood how that is eligible to be treated as a capital expense as the van is an asset that will depreciate over time. He asked how an item such as a tree canopy inventory might also be able to be treated as a depreciating asset.

Dr. Huntley noted trees depreciate, hence why the inventory could be included.

Mr. Martindale stated this is a good point that staff have discussed with the Parks & Recreation Department. For the last 3 – 4 years, ash tree removal efforts have been included within the capital budget. However, it has been determined this is not the optimal location for that expense, so in the FY2025 budget it will be moved to the operating budget. The inventory may also end up being an operating expense as part of the process.

Mr. Cambron noted the CAC has frequently discussed light pollution mitigation. He wondered if there are any lighting projects that might be candidates for capital budget funding, because this may involve purchasing assets that could depreciate over 10+ years. He believed larger allocations could make a more significant dent in light pollution issues than smaller allocations.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there is room to expand the McKee's solar park.

Mr. Martindale stated the City capped it out as part of the energy savings performance contract.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there are other suitable locations.

Mr. Martindale stated the City is currently investigating to find that answer. There was a bid opening for a warehouse expansion project at the Maintenance Yard, which currently holds the Yard's solar panels. Staff have plans to design the roof to be strong enough to include additional solar panels.

Dr. Huntley asked for the timeline of this project.

Mr. Martindale stated a discussion on solar panels for this expansion will be slated for 2026. The construction project will take approximately six months and will likely not begin until spring of 2025.

Dr. Huntley asked if the reservoir, which currently hosts solar panels, is also maxed out.

Mr. Martindale confirmed. There have also been discussions of solar canopies in City parking lots. He anticipates once the City commits to the implementation of one, they will likely commit to several, but it is a matter of finding the necessary funding to make the initial leap.

Ms. Smith asked if pavilions in City parks could hold solar panels.

Mr. Martindale stated it would not be a cost-effective effort.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there are any City vehicles scheduled for replacement that could be replaced with electric vehicle (EV) alternatives.

Mr. Martindale stated he would check the capital budget. It is typical in the budget process for management to meet with the fleet maintenance mechanics to discuss what equipment is due for replacement. However, this conversation has not occurred this year due to retirement of 3 of the 5 fleet maintenance mechanics (including the lead).

Mr. O'Donnell noted EVs do not require as much maintenance as gasoline-powered vehicles.

Mr. Martindale agreed, but staff do not know what can be replaced by an EV without discussing with the mechanics.

Mr. O'Donnell believed investing in the statewide Energize Delaware fund could be a beneficial contribution from the budget, as it can help homeowners with differing income levels, reduces emissions, and improves efficiency. He noted this funding could be designated to only go toward residents within Newark's City limits.

Mr. Martindale noted the weatherization projects with the Newark Housing Authority (NHA) occurred around the same time as these initial discussions regarding Energize Delaware. However, the weatherization projects never came to fruition due to the lack of a grant application from NHA. This item could be revisited in the future.

Dr. Huntley asked if NHA moved forward with the weatherization project despite not applying for a grant.

Mr. Martindale responded in the negative. The CAC allocated funding should an application come through, but the City and CAC were not responsible for monitoring the project. The money was never encumbered as Energize Delaware did not receive a grant application from NHA.

Mr. O'Donnell stated it is a simple process to send the funding to Energize Delaware and does not run the same risks as other projects where the CAC could allocate funding, but the funding is not actually used.

Ms. Smith wanted to use CAC funding to mitigate speeding. She wondered if there are enough speed monitoring signs throughout the City and if it would be beneficial for the CAC to provide funding for the City to obtain more. However, she was unsure if the upcoming speed camera purchase and associated signage would make these signs obsolete. There are many different signs that could be used by the City, and she believed this would be an inexpensive initiative to support. She also wanted to pursue adding more practical bike racks, which will improve bikeability in Newark. The CAC has also discussed providing bicyclists with lights. She wanted to work with the City and NCCL to reduce lighting that is pouring into Phillips Park, such as through installing dark sky lighting on City buildings and properties.

Dr. Huntley noted she had suggested implementing signage to assist EV drivers in finding charging stations around town. She recalled signage surrounding the historic train station's chargers, but not for chargers on City properties and in City lots. She was unsure how much this effort would cost. Another idea was to subsidize the renewable energy opt-in program to improve its affordability but was unsure of the current cost and if contributing an allocation of \$10,000 would make a significant impact. She asked if Mr. Martindale could provide an estimate.

Mr. Martindale stated this is dependent on how many people opt-in to the program. This size of an allocation could go a long way for a small number of individuals, but not for a large number.

Mr. O'Donnell stated using that funding to opt-in all the municipal buildings would benefit everyone in the City of Newark.

Mr. Martindale explained the City bills itself for electric for the municipal buildings', but he was unsure what that figure currently looks like.

Dr. Huntley stated this is a benefit for the City, as it could bill itself the renewable energy rate if it bills itself for electricity.

Mr. Cambron asked if the City is already doing this.

Mr. Martindale did not believe so. He was aware 2019 was used as the baseline year in the greenhouse gas inventory, so it does not account for much of the solar that has been installed since. The City had 2,918 megatons in CO2 emissions, which was two thirds of the total emissions output for the baseline years. This means the municipal building has contributed less than 1% towards the total emissions in Newark.

Dr. Huntley stated it could be a good promotion for the City to state the municipal building is using 100% renewable energy. She asked if the City has used the greenhouse gas inventory other than to review its data.

Mr. Martindale noted the greenhouse gas inventory was included in the Sustainability Plan revisions. Additionally, the City is investigating grant opportunities for a climate action plan. The next step in the process would be to make something actionable out of the data from the inventory. Currently, he is looking into the Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant (EECBG), which is a federal, non-competitive grant that has already selected a vendor to help municipalities with climate action plans.

Dr. Huntley asked if Mr. Martindale would be able to assign monetary values to these ideas and distribute them to the CAC prior to their next meeting.

Mr. Martindale agreed.

Ms. Smith asked what the timeline is for implementing the speed cameras and its correlating signage. She suggested adding language to the “Welcome to Newark” signs that would encourage drivers to slow down.

Mr. Martindale stated he and Former Parks & Recreation Director Joe Spadafino were discussing updating the signs prior to Mr. Spadafino’s recent retirement. This discussion can be continued in the longer term. He noted the City will have one speed camera that will be rotating to different locations, but the correlating signage will always be posted along all the included roads.

Ms. Smith asked if the City is looking to add another camera to the program in the future.

Mr. Martindale responded in the affirmative, but this will likely not need CAC assistance to obtain as they should pay for themselves.

5. COMMUNITY DAY: LAST-MINUTE NEEDS – MIKE CAMBRON (10 MINUTES)

Mr. Cambron noted Community Day is approaching. He only needed to obtain items from Ms. Smith. He invited other members of the CAC to notify him if they are available to spend some time at their booth.

Dr. Huntley stated she would help Mr. Cambron set up for the event but had conflicts that prevented her from staying.

Mr. O’Donnell stated he would attempt to be at Community Day for the entire event.

Mr. Cambron state he would read the vendor email he received from Parks & Recreation and would forward it to the other members of the CAC who will attend.

Ms. Herring noted the email includes a map that will show the location of the CAC’s stall.

Dr. Huntley asked if the City could provide the CAC with a table for Community Day.

Mr. Martindale stated he would provide one if the Parks & Recreation Department cannot. He would coordinate with Mr. Cambron for when and where to provide him with the canopy and tablecloth.

Mr. Martindale noted he also has shirts for the CAC members.

Ms. Smith stated she would help with the booth at Community Day for a short period of time between 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Mr. Cambron clarified Community Day is from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mr. Irvine stated he would attend for a fraction of the day, especially in the later hours to help tear down.

Dr. Huntley stated the weather report for the day looked sunny.

Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Cambron coordinated to have any printouts for the event.

Mr. Cambron responded in the negative.

Ms. Smith believed the supplies from the previous year would be sufficient to cover this year's stall.

Mr. Irvine asked what activity the CAC is using to generate input from the public.

Ms. Smith noted this will be the same as the previous year, where individuals who stop to speak with the CAC could give their input on a board listing the themes of the Sustainability Plan. The individuals who participated would then be entered into a raffle to receive a tree. There are still bags and flyers the CAC could give out to the public.

Mr. Cambron and Ms. Smith coordinated when to exchange the materials and supplies.

6. FOLLOW-UP ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS RECOMMENDATION – HELGA HUNTLEY (5 MINUTES)

Dr. Huntley noted at their September meeting, the CAC passed a recommendation to ask City Council to acknowledge climate change impacts in their assessments of public health, safety and welfare. Following the recommendation, she had a conversation with City Manager Tom Coleman & Planning & Development Director Renee Bensley about their impression of the CAC's recommendation. Ms. Bensley strongly recommended the CAC ask City Council to clarify it as a consideration in the Zoning Code by ordinance instead of resolution, due to the heavier legal weight. Additionally, one Councilmember did request for this recommendation to be a formal item of review on an agenda, but she had not yet been informed when it will be discussed. She will notify the CAC as soon as she receives word of when this item will be heard by Council. She plans to attend that Council Meeting to speak on the recommendation when scheduled. She suggested that she would inform Council, based on the Planning & Development Director's recommendation, the CAC recommends the City Council consider their recommendation through ordinance changes instead of a resolution. As this recommendation was already voted on by the CAC, she wanted the CAC to indicate if they approved her making that verbal amendment to the recommendation when it is discussed by City Council.

Ms. Smith asked if Dr. Huntley could elaborate on the differences between the previously approved recommendation and the suggestions made by Ms. Bensley.

Dr. Huntley explained the CAC's recommendation suggests adopting a resolution, which is a formal statement voted on by City Council. Resolutions often recognize and acknowledge events. They are easier to pass but do not have the same legal weight as an ordinance. Ordinances are harder to pass but are cemented

in City Code and have significant legal weight.

Ms. Smith asked how zoning impacts their recommendation.

Dr. Huntley stated the Zoning Code requires assessments on public health, safety and welfare when approving development projects. The CAC's recommendation would be to amend this part of the Zoning Code to clarify these assessments should also include a consideration of climate change impacts. The current approved recommendation did not specify the scope as they wanted to leave that to City Council to determine. She believed it should be cemented in Code rather than adopted as a resolution.

Mr. Mateyko noted this to be a complex legal topic and there is currently not an attorney present to provide the CAC with guidance. He believed the statement created by the CAC has two components. The first component is that City Council finds that climate change impacts are a risk and danger to public health, safety, and welfare. He believed Council should adopt this portion alone as a resolution. However, he believed both the first and second component, which is the remainder of the statement, could be added into Zoning Code. He believed the first component should still be adopted as a resolution in addition to be included in the Zoning Code as it is a broader idea that affects the entirety of the City's operations. However, it could be problematic to include the same statement in two different areas due to the potential amendments to either iteration.

Dr. Huntley did not believe the CAC needs the City Solicitor to provide them with legal advice on this topic as they will not be amending the code themselves. The CAC's recommendation to Council should be to work with the City's attorney to give this idea legal weight.

Mr. Mateyko stated this recommendation provides the City with a different way of thinking that he does not often see expressed in the United States government. He reiterated his belief that the first portion of their recommendation should stay as a resolution.

Dr. Huntley explained Ms. Bensley's perspective, from the Planning Department, was that a resolution does not have as strong of an impact as an ordinance. If the CAC wants their recommendation to be adopted and enforced, it should be in the form of an ordinance to do so.

Ms. Herring noted the recommendation submitted by the CAC has already been received by Council. If they want to amend the recommendation itself, it will need to be rewritten, voted on, and submitted once more to Council through the process.

Dr. Huntley understood and clarified she was looking for approval from the CAC to make verbal suggestions to implement this recommendation within Zoning Code when Council discuss this at one of their meetings.

Ms. Smith agreed with Dr. Huntley, as the job of the CAC is not to write and implement these changes themselves but instead provide Council with suggestions, ideas, and ask for their consideration. It is the City and Council's job to decide how to implement the CAC's recommendations.

Mr. O'Donnell noted a resolution is a statement that makes an acknowledgement or recognition, such as to declare "National Donut Day." However, it does not have any legal grounding to it.

Dr. Huntley stated she will verbally introduce this recommendation when it is discussed by City Council. In her comments, she will note the CAC would like Council to determine what is the most effective

way to legally put it into code.

Ms. Smith noted she had once been told these ideas would not be implemented until there is an internal contact with enough power that agrees with them. She suggested communicating these ideas to their respective Councilmembers, so the CAC's ideas are taken seriously. She would attend that Council meeting to show her support for the recommendation.

Mr. Irvine noted the CAC has raised this concern in relation to zoning. When the gas station project on South College Avenue came forward for consideration in January, no-one considered the true cost to the City related to climate change. The CAC is doing their duty to raise attention to these issues and are framing a problem, which is the gap in Code that does not allow the Planning Commission or Council to consider these factors when considering a project. Changing the Code will give Council legal grounds to give that consideration. He believed presenting this problem as an identified shortcoming that does not adequately protect the City from future costs will be beneficial.

Dr. Huntley thanked Mr. Irvine for communicating this idea in financial and legal terms as that will likely resonate with Council.

Mr. Irvine agreed, since this is a liability that will be passed down to Council to potentially be paid for. Adjusting the efficiency in City Code serves to prepare for these costs.

Mr. Cambron agreed with Dr. Huntley's idea.

7. LIGHT POLLUTION: IDENTIFICATION OF CONCERNS AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS – SHEILA SMITH (20 MINUTES)

Ms. Smith believed this process began with the previous discussions of the Lights Out initiative, and getting Council approval of the suggestion to reduce lighting at certain times of the year and certain times of the day. These concerns have increased due to additional data from the Dark Sky studies on the impacts of over-lighting. These impacts affect humans, animals, and even plants throughout the year through various issues such as lack of sleep and its resulting health impacts. While the Lights Out initiative is a great concept to protect birds, the CAC's charge is to protect all things living. Council has previously approved a recommendation to reduce lighting in observance of bird migration, but Ms. Smith could not recall any noteworthy changes made as a result. She stated she never received specific data from the City correlating to the light reduction on Main Street. She wants to find information and programs that indicate what standards to follow and how the City's current practices compare to them. She noted the language used (lumens, wattage, amps) to refer to streetlights can be rather confusing, and she preferred to have more clarity, as what "comes out" of a light is different than what hits the ground.

Mr. O'Donnell noted these terms refer to the efficiency of the bulbs themselves, for example, a bulb could have high wattage but may not produce a lot of light.

Ms. Smith wanted further specification on what a bulb emits verse what hits the ground. She wanted solid data to know how a light should be reduced if she wanted to reduce a light's illumination radius.

Mr. Cambron believed for that purpose, lumens would need to be reduced.

Ms. Smith noted she had numerous questions related to this topic: is there a national standard, is

there a method for measuring, and is there an individual willing to measure and evaluate where the City can reduce lighting. In August 2021, she proposed an idea to reduce light pollution by using dark sky methods at Phillips Park, which included motion-detection lights, lumen reduction, and downshielding. With dark sky lighting, the target of the lighting is the only thing that will be illuminated. She shared evidence to indicate there is heavy over-lighting at Phillips Park and wanted the lights in and near the park to be addressed. She believed over-lighting at the Maintenance Yard and NCCL contribute to this problem. She noted reducing lighting is an inexpensive effort that the CAC can allocate their funding towards.

Dr. Huntley recalled a City staff member telling the CAC that the Police Department conducted a study where they changed the brightness of the streetlights and experimented to determine what the acceptable minimum lighting was. She asked Mr. Martindale if this was true.

Mr. Martindale did not recall.

Dr. Huntley asked if he knew how the City decided how bright the streetlights should be.

Ms. Smith noted when Council considered the recommendation to reduce lighting, the Police Department was concerned that the "Lights Out" title misled residents to believing lights were going to be eliminated entirely. However, it was clarified this program only refers to the minimum brightness.

Dr. Huntley asked if the lights are dimmable City-wide.

Mr. Martindale stated street and pedestrian lights are dimmable City-wide, but park lights are not included.

Ms. Smith asked if there is a way to know if an area is over-lit and if the lighting can be reduced in certain areas.

Mr. Martindale stated a lighting analysis would be necessary, which would likely be conducted through a consulting firm. He recalled one was done with the previous lights in the municipal parking lot to determine what upgrades could be done. The current lights in the municipal parking lot are dark sky compliant.

Ms. Smith asked how much time has passed since the implementation of these lights, noting the definition of dark sky compliant may have changed since the upgrades.

Mr. Martindale responded these lights were installed this year, so hopefully the values of compliance have not changed within the previous six months.

Ms. Smith noted there is a way to measure lighting along with a minimum safety requirement. Over time, the City could work to reduce lighting to that minimum.

Mr. Martindale stated the minimum safety standard may be more subjective than objective.

Ms. Smith stated she was specifically referring to foot candles, as two lights of the same wattage and lumens could have different size foot candles if their heights are different. These factors are all considered when dark sky lighting is implemented at locations such as football fields.

Dr. Huntley asked if there are any motion-activated City streetlights.

Mr. Martindale was aware there are indoor lights at the City building that are motion-activated, but he was not aware of any streetlights that are motion-activated.

Mr. Irvine stated there is a section in Delaware Code (enacted in 2005 and amended in 2010) that addresses minimum lighting standards. It uses the language, "...the minimum luminants adequate for the intended purposes used with consideration given to nationally recognized standards." There is a reference to 1800 lumens, but it may be wise to look at this Code because in the absence of a City of Newark light pollution ordinance, the State's Code could be a reference point.

Ms. Smith recalled New Castle County adopted a light pollution ordinance this previous spring which refers mostly to new construction. The ordinance revolves around what is light pollution and light trespass. She reiterated dark sky standards are to only illuminate the targeted area for lighting.

Mr. Mateyko noted light pollution is easier to combat than other types of pollution in today's climate. The impacts on all species are the product of compounding different types of pollution and affected species even more than one type of pollution alone. It is inexpensive to reduce the brightness of lights and shine light only where it is necessary. Part of those pollution impacts to health may come from the lack of downshielding, which leads to light trespass.

Ms. Smith stated multiple light studies have concluded this is an issue and the solution is relatively inexpensive, as light reduction saves energy and money. Simple motion detector bulbs are now available for retail purchase.

Mr. O'Donnell agreed with Ms. Smith. One way to immediately begin implementing these ideas and see the effects are to collect data from a light survey regarding shielding, then discuss that data next meeting. Another way is to create and implement a light pollution ordinance, such as by mandating that all new City projects are required to follow dark sky lighting standards.

Mr. Cambron supported the idea of motion detector sensors in lighting, and only lighting what is necessary. He would only add the provision to shine light at the times it is needed.

Ms. Smith stated lighting only when necessary is included in Dark Sky's five lighting principles. She noted light pollution is decimating insect populations.

Mr. Cambron stated the warmer color lighting temperatures are less harmful to species than cooler lighting temperatures.

Mr. Irvine noted New Castle County's light pollution ordinance could also serve as a reference example for this issue. The CAC could make a similar recommendation for an ordinance to this effect.

Dr. Huntley noted there are two different sides to addressing light pollution: the abilities of private entities/individuals, and the abilities of the City. She suggested pursuing both avenues. She would discuss with Ms. Smith which avenue to prioritize and schedule first, and the other will be pursued further down the line.

8. BIKEABILITY/WALKABILITY/TRANSIT: IDENTIFICATION OF CONCERNS AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS – SHEILA SMITH/MIKE CAMBRON

Ms. Smith believed slowing down traffic and increasing the comfortability of City streets is the first step to improving walkability and bikeability. She noted the City has done an amazing job with bike paths and the correlating infrastructure. An article from the New York Times indicated driving behaviors have drastically changed over the last 4 years, which is leading to more deadly pedestrian and vehicle accidents. She noted bike paths and methods of traffic calming are actively being pursued by the City. However, she wrote a letter to the Public Works & Water Resources (PWWR) Department and the Police Department specifically regarding speeding on Elkton Road. Running red lights and stop signs are especially common nowadays. She was aware this is an issue related to speeding enforcement and wished to see more flashing signs on the road either indicating a driver's current speed or asking them to slow down.

She understood signage will be a part of the upcoming speed camera implementation. Bicyclists who routinely ride throughout the City have commented certain intersections are extreme problem areas for speeding. She suggested using the speed signs to collect data on the number of vehicles that are speeding. The municipal building is a good example of a cool and well-shaded building, and there should be more buildings like it throughout the City. Additionally, large shade trees are beginning to come down, but are not being replaced.

Dr. Huntley stated Ms. Smith mentioned significant issues while bringing up ideas for solutions the CAC could support: speed monitoring signs and planting more trees to improve street comfortability. However, the CAC needs to determine how exactly to tackle the other speed reduction efforts she mentioned. These are very concrete steps the CAC can take. As some of these items are financial, the CAC can put "price tags" to each solution once they receive their full budget estimate and see what items they can fund without additional buy-in from the City.

Ms. Smith asked if there are bike racks in every City park.

Dr. Huntley responded in the negative. There is also not a curb cut in front of the George Wilson Center (GWC) to allow bicyclists to turn directly from their bike lanes onto the property.

Mr. Cambron noted very shortly after he moved to Newark, he was almost involved in a potentially deadly traffic accident while riding his bike. If he had moved right after the traffic light turned green, instead of looking to his left, a van would have hit and likely killed him. He believed the driver of this van was likely looking at their phone. He believed the smartphone to be the deadliest tool ever to be given to drivers due to how distracting it is. He usually rides along the isolated bike paths around the city as they are normally safer than bicycling on City streets. He agreed traffic needs to slow down, and protected bike lanes would better improve safety for bicyclists. He noted he has lived in multiple cities outside of the United States, and nearly all of them closed their main shopping corridors to vehicle traffic. He wondered, with the adjacent streets and the levels of traffic they host, why at least a portion of Main Street is not closed to vehicle traffic.

Dr. Huntley stated during the pandemic, all the restaurants on Main Street were closed since they could not allow patrons inside. Therefore, the City tried to give restaurants the opportunity to serve patrons outdoors – these were called "Al-Fresco" nights. During this period, on Wednesday evenings, the City closed a portion of Main Street to vehicle traffic. However, when the pandemic ended, Main Street restaurants did not want to continue this practice as they worried this was negatively impacting their businesses. She would greatly prefer a pedestrian Main Street as she did not see a reason for there to be cars. However, the

businesses in this area fear they will not be sustained if their customers cannot drive to them.

Mr. Cambron did not believe the traffic on Main Street is benefiting a business' success.

Mr. Irvine agreed stating these are good ideas and wanted to explore how to put them into action.

Mr. O'Donnell wanted to see Main Street close to traffic at least once a week to compare data for its businesses. He believed an electric trolley that runs through Main Street would be beneficial during this period. Additionally, he believed an idea of an automatic spike strip to punish speeding drivers going a certain amount over the speed limit would help to enforce speeding on Main Street, however, this may be outside of the CAC's purview.

Dr. Huntley stated speed camera enforcement is a less punishing version of Mr. O'Donnell's idea, as drivers going more than 10 mph over the speed limit will automatically be ticketed.

Ms. Smith noted they will likely have a better chance of instituting these ideas through ordinance enforcement if they have support from City staff.

Mr. Mateyko stated except for diet and food systems, walkability is the largest opportunity for climate change mitigation according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This is an idea that is designed around people rather than automobiles. He believed currently the City of Newark is designed around the automobile, and not the regular human being, which is the opposite of how it was in the past.

Mr. Martindale stated 90% of the roads in Newark are owned by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), so many of these ideas will require State buy-in. Even the Al-Fresco events required a DelDOT permit to be able to execute them, and the City pled with DelDOT to expedite the review of those permits. Shutting down Main Street required a lot of staff work to accomplish.

Dr. Huntley stated it is still possible.

Mr. Martindale agreed, but there are additional steps that are outside of the City's control.

9. NATURALIZED LANDSCAPING: IDENTIFICATION OF CONCERNS AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS – JOHN MATEYKO (20 MINUTES)

Postponed.

10. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST

Dr. Huntley noted Ms. Smith will write an article on shade trees to be published around the time of the fall tree giveaway. Mr. Mateyko is queued to write an article for a subsequent month.

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None.

12. NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 8, 2024

MOTION BY DR. HUNTLEY, SECONDED BY MR. O'DONNELL: TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Jordan Herring
Administrative Professional I

/jh