

CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE

PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

MICROSOFT TEAMS
MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON

SEPTEMBER 2, 2025
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
Kazy Tauginas
Chris Williamson

Staff Present:

Paul Bilodeau, City Solicitor
Renee Bensley, Director of Planning and Development
Jessica Ramos-Velazquez, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Katelyn Dinsmore, Administrative Professional I
Mike Fortner, Senior Planner

Staff Virtual:

Lauren Dykes, Community Planner

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

Chair Hurd: Alright good evening, everyone and welcome to the September 2nd, 2025, City of Newark Planning Commission meeting. We are conducting this hybrid meeting through the Microsoft Teams platform, and I would like to provide these guidelines for the meeting structure, so everyone is able to participate. Katie Dinsmore, our Administrative Assistant, will be managing the cameras, chat, and general meeting logistics at the beginning of each agenda item I will call on the related Staff Member to present, followed by the applicant for any land use item. For land use items we will take public comment first and then comments and questions from the Commissioners after the Applicant. I will call on each Commissioner on the dais for comments and questions of the presenter followed by Commissioners online. If a Commissioner has additional comments, they would like to add later they should ask the Chair to be recognized again after all members have had the opportunity to speak. For any item open to public comment we'll read into the recorded comments received prior to the meeting followed by open public comment. If members of the public would like to comment on an agenda item and are attending in person, we ask that they sign up on the sheet near the entrance so we can get the spelling of your name correct and we will be called on to speak at the appropriate time. If members of the public attending virtually would like to comment they should use the hand raising function in Microsoft Teams to signal the meeting organizer that

they would like to speak. All speakers must identify themselves prior to speaking, public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person and must pertain to the item under consideration. Comments in the Microsoft Teams chat will not be considered part of the public record for the meeting unless they are requested to be read into the record. After public comment and the Commissioners discussion, we will have the motions and voting by roll call, Commissioners will need to articulate the reasons for their vote for all land use items, and all votes must be audible. If anyone in the meeting room is on Teams, please mute your microphone and turn off your speakers. In addition, for Commissioners on the dais, unless you are speaking, please mute your microphones so the camera doesn't automatically track to you. If there are any issues during the meeting, we may adjust these guidelines if necessary. The City of Newark strives to make our public meetings accessible. While City is committed to this access pursuant to 29 Delaware Code 10006A, technological failure does not affect the validity of these meetings, nor the validity of any action taken in these meetings.

1. Chair's Remarks

Chair Hurd: That takes us item one chair's remarks, I want to commend Commissioner Tauginas on the successful second annual Newark, let me get this right, Newark Independent Film Festival. I went to more days this time than last year and it was worth it. It was in the new Chapel Street Players building which is a lovely facility. And I wanted to say one of the pleasures of this job is to go and see the things that we made happen, because that was a project that we had approved the rezoning we had approved some of their weird sort of lot things so that they could make the theater happen. And it's happening and it is great, and it is a benefit to the City. So good job.

2. Minutes

Chair Hurd: That takes us to item 2 review and approval of the August 5th, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Any corrections or comments...besides the one you emailed. Ok, seeing no further, no others, the minutes are approved by acclamation.

3. Review and consideration of a Comprehensive Development Plan Amendment changing the zoning designation from "University" to "Residential, Low Density" for the property located at 305 Ashley Road.

Chair Hurd: Takes us to item 3 review and consideration of a Comprehensive Development Plan Amendment changing the zoning designation from "University" to "Residential, Low Density" for the property located at 305 Ashley Road. Director Bensley who is presenting?

Director Bensley: I will start, and the applicant is here this evening if they have anything we want to add after. So, this one is fairly straightforward. The University of Delaware is currently in the process of selling off several of the single-family homes, properties that they own, and the 305 Ashley is one of those properties. We've brought it to you this evening in part because the applicant is looking to move forward with constructing a new building, another single-family home on that lot and we wanted to make sure everything was in alignment. When we went through the Comp Plan, we did note that the property had been incorrectly designated in the Comp Plan in the first place, it should have been "University" it was actually "Residential, Low Density". But we did want to bring this forward and we're going to be bringing it forward to Council in part because what usually will trigger the County to revert the zoning back to what it is when we change the Comp Plan designation to match what the, or to match what the former zoning should or would have been. So, we wanted to make sure there weren't any issues on the county level with getting that change back. So that is why we are presenting this to you this evening. I will say we have also reached out to the University to get a comprehensive list of all the properties that they have sold that have not been changed yet. We received another 9

98 properties from them in addition to this and they are anticipating selling a few additional ones
99 before the end of the year, so we will be looking at early 2026 bringing you a kind of omnibus
100 change to the Comp Plan with all of those properties at the same time so we're not having to
101 piece meal those as they go. But for those that are looking to move faster as far as moving
102 forward with construction on the properties we would bring those in so as not to delay the
103 applicant for that. And that is all I have.

104 Chair Hurd: Ok, does the Applicant wish to add anything? All right so we'll begin with any public
105 comment for this item has anything, Katie has anything been emailed prior to this?

106 Ms. Dinsmore: No, Mr. Chairman.

107 Chair Hurd: Ok, is there anyone present who wishes to give public comment? Anyone online
108 who wishes to give public comment? All right seeing none we'll close public comment and bring
109 it to the dais for the Commissioners to ask any questions. I'll start on my left with Commissioner
110 Tauginas.

111 Commissioner Tauginas: Pretty self-explanatory, I've got no questions.

112 Chair Hurd: Ok, Commissioner Bradley?

113 Commissioner Bradley: I've got no questions.

114 Chair Hurd: Thank you, all right, Commissioner Kadar?

115 Commissioner Kadar: And I also have no questions.

116 Chair Hurd: All right, Commissioner Silverman?

117 Commissioner Silverman: I have no questions.

118 Chair Hurd: Commissioner Williamson.

119 Commissioner Williamson: Oh no question but just a comment on the Staff Reports second
120 paragraph, let's see...second sentence "it should have been designed as University" which I
121 think you meant "designated"?

122 Director Bensley: Yes.

123 Commissioner Williamson: And is that auto correction software, sometimes we got to keep an
124 eye on it because it'll do things. No questions.

125 Chair Hurd: Ok, Commissioner Cloonan.

126 Commissioner Cloonan: No questions.

127 Chair Hurd: All right, my only, in the packet the maps that were given are these the amended
128 these would be the amended maps? Because I'm looking at Ashley and I don't see any dot of
129 University land.

130 Director Bensley: So that that was the point that I made, is that it was it was incorrectly
131 designated already as residential low density not as University in the Comp Plan.

132 Chair Hurd: But it's still zoned?

133 Director Bensley: Correct, so we we're going to be doing basically an affirmation to go through
134 you guys and to go through Council so the County will change the zoning the way that they
135 would normally for the property.

136 Chair Hurd: Ok, I understand now. All right then I have no other questions. Well, I guess we can
137 move to the motion.

138 Commissioner Kadar: You ready?

139 Chair Hurd: I'm ready.

140 Commissioner Kadar: Ok. **Because the applicant's request does not conflict with the**
 141 **development pattern future land use designation of the nearby area, I move that the Planning**
 142 **Commission recommend that City Council revise the Comprehensive Development Plan**
 143 **version 2.0 land use guidelines for 305 Ashley Road from "University" to "Residential, Low**
 144 **Density" as shown on the Planning Department Report dated August 26, 2025 Exhibit A-1**

145 Chair Hurd: Thank you, do I have a second?

146 Commissioner Silverman: I'll second.

147 Chair Hurd: Thank you, any discussion to the motion? All right seeing none we move to the
 148 vote. Commissioner Bradley.

149 Commissioner Bradley: I vote aye

150 Commissioner Silverman: Do I need to give reasons?

151 Commissioner Bradley: For the reasons stated in the report

152 Chair Hurd: I was going to say, for this do we need to give some sort of affirmative reason? Or
 153 what's an acceptable affirmative reason?

154 Solicitor Bilodeau: That was an acceptable reason

155 Chair Hurd: Ok awesome. Commissioner Kadar.

156 Commissioner Kadar: I vote aye for the reasons specified in the August 26th report.

157 Chair Hurd: Thank you, Commissioner Silverman.

158 Commissioner Silverman: I vote aye for the reasons cited in the department's report. Also, that
 159 there was a recent change in underlying facts and circumstances, the proposal demonstrates a
 160 strong potential to serve the public interest by bringing a tax-exempt property back onto the tax
 161 rolls, and the amendment is consistent with all the other goals and policies of the
 162 Comprehensive Plan.

163 Chair Hurd: All right, thank you. Commissioner Williamson.

164 Commissioner Williamson: Aye for reasons stated in the Staff Report and the administrative
 165 record.

166 Chair Hurd: All right, Commissioner Cloonan.

167 Commissioner Cloonan: I vote aye for reasons stated in the Staff Report.

168 Chair Hurd: And I am aye as well for all the reasons previously stated by the Commissioners
 169 motion carries.

170 Commissioner Tauginas: I wasn't a nay!

171 Chair Hurd: Oh, geez I'm sorry, Commissioner Tauginas. I'm so sorry, I'm gonna un-ring that
 172 bell. Commissioner Tauginas.

173 Commissioner Tauginas: All right I vote aye because of all the reasons stated in the report.

174 Chair Hurd: See that's what I get for trying to shuffle the list around.

175 Commissioner Tauginas: Include me.

176 Chair Hurd: Ok, that's the real one. Ok thank you all. That is embarrassing.

177 Aye – Bradley, Kadar, Silverman, Williamson, Cloonan, Hurd, Tauginas
178 Nay – None
179 MOTION PASSED

180 **4. Review and consideration of appointment of the Comprehensive Development Plan VI**
181 **Steering Committee members**

182 Chair Hurd: Moving right along, that takes us to item 4 review and consideration of
183 appointment of Comprehensive Development Plan VI Steering Committee members. Oh, hey
184 there's Planner Fortner.

185 Planner Fortner: All right, thank you Mr. Chairman and Planning Commissioners. Your report
186 dated August 26th is the proposed list of Steering Committee Members. On the first page of the
187 list of the Steering Committee Members and what they represent and it's according with the
188 Plan for Planning that was adopted last month. Exhibit A is a short biography of each of the
189 members proposed for the Steering Committee Members. Some of them are here today and
190 there might be a few online as well. And then there was a note, but that concludes my report.

191 Chair Hurd: Ok. I'll open it up to the dais for anyone who has questions or comments on the
192 proposed Steering Committee.

193 Commissioner Williamson: Question Mr. Chair, can, is there a short little description of how the
194 student would be selected or volunteered?

195 Planner Fortner: I'm sorry about that. We are going to have; we are working with Staff to
196 appoint a student representative for the thing, and that will be presented the next month. We
197 weren't able to secure them.

198 Commissioner Williamson: Thank you.

199 Chair Hurd: Ok, I'm liking the diversity and the spread of the residents. I mean the, well the
200 overall residents and members, good job.

201 Planner Fortner: Yeah, Thank you.

202 Commissioner Silverman: Can I ask a question?

203 Chair Hurd: Yeah, that's why it's open.

204 Commissioner Silverman: With respect to the University Student, my preference would be a
205 graduate student.

206 Planner Fortner: Ok.

207 Commissioner Silverman: We've had Graduate Students appear before our group and they are
208 very sensitive to things like housing issues and disruption in neighborhoods and that kind of
209 thing, and in the past, they've generally contributed at a very high level.

210 Planner Fortner: Yeah, very good, we had one for the update or the review and she was very
211 good.

212 Director Bensley: I will say we are have been working with the City 's liaison for the University
213 and they've reached out to the Institute for Public Administration and they have been actively
214 working to find a student who is interested for the duration of the time because obviously since
215 this is going to go past the spring semester, they want to make sure, or we were trying to make
216 sure it's somebody who can, who will be here for the entire length of the Comp Plan. Obviously,
217 the semester just started last week so we felt it was appropriate to give them a little more time
218 to figure out exactly who is interested in serving for that period.

219 Commissioner Williamson: Comment, ideally a, maybe, someone in a 2-year program master's
220 degree program and they get some kind of credit for this, you know maybe it's an independent
221 study or some University credit.

222 Planner Fortner: Well, I can do what they want, if the University wants to give them credit that's
223 fine with us.

224 Chair Hurd: We can't go handing out credits.

225 Planner Fortner: Right.

226 Chair Hurd: Any other discussion or are we in general agreement? Ok, so what's the motion, just
227 an approval?

228 Planner Fortner: Yeah. Motion to accept the...oh go ahead.

229 Chair Hurd: Oh yes, I'm sorry, Katie.

230 Ms. Dinsmore: I did have one comment submitted by a member of the Steering Committee I'd
231 like to read into the record?

232 Chair Hurd: Yes, thank you.

233 Ms. Dinsmore: This is from Allison Stine of District 1. "Dear members of the Planning
234 Commission, Thank you for considering me for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. I
235 apologize for not being able to attend this evening's meeting, but I truly appreciate the work
236 you're doing on behalf of our community. I would be honored to contribute to this effort if
237 selected and look forward to the opportunity to help shape a thoughtful plan for our town's
238 future. With gratitude, Allison."

239 Chair Hurd: Right and thank you for reminding me. Is there anyone present who wishes to give
240 public comment on this item? Mr. Williams? Doctor, sorry.

241 Dr. Williams: Thank you. Good evening to everyone and it is indeed an honor to represent and
242 be a part of the of this process and as a longtime resident of Newark, it's an opportunity yet
243 again to contribute to our community, so thank you very much.

244 Chair Hurd: And we appreciate it thank you. Is there anyone online who wishes to give public
245 comment? Ok seeing none we'll close public comment on the item. I think the Commissioners
246 have exhausted their comments, so I guess now we can move to the motion for approval.
247 Secretary Kadar, thank you.

248 Secretary Kadar: **I move that the Planning Commission approve the list of Steering Committee**
249 **members as shown in the Department memo dated August 26, 2025.**

250 Chair Hurd: Thank you, do I have a second?

251 Commissioner Bradley: Second.

252 Chair Hurd: All right, any discussion to the motion? All right all those in favor signify by saying
253 aye.

254 All Commissioners: Aye.

255 Chair Hurd: Opposed say nay. All right it carries, thank you all.

256 **Aye – Bradley, Cloonan, Kadar, Tauginas, Silverman, Williamson, Hurd**
257 **Nay – None**
258 **MOTION PASSED**

5. Early-Process Review and Direct Outreach to Planning Commission for Comprehensive Development Plan VI

Chair Hurd: All right that takes us to item 5 which is Director, sorry Planner Fortner again.

Planner Fortner: All right thank you. This is for the Planning Commission 's early process review as per the Plan for Planning which is an early phase of the outreach this one specifically to the Planning Commission, we're going to have a lot for the members of the public, the public will be able to participate in the public comment section of this workshop. But for the first part of it, it's gonna be an engagement with Planning Commissioners and doing an activity to kind of see what your priorities are. This is to get your priorities, what you see is some of the issues in the community and also facilitates discussion on the vision and your priorities. The, this is sort of a test run for the upcoming November workshop, so this is kind of, kind of again, for kind of a, you guys are kind of guinea pigs for us here. But anyway, for the first presentation I'm gonna give on the previous Comp Plan some of the accomplishments and highlights of that to sort of set a framework for kind of issues and project priorities that you can, that can go into this and what these lead to and, so, I did it in the framework of like, a David Letterman style top 10 list and so hopefully it won't as funny. Off to a bad start with Will. Ok.

This slide is just to show the variety of things that are in a Comprehensive Development Plan. The different chapters, so we have land use, transportation, infrastructure, annexation, housing, environmental quality, economic development, sorry, Katelyn wants me to speak into the microphone, parks and open space and all these things get interlinked and so how all these things come together to form this, this document. And so, it's basically an all-encompassing planning process for the City of Newark so a lot of things going on. Go ahead and go to the next slide.

We're on to the top 10 list and so the first, the first thing in addition to all those subject matters that you saw, the last plan, Plan V was the first Comprehensive Plan to have a vision statement. And what we came up with through a variety of analytic tools, SWOT analysis and surveys and a whole host of workshops we came up with a vision that included a healthy active community that people wanted a community to live in that was had opportunities to have active recreation, walking places, bicycling places. They wanted a sustainable community, they wanted a community that addressed clean energy to help us reduce our environmental footprint but also have, preserve our natural environment and to have a built environment that includes trees and open space and parks. And finally, we wanted to have an inclusive community, so people of all ages being welcoming, so families, seniors not just, well college students also, but not just college students. We're a college town but we're also a hometown, we're also a place where people retire.

We want people of different incomes to be able to live here and so that's became our inclusive community. So, it also includes things like transit if you have a place where you can walk and bicycle that's the inclusive community because a lot, some people are not able to drive. Either they can't afford a car or maybe they have a disability and can't drive anymore and so these things also feed into an inclusive community, this is a place where all people can live. I'm going to go to the next slide.

The next, number 9 on the list was we created a major reform of the comprehensive, or reorganization of the Comprehensive Development Plan. The plan that we had adopted in 2008 had a very different structure, it was essentially organized in 4 sections and it basically recited all the plans that were in existence in the City that were bound to and then it had elements that were sort of scattered, so if you were interested in sustainability you had to kind of read the different sections to get what the plan's sustainability positions were on Environmental Quality or what have you. We try to do it in a more organized approach so by subject matter so and this

307 is more common for other Comprehensive Development Plans in the states more structure that
308 you commonly find in plans. So, if you're interested in transportation you go to the
309 transportation chapter, and it was all contained right there. Go ahead and go to the next slide
310 please.

311 Next part, what we do with a with a Comprehensive Development Plan is we of course update
312 all the census information in the American Community Survey. What we did with this Plan V is
313 we organized this information in a narrative that followed a book called the American College
314 Town and the American College Town...one of the thesis of it is that the American College Town
315 is a very unique place in American culture. And it has several characteristics that make college
316 towns a desirable place, an interesting place and so we use some of the things that college
317 towns tend to be useful places, they are highly educated places they're very cosmopolitan. We
318 show in the demographics how we fit that profile of a college town and that it is part of our
319 identity here in Delaware is we're Delaware's college town and it sort of embraced that identity.
320 We're a college town, that makes us interesting, that makes us a unique place. Go to the next
321 slide please.

322 Number 7, is we provided detailed community demographics and trend analysis, I think there
323 was some conversation last time about single families and what households look like what we
324 did is we looked at the demographics and we found sources that showed the different trend
325 shifts for example in the table on the left hand side there, we showed how different age cohorts
326 and the types of housing stock that they're looking for. So the in the lower right we had a
327 Millennial generation that was emerging into the home buyers what they were looking for then
328 we had the single family home buyers which were kind of the Gen X at the time and how they
329 were smaller demographic and then you had the baby boomers who were retiring, and they
330 were looking to downsize and they were looking for a lot of smaller types of homes and so we
331 use that that kind of analysis to talk about what kind of housing maybe we should be projecting
332 into our future, what demand is going to be. And we do this we look at age cohorts, we look at
333 changes in demographics in terms of racial or household size, we do that kind of analysis and
334 not just reciting the census tables. Go ahead and go to number 6 please.

335 Number 6, we had a robust transportation chapter that focused on multimodal transportation,
336 so it had projects that improved our transportation system in Newark. One was the Newark
337 Transportation Improvement District that a lot of you remember going through, this was a
338 major planning effort to look, not just react to development and then try to plan projects based
339 on the new development happening it looked and projected forward 5, 10, 15, 20 years and
340 then designed a transportation network that would fit future development growth. It was a
341 plan that also called for reforming our transit system, where we had these different transit
342 systems that were all run by different entities, and they didn't really work together that well.
343 And it also called for exploring micro transit and that's what we developed is, DART connect,
344 and DART responded to that, and now we're one of the pilot districts for this program. Bicycling
345 and becoming a more bicycle friendly community, and then pedestrian improvements and also
346 parking which we did a major parking study, these were all ideas that came out of the planning
347 process for Plan V. Go to the next one please.

348 Number 5, same thing with housing, when the Plan V was being developed we had a situation
349 where we had a tremendous amount of development within a few years periods of time where
350 we were concerned that we were going to build too much housing and have vacant housing
351 everywhere and so this planning process led to several studies starting with the rental housing
352 needs assessment and continuing on with the current stuff we're working on. But it did an
353 analysis of what housing's been built, what needs to be built, what are the trends, what is the
354 University's growth doing, how would I impact if it changes up or down, what do we need to

355 look for in the future. And so, it led to all these housing studies and all this stuff that we've been
356 working on for the past 5 to 10 years. Go ahead and go to the next slide.

357 Number 4, sustainability and it integrated the community, Newark Community Sustainability
358 Plan with the with the review and to the Comp Plan. What happened was under in the first
359 Comp Plan we had we had a lot of a vision for a sustainable community we knew that we
360 wanted as a vision, but we didn't have necessarily all the components in place and all the ideas
361 in place and so what a Comprehensive Plan is it's a very broad document. It doesn't solve all
362 the problems, but what it does is identify future needs that we need to do more planning on
363 and that's what happened. We identified we need to do more planning and sustainability to
364 how Newark was going to be a more sustainable place, and we created the Newark
365 Sustainability Plan, and it had its vision, it had a more detailed action list for us to work on. Go
366 to the next slide number 3.

367 We substantially advanced how we use GIS mapping for the future land use maps and so the
368 map on the left-hand side is really just a map where I digitally drew lines and it's not as parcel
369 specific, it's hard to interpret specially in very older more convoluted neighborhoods. And what
370 we switched that too is a parcel-based map where all the data is inside a spreadsheet, and then
371 that spreadsheet is transformed into a digital map and so each parcel has a designation and
372 then it projects into a map and so that was a big advancement for this this Comp Plan. Go
373 ahead and go to number 2 please.

374 The number 2 accomplishment was that we created a mechanism called focus areas and focus
375 areas were a, we had areas that were transitioning, we knew where we wanted to go but we at
376 that time we were not changing zonings, we wanted to avoid doing, changing future land uses
377 and changing the zonings because that was a more complicated process and we weren't, we
378 wanted the Developers to still present a plan that made sense and not giving them by right. So,
379 we created these focus areas where we could give guidance to Developers about how we saw
380 this developing based on the current trends. Go to the next.

381 And finally, number one is that we held an extensive public outreach campaign that saw a broad
382 level of public participation and so during Comp Plan IV which we completed in 2008, you can
383 see the list of meetings that's the entire list from the first opening meeting to the Council
384 approval. You know we had about 4 or 5 workshops, these usually involve the Planning
385 Commission just sitting around a conference table, very little public normally would come to
386 these meetings. The public never didn't really get totally involved in the public hearings until
387 the Council portion and you had people coming in the last sometimes wanting changes not
388 knowing what's in the proposed plan. During Comp Plan V we had a very broad process we had
389 over 47 public engagement events with an estimated over 400 individuals, we had we had
390 newsletters the newsletters had over 200 subscribers. We did outreach at Community Day, that
391 was the first time we started doing Community Day outreach is for the Plan V 2.0. We had a
392 similar process, where that was the first time we established a steering committee that kind of
393 does the kind of the grunt work of meeting and hashing it out and it would be the first time it
394 was the Planning Commission. But anyway, this was a completely new thing that we had we
395 hadn't done before this is kind of this broad outreach and trying to get the public involved and
396 getting their thoughts early middle and then towards the end and that concludes my
397 presentation.

398 The next part of this is a dot voting exercise and you have 2 sets of dots. The first dot is a small
399 sheet and that is, there's 12 dots on there and that is for the on the top row that is there's 4
400 boards and that's part of a kind of a SWOT analysis you'll see once its strengths, weaknesses,
401 then you have opportunities and threats. I'd like you to vote for your top 3 strengths,
402 weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Just use 3 dots you have 4 columns of 3 so put 3 on

403 each. For the larger sheet there's 20 dots there. I'd like you to do this for the bottom row I'd like
404 you to use those 20 dots and mark your priorities which you think are the most important
405 things. You're allowed to put more than one dot on a single box if you'd like you can spread
406 them all 20 out or you can put all 20 on one box if you want. But you can, so for things that you
407 find maybe a really higher priority you can put more than one dot there based on what you
408 want to do, yes, a question?

409 Commissioner Bradley: Teacher has a question. Well for these that's the upper row and it's
410 only?

411 Planner Fortner: Yes, 3 per board, yeah. So, the first board is strengths and then the other ones
412 are all, the colors don't mean anything. It's all, you can put it all on this board, you can put
413 them all 20 on this board, all 20 or whatever, doesn't matter, just distribute how you think is
414 important. And then Samantha's gonna take over and we'll have a facilitated discussion on
415 what we see. We'll see where the patterns fall and have a discussion. And that's where we get
416 into the nuance, some of these things are not going to be nuanced. You're going to be this or
417 that, whatever you think it is then we'll talk about it afterwards. Then if we miss anything you
418 can write on that dry erase board and you can write on the bottom if there's a category you
419 want to make just create your own category your own little button and people can even stick
420 dots on them if they want.

421 Chair Hurd: All right, how much time should we give people for this 5 or 10?

422 Planner Fortner: More than that but because you got to read them all and...15?

423 Chair Hurd: 15.

424 Planner Fortner: But if it's going long, we'll go longer.

425 Planner Edwards: I also have posted its as well if you want to add more to your thoughts put it
426 on the post it.

427 Chair Hurd: Ok.

428 Director Bensley: And I'd also say please make sure you're not having discussion and
429 conversation between yourselves while you're up there because you won't be on the
430 microphones. It won't be in the minutes and it's important that that conversation is captured.

431 Chair Hurd: Ok.

432 Commissioner Kadar: But it but it's ok, to talk to yourself.

433 Planner Fortner: You can mumble and grumble yeah.

434 Director Bensley: Sometimes I have my best conversations with myself.

435 Planner Fortner: For the public, there will be opportunities for this to the public and future
436 ones, and they'll also open up for public comment and discussion all right.

437 Ms. Dinsmore: You need me to set a timer?

438 Planner Fortner: Yeah, go ahead and set a timer.

439

440 *****Secretary's Note: Commissioners participated in the activity from 7:32 p.m. to 7:47 p.m.**
441 **Discussion resumed at 7:47 p.m.*****

442 Planner Edwards: All right, thank you everyone. So, Ann Marie and I wanted to do a quick
443 introductions of ourselves since we'll be working with a lot of you over the next coming year, my
444 name is Savannah Edwards. I'm a Senior Planner with Rossi Group and...

445 Manager Townsend: I'm Ann Marie Townsend, I'm a Senior Project Manager with Rossi Group.

446 Planner Edwards: We've done a number of Comp Plans around the State of Delaware, we're
447 both UD graduates from the MPA program here, so we have a soft spot in our hearts for Newark
448 for sure. And like I said we're very early in the process, Mike invited us here tonight to give you
449 guys the initial opportunity to kind of start building a basis for this Comprehensive Plan. So, we
450 have started developing the logo we've started applying to the State, and tomorrow we have an
451 initial meeting to hear from the State Agencies about what their priorities are going to be in this
452 plan. So again today, stop me as I go through this conversation, the next 20 minutes is
453 supposed to be unpacking your guys thoughts and priorities a little bit further. So, we'll start
454 with the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and highlight what you guys have put your
455 priorities on tonight. At the end I think there will be time for public comment as well if any of
456 you guys would like to add to the conversation too.

457 So, our first board up here tonight was what are Newark strengths, the highest priority from the
458 votes from you guys tonight is City services. Obviously, it shines through with 5 stickers on it for
459 responsive City Employees, Elected Officials, Parks and Recs, you guys all up there tonight, but
460 obviously I think people around the State recognize that Newark does have a very involved
461 residency as well as employees that offer good services.

462 The second most was open space and parks and as Mike had highlighted with the last
463 Comprehensive Plan, there was really a focus on sustainability, adopting more green space and
464 trying to map out how you guys can accomplish that. Some of them noted here are White Clay
465 Creek, city parks, and tree preservation, and I think that's something that we want to keep a
466 priority for the City. Moving down from those cause those are the 2 most apparent with 5 and 4
467 votes, with 2 votes, again strong community that talking more to the residences, a small-town
468 atmosphere, very friendly neighbors, and a lot of community events. And then finally the
469 College Town is seen as a strength. Couple more that received one sticker each, citizen
470 involvement, cultural activities pedestrian and bicycle friendliness, its proximity near Interstate
471 95, and active downtown or Main Street. So again, the top 2 highlight here as the strengths
472 where you guys are already doing well City Services, open space, and parks. Is there anything
473 that any of you all would like to add to the discussion about strength tonight? Anything else you
474 think really shines about the City that we want to note?

475 Commissioner Williamson: As you're aware it's unique that the City owns and runs its utility, so
476 that is something as a strength that's maybe unique in the state I don't know.

477 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I don't know if that's an expansion of the city services section or, but I would
478 agree I sort of say no our power outages are minutes usually or hours.

479 Director Bensley: And I'd say in response to whether other municipalities do, we're part of a
480 collective known as DMEC of multiple municipalities around the State, I believe it's 11 total that
481 own and manage their own electric utilities and then the majority of the states are, excuse me
482 the municipalities I believe manage both their water and their sewer systems.

483 Chair Hurd: Commissioner Tauginas?

484 Commissioner Tauginas: Yeah, I wanted to just piggyback a little bit, you know, about the
485 location, I was the one that marked near 95. Location is incredibly important if there's other
486 parts of the Comprehensive Plan and like the vision for the community that are gonna be you
487 know like economic development for instance right. So, it's not just the proximity to 95, it's also
488 the fact that you have an Amtrak stop in Newark too. And that accessibility by train to be able
489 to connect to, like it is a major corridor up and down the East Coast and can put you into New
490 York within 2 hours, put you to Philly very quickly. So, I think that that is an incredible strength
491 that we should definitely not overlook because that can plug this specific community of Newark

492 Delaware into every major urban metropolitan area on the East Coast and I think that is a
 493 hardcore strength that can help with a lot of these other ideas particularly economic
 494 development. Sorry.

495 Chair Hurd: No

496 Planner Edwards: Yeah, and it it's an interesting point to think about when you bring up the
 497 proximity on the East Coast corridor cause I noted you know, no one identified affordability or
 498 cost of living as a strength instead I think it's identified later as a threat or possibly a weakness
 499 to the community. But if you look at it in the context of the I-95 corridor and from Washington
 500 DC to New York City, how many communities have the proximity to the Amtrak Station that are
 501 similarly priced?

502 Commissioner Cloonan: I was thinking the same thing that if you had put Amtrak and I-95
 503 together on one square I would have put a dot there, I think it is an interconnectedness that is
 504 really important.

505 Commissioner Williamson: And we will soon maybe have a finished intersection at 896.

506 Chair Hurd: Yeah, and we might soon have the mark train line, there's a number of sort of things
 507 in progress, we'll see if the funding holds but...all right thank you.

508 Planner Edwards: Anything else anyone wants to highlight in strengths before we move to
 509 weaknesses?

510 Commissioner Williamson: You might add proximity to the beaches to the South; you know
 511 Chesapeake Bay things like that that are not that far away.

512 Commissioner Silverman: You can throw in Lancaster Valley, Lancaster, PA.

513 Planner Edwards: Ok, great so let's move on to weaknesses now. So, highlights from the
 514 weaknesses board the most popular was the University and City relations, so clearly still a
 515 challenge for the City. As I noted you know, as we started to talk about the second most
 516 popular weakness was affordability slash cost of living. And I think across the board you know
 517 many communities and residents are just feeling that right now. From there it kind of duck tails,
 518 there's a lot that has 2 stickers for it, so Main Street, too Student oriented, a lack of cultural
 519 activities, downtown Main Street parking, and a lack of non-alcohol gathering spaces. Those
 520 really all centered around land use types of issues that we can you know, consider and start to
 521 address within this comprehensive process. So, trying to look at how do we get more of a mix
 522 of uses around the Main Street area, is there appropriate parking there, is there too much
 523 parking currently there, and how do we partner that with cultural activities and still keeping
 524 housing affordability low. Obviously, a lot of things to throw into the mix but if we start putting
 525 lenses on each of those issues, we can kind of unpack them and then have one sticker for traffic
 526 and citizen involvement. Comments, thoughts on what was presented here, weaknesses? And
 527 any that we didn't think of?

528 Commissioner Williamson: I'd like to offer one...there's no Town Square, you know there's no
 529 central point. There's the Main Street which is good and then there's the only place the
 530 University connects to Main Street is at the far, well, the West End where The Green comes up
 531 to Main Street. And that's kind of a modest connection...the open parking lots along Delaware,
 532 right? On the south side of Main Street, which are important, no question. But I just wonder
 533 sometimes whether one of those blocks could become something else that connects and gives
 534 the Town a middle in a way instead of being linear. So that's just a...

535 Chair Hurd: Right or possibly enhancing the Academy lawn area yeah.

536 Commissioner Williamson: Yeah, just...

537 Chair Hurd: Just yeah, a little loose.

538 Commissioner Williamson: So, it's the classic Town Square Center concept that is weak I would
539 call it here.

540 Planner Edwards: Noted...one of the other comments you know a lack of a non-alcoholic
541 gathering space I found that interesting for you all to pick up on, what did you have in mind or
542 whoever had posted this, and a couple people agreed so?

543 Chair Hurd: Oh, I was the one who put that on there. So, it's come up several times when we've
544 had projects on Main Street or talking about Main Street that people go you know we've got all
545 these restaurants we've got these restaurants bars there's no place to go for people who don't
546 drink. Those who don't want to pay a cover charge, who don't want to have to pay all that but
547 there's no, or be, you know there's no place for underage people to gather in a safe way and
548 have music. So, there's no place to do music that's not associated with alcohol.

549 Planner Edwards: Ok.

550 Chair Hurd: So, just trying to find or create you know, spaces for that kind of stuff cause without
551 that then you get underground basement parties which aren't good for the community either.

552 Planner Edwards: True. Yeah, so either commercial or community facilities?

553 Chair Hurd: Right, I mean to me at least that that's what's assigned partly to the strength thing
554 the other weaknesses is things that are for Residents but aren't for Students because I think
555 that that's I think what people often feel is there's a lot of stuff for Students, you know like the
556 University has programs and events and there's all this stuff but as a Resident you know we're
557 closed out of those. And we're closed out of a lot of the businesses that cater to the Students
558 and so I think there's a sense of like, what is there for me, the Resident who is not a Student
559 anymore, to go out and do stuff that's appropriate to you know our age and interest.

560 Planner Edwards: Ok, anything else on weaknesses anyone would like to share? Ok, great let's
561 move on to opportunities. So, top opportunity we've already talked about a little bit, but it was
562 better trained service. So, I think you know whatever can be done to increase service by Septa
563 despite the challenges obviously faced there and mark if it can extend on up would be a great
564 opportunity for Newark obviously. Burying the power lines Downtown, received 4 votes as well
565 so that also great opportunity. Moving down from there in the next most popular were more
566 cultural events which were noted as a weakness of Newark. Then renewable energy and
567 innovative housing strategies and then redevelopment opportunities as well. Then we got one
568 sticker on improved bicycle pedestrian facilities, University STARCampus, and then economic
569 opportunities for American based industries. So again, possibly redevelopment opportunities
570 but more focused on industry manufacturing. So, any comments on these that we'd like to
571 unpack a little bit more? I'd say 2 of them are very specific you know, better trained service and
572 bearing power lines downtown, but innovative housing strategies I saw ADU use listed as one
573 possibility were there any thoughts that other folks had as well?

574 Commissioner Cloonan: This isn't this isn't related to that but in terms of opportunities. I do
575 think it'd be nice if there was more interaction between the University Cultural Events and their
576 departments, whether it be environmental or educational it seems like there's a lot of
577 opportunities that you know if we could you know pull them into our City constructively it
578 would be a good win-win for both sides.

579 Planner Edwards: Good yeah, it's a good opportunity to note.

580 Commissioner Tauginas: I was just going to, to briefly talk about like you know the opportunity
581 for like more cultural events and whatnot. I think that, I definitely think that that just in in terms

582 of making Newark more of a like a destination that people want to come to that they want to
583 visit, and they all kind of go hand in hand because if you have improved accessibility like if you
584 do have mark and SEPTA and you have all these ways to access and you do have things that are
585 that are going on here that aren't necessarily offered in other places or if they are offered here
586 they're better or they're whatever, I think they all kind of tie in together because if you can
587 become the cultural center of Delaware then you're going to attract more people, which in turn
588 leads you know to economic growth etc. etc. So, I think that that's on that chart, there is a very
589 big opportunity because of the location, and you know yeah.

590 Commissioner Kadar: Can you explain to me how the STAR campus is an opportunity for the
591 City? I mean other than selling electricity and water and all of that stuff we have absolutely no
592 control over it.

593 Chair Hurd: No, but there are employers that come in there. There will be hopefully Residents
594 coming there that we could have some...I guess I personally don't want to think that anyone
595 who's living at the STAR Campus is somehow not part of the City. So, it's I think it's an
596 opportunity to say if you're going to live there, we can bring you into the City and we can make
597 you engaged and part of and help with that.

598 Commissioner Kadar: Well, I can see how it's a potential opportunity from a reputation
599 enhancement because of whatever industry and stuff winds up there. But again, that's really
600 outside our control. It's going to be what it's going to be, and we're and we don't, we don't
601 have any say.

602 Chair Hurd: True, and but it is still there as an available place where you know Employers are
603 going to come. There's going to maybe be industries shifting there I think to Commissioner
604 Tauginas' s point, there's an access point of accessibility. People might say I'm going to locate
605 my business there, oh and now we've got these people coming there and we can start to bring
606 them into the Main Street. We can offer cultural activities for them, we can offer them better
607 places to live, that kind of.

608 Director Bensley: I'd also say I think it also offers an opportunity where if you look at the
609 demographics for the City of Newark right now, we have a very young population with the
610 University Students, but we have an aging population with the rest of our folks. And there's,
611 we're seeing starting to see a hollowing out of kind of those middle age groups. The STAR
612 campus with bringing additional employment opportunities, gives us the opportunity with
613 those companies to have their Employees live here and have their Employees move here and
614 have their Employees you know, become part of the fabric of the community I think also
615 another opportunity with STAR Campus is you know, traditionally the University property has
616 been tax exempt. However, that only goes for properties that have a direct University use. So, if
617 a building is built on STAR Campus and part of it is leased out to a private company, that portion
618 comes back onto the tax rolls so if you look at kind of the tracking of the property tax over the
619 years, you see a big dip when Chrysler was sold to the University for STAR Campus. But you're
620 also seeing that it starts to come back because for each of those private companies, they come
621 and lease property from the University there that, those spaces come back onto the tax rolls.
622 And that includes residential space, the new Buccini Pollen Building that's being built there
623 since it is going to be market rate apartments, that will all come back onto the tax rolls. So I
624 think the STAR Campus is very is very important in the, while we may not have control
625 necessarily over what goes there or how it's necessarily developed, I think it does play an
626 important part in our City in helping to maybe stem some of the demographic issues that we're
627 having as well as to help fill some of the financial gaps that we have with having as much
628 untaxed property in the City as we have.

629 Commissioner Kadar: So, the land belongs to the University it's specified as University, but only
630 so far as it is utilized for University activities? If it's used for private enterprise, then it becomes
631 taxable to the City still owned as University property? So, it's kind of a hybrid from what's
632 happening in the rest of the City.

633 Commissioner Silverman: Another way of putting that is the University partners, the University
634 owns the land. The partner puts in the improvement; the improvement goes back on the tax
635 rolls.

636 Director Bensley: And I would say that's not unique to STAR Campus among University property,
637 I'll give the example of the Barnes and Noble for the bookstore the parts of it that are dedicated
638 to the bookstore specifically.

639 Commissioner Kadar: So, it behooves us to publicize it as available for...

640 Director Bensley: And I also would say from the federal level, the STAR Campus is designated as
641 an opportunity zone. So that provides tax benefits for folks to invest and to have businesses
642 there.

643 Commissioner Kadar: Ok, I understand now thank you.

644 Commissioner Silverman: So, it's the improvement that's the benefit.

645 Chair Hurd: Yeah, and I think, and this is the last point, in this area there's not a lot of open land
646 with as much access and you know support services around it know as we have on the STAR
647 Campus. So, I think again if someone 's looking to build a building it's like oh right there it's got
648 everything you need it's got access and highways and everything. You know rather than being
649 down you know off in Hockessin or something.

650 Director Bensley: But I mean I also say with STAR Campus part of the part of what we should be
651 looking at from a planet comprehensive planning perspective is you know it has the potential as
652 it develops out to become direct competition to Main Street right? Like it they have because
653 they're owned by the University, they have fewer regulations there than they have in other
654 areas you know, and we want to make sure that that STAR Campus is complimentary and it's not
655 causing more issues with Main Street from a commercial perspective.

656 Chair Hurd: Yep.

657 Commissioner Williamson: One more opportunity and that is the summer, you've got 3 months
658 with the Students largely gone and you have empty buildings on Campus available for things,
659 you've got a lot of hotel rooms that are probably empty, you know many places would run like
660 film festivals, for example that bring people to the City or to the City during the summer.

661 Chair Hurd: No that's a good point cause we have that kind of capacity for the normal you know,
662 we've got more hotel rooms than some places too because of Parents and such. But when you
663 take that away, we've got this capacity that could be very useful for cultural events for other
664 things yeah, thank you.

665 Commissioner Tauginas: You've made it very affordable for film makers to come from all over
666 the country. They were like how much is the hotel? I'm like 80 bucks a night and they're like
667 what...a New York hotel room right now is like \$400.00 a night so like the price differential
668 especially during the summer, is you know, it's like walking into Wizard of Oz for them.

669 Planner Edwards: Alright, so we're gonna move on to threats now. And Renee had actually
670 queued up one of them perfectly, so I'll go ahead and highlight that first, but it was just that
671 STAR Campus can potentially become a second Main Street. And so needing to understand
672 what challenges that could present, you know not to harp too much but one of the

673 opportunities of the STAR campus because it's been noted so much tonight is the potential to
674 get more transit service such as SEPTA train service when you increase that density of people
675 right at the transit location that really captures the attention of SEPTA to increase how often the
676 train is coming to the station. But again, with that you're also talking about more vehicles in
677 that area, obviously there's already challenges out on 896 already. How will it be serviced by
678 other things such as transit, multimodal, bicycles, pedestrians and traversing across the
679 University then to get to other commercial areas perhaps.

680 Other threats are potential new development such as the big box stores, poor architecture,
681 recent large-scale developments that may be taking on around the community as well as UD's
682 growth. So obviously while we can acknowledge the opportunities of the STAR Campus, I think
683 there's potential threats there as well. Traffic is then noted as the next biggest threat to
684 Newark, and then from there again we kind of dovetail into a couple of different areas that all
685 have one vote each. Crime, loss of historic architecture, which can kind of go with the new
686 development, over development of downtown, again kind of ties back to the new development,
687 rising cost of living, stagnant population growth, and then Student rentals in single family
688 neighborhoods. One of them that was also noted was the loss of green space. So, while
689 Newark has done a lot and it's a strength of them, the green space they have obviously there's
690 always threats with this new development to that. So, any other you guys wanna talk about
691 with the threats?

692 Commissioner Williamson: I'll add two, one I wrote on the board there, the wet board dry
693 marker, what is the state and the feds gonna do to us you know just to be aware of that.

694 Planner Edwards: Sure yeah.

695 Commissioner Williamson: And for example, I don't think we have serious floodplains, but you
696 know regulations and things or lack of or overrides or whatever from the state or the federal.
697 The other is the 2 trains; we haven't talked much about the freight line and Amtrak lines you
698 know these go through here at 150 miles an hour and the trains carry...we don't know what.
699 And there are train wrecks from time to time, we shouldn't just ignore that, that should at least
700 be talked about acknowledged.

701 Chair Hurd: No that is a good point, we are bracketed by 2 active train lines.

702 Commissioner Williamson: And they tend to separate the town in the pieces the north of the
703 line in between the lines, south line you know.

704 Director Bensley: And I will say the City is currently undergoing an update of its continuity of
705 operations plan and its emergency planning under a separate consulting contract, so we are at
706 the point with that where the draft is being finalized and we're moving into tabletop exercises in
707 early October.

708 Commissioner Williamson: Oh wow, ok. And that's one scenario I assume like a train accident of
709 some kind?

710 Director Bensley: Yes.

711 Planner Edwards: All right, let's move down into the focus areas.

712 Commissioner Williamson: Can I just ask where did the focus areas come from? I mean this is
713 your from Mike and your consulting experience I mean is it, just sort of curious?

714 Planner Fortner: The focus areas I devise from the Comp Plan 's past rest so the basic elements
715 of a Comp Plan transportation economic development land use and those are the kind of 5
716 categories.

717

718 Commissioner Silverman: And the thing that precipitated it was those areas had the most
719 redevelopment transition activity.

720 Chair Hurd: No, not the focus areas in the Comp Plan but those are, those priorities yeah.

721 Planner Edwards: Priority chapters, yeah so these don't encompass all chapters such as like
722 community development, or utilities, but I think when Mike set up these broad kind of branches
723 most of those other chapters kind of fit within them so.

724 Commissioner Williamson: There's some caution when this goes to the public some of this is a
725 bit planner-ease jargon so that's your job.

726 Planner Edwards: Yeah agreed, definitely once we go out to the public, we're gonna whittle
727 down to not hit them with as much cause we also can't capture them for 15-20 minutes or you
728 know really an hour is what we're doing here tonight but agreed and noted. So, when we get
729 into land use next and annexation and again keeping in mind for these boards you guys were
730 allowed to put as many wherever you wanted. So, we're not going to be quite as divided and
731 going to have a few more of the specific issues kind of rise to the top that will want to tease out
732 more throughout the next year. So, the top one on land use annexation is requiring green space
733 for all new development. And then next one is encouraging redevelopment of underutilized
734 commercial properties. Moving down from there, the next set of recommendations we have 3
735 of them with all 3 votes protecting historic neighborhoods and community character design
736 standards to ensure new development fits in. And then expand opportunities for small
737 businesses and startups. And then the last set of priorities that still received votes, limit
738 encroachment of student housing into established neighborhoods and then incentivize mixed-
739 use development housing and commercial office mixes. So, any comments from you guys on
740 those set of priorities? Really focused on community character, encouraging redevelopment,
741 and requiring green space with any kind of new development.

742 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I guess I'm...I'm interested to know that none of the annexation topics got any
743 votes. Because certainly annexation has sort of dropped in in, we get very few of those now
744 one now that the City can sell sewer service directly to basically external parcels because people
745 would annex in just to get the sewer service and now that they don't have to annex to get it,
746 we've gotten almost none in the last couple years, I think. And I think there isn't a sense of like
747 we want to get bigger or take over, our policy almost always has been, we wait for someone to
748 ask to come in we don't go taking.

749 Planner Edwards: Unless it's infill pockets?

750 Chair Hurd: No, not even then.

751 Planner Edwards: Oh ok.

752 Chair Hurd: And we have some really weird pockets.

753 Planner Edwards: Every town does.

754 Chair Hurd: In the City and they just sit there and you know cause it doesn't, just the general
755 policy has been we let that be until someone says ok I'm tired of being the only New Castle
756 County parcel surrounded by the City or my septic system has failed or our new owner has
757 come along or something and it's like ok now we'll join, we'll come into the City.

758 Commissioner Silverman: Plus, the hurdles established by the State of Delaware and New Castle
759 County make annexation very difficult.

760 Chair Hurd: And Delmarva.

761 Commissioner Silverman: And Delmarva with the way electric distribution goes.

762 Commissioner Bradley: Just a quick comment on annexation, down by where we are where the
763 end of the City property on Welsh Tract and there's a lot of parcels down there that would be
764 ideal for, but the problem is there's no utilities from the City out there. There are no utilities on
765 from the City on the west side of 95 on Welsh Tract so, I mean there's gonna be...there's 2 major
766 parcels down there they're probably the next 10 years or so it'll get developed. You're talking
767 hundreds and hundreds of homes.

768 Commissioner Silverman: There's an also a strange relationship established by the Public Service
769 Commission that there can actually be one side of the road that has to be Delmarva Power and
770 the other side can be City of Newark.

771 Commissioner Bradley: Well, it's just physically the City doesn't have the infrastructure to go
772 across 95 I mean, I would tie into sewer in a heartbeat, but we can't get it.

773 Commissioner Silverman: That's been part of the problem going out Elkton Road.

774 Chair Hurd: Yeah.

775 Commissioner Williamson: One comment that hasn't come up and it maybe belongs on the
776 opportunity board but it's kind of like an annexation is the Country Club development which is
777 in the City limits but it's greenfield and large kind of like a big farm annexation in a way. Maybe
778 that should be called out somewhere.

779 Director Bensley: So that's called out in our current Comp Plan. The Country Club has been sold
780 and is owned by Lang development. They, at the time of sale it was leased back to the Country
781 Club for 10 years with an additional 10-year option. So that is something that that initial 10
782 years will be up during this Comp Plan cycle. I believe in the last Comp Plan, Mike, you can
783 correct me if I'm wrong, we talked about some sort of charette or something of that nature
784 community planning process for that site, so that is something that we would likely probably
785 want to keep in the updated Comp Plan.

786 Chair Hurd: Yeah I know, many years ago I went to a presentation by the IPA on Comp Plans and
787 they recommended master plans as a way to kind of talk about how you want large parcels to
788 develop but without the force of the Comp Plan and future use zoning and such it's a sort of a
789 lower level process that doesn't commit everything but does help sort of get the community
790 engaged.

791 Director Bensley: I will say back in 2008 there was an approved project for that site, and I
792 believe it's like 280 single family homes if I remember correctly? So, and nobody liked that so
793 we'll have to, but that's that is what would be by right under current zoning so. You know I
794 think a, there's been discussion in the past about wanting to have you know a master planning
795 or charette for that site. And I think we would....And part of the part of some discussions too
796 has been you know do we have some sort of process where we say ok, we'd like to do some sort
797 of master plan for this site and if the Developer elects to follow that master plan then they get
798 some sort of expedited approvals or they get some sort of fast track to be able to do that and
799 get to construction faster. So, I think there, you know that there's opportunities to discuss how
800 that would work and if there's some sort of carrot to get folks to buy into to the community
801 vision for the site.

802 Solicitor Bilodeau: I would just add with the current reassessment, they...it's not good for them
803 you know so this may be coming quicker than 10 years.

804 Chair Hurd: Gotcha.

805 Planner Edwards: Ok, we'll move on to economic development. A clear popular one we've
806 noted on tonight, promoting arts culture and local events as economic drivers. So, you know I
807 implore you guys as we go throughout this process this year, thinking about site locations like
808 we're already mentioned between Main Street and the University or particular places that
809 would lend themselves to these cultural events or being a 3rd place that people can feel safe
810 and comfortable to go to. You know, keep those in mind and let us know as we go throughout
811 this process, like what the zoning should look like, what the future land use should look like to
812 allow for that to happen.

813 Next most popular is the adaptive reuse of vacant or obsolete properties again making sure that
814 anything underutilized we're not continuing to underutilize. Strengthening downtown as a
815 dining and shopping destination, again I think that can really partner with the cultural events
816 center because when you come out for those you also want to shop and dine and hang out with
817 your friends or do other things. Then moving on from there we've got 3 with 2 votes, incentives
818 for startups and entrepreneurship, expanding small business opportunities, which is very similar
819 and enhancing it aesthetics and walkability to attract visitors. Final ones that got one vote each
820 supporting outdoor recreation opportunities in ecotourism, encourage mixed-use development,
821 that includes jobs and housing and then more home-based business opportunities. So good mix
822 a lot focused on you know again bringing in visitors, or I'm hearing more adult oriented kind of
823 uses things outside of the University. Anything to add for economic development?

824 Director Bensley: I'd say with the promoting arts and culture one I think one of the things that
825 we need to look at is, a lot of the times it's looked to the City to put on some of these events
826 and are there ways through regulations or deregulation that we can be promoting more private
827 entities coming in and starting businesses or non-profits that do these things and not
828 necessarily relying on the City to be the engine behind some of these events.

829 Planner Edwards: And I would also frame it in a way to think of, are there regulations or
830 ordinances perhaps preventing it from happening, like thinking about some of the more popular
831 events in Delaware being like the Lady Bug Music festival down in Milford or Jazz Festival in
832 Wilmington or Rehoboth, do the current ordinances in the City of Newark allow musicians like
833 that?

834 Director Bensley: They do prevent that.

835 Planner Edwards: Things to consider as you know...

836 Chair Hurd: Right, especially if we're thinking about a Town Square or some sort of open space.
837 I think I wanted to add that sort of the economic like, the idea of mixed-use something that I've
838 liked, and I would love to see starting to work its way into our zoning regulations is the, is
839 basically neighborhood businesses in residential neighborhoods at the edges. Because I think
840 there's 2 like, I don't want all of our economic like all it all to be on Main Street like there should
841 be some there, but it should also be distributed in appropriate places. So, as you know, if I'm in
842 a neighborhood there's a corner store that's somewhat close and that helps cut down on car
843 traffic. And then I think that also helps if I'm a family in a neighborhood I can be like oh, I can
844 walk to the store with the kids and I can it's a lower barrier to doing that without like, for
845 example once I've got him in the car I may as well go to the ACME rather than you know,
846 because I've already driven.

847 Planner Edwards: So, I did not live in the City of Newark when I was a student here and
848 obviously had a different perspective than perhaps many of the residents, but is that something
849 that you think would be popular with residents or that we would face, you know, any kind of
850 nimbyism or what?

851 Chair Hurd: Well...

852 Planner Edwards: What is the general...you know you guys represent....

853 Chair Hurd: I think part of it's how we present it and how we discuss it and how we kind of plan
854 it. So, I think we don't say you can have stores anywhere in a neighborhood, but you sort of
855 start to say okay they're at the edges.

856 Planner Edwards: So, on critical roadways that already have the infrastructure to suppose

857 Chair Hurd: On the corners of major roads, kind of things on the edges basically the edges of
858 neighborhoods are opportunities for that sort of mixed-use

859 Director Bensley: I think there's also opportunities in maybe rolling it out gradually if that is if
860 that is felt to be needed. You know looking at say, you know RA which is our high-rise
861 apartment district. We've been turning a lot of our focus areas into denser student housing in
862 those areas but there's no amenities right, so like I think it's a much easier jump to say hey
863 we're going to start letting you put in coffee shops or corner stores in the first floor of some of
864 those buildings in those corridors to start you know see how that works. Maybe roll it into RM
865 with garden apartments, and then start to look at the major corridors in the single family areas
866 you know, I didn't grow up in Newark but I grew up in an area where you know we could we as
867 kids could walk to the 7/11 and that was really cool, an experience of freedom and you know
868 you start to learn how to be more responsible and you know it's something my daughter 's not
869 going to have if we keep going down the road we're going right now so. I'm hoping that it's
870 something that even if people aren't ready to dive into it full force, maybe we can start to put
871 the elements of that into motion to where it people are more open to it in the future yeah.

872 Chair Hurd: Yeah, no I would say my neighborhood is probably in some ways ideal for it. I'm in
873 basically the, I'm off Campus, basically on Campus I should say. I've got a lot of student traffic
874 walking by and everything, so you know if I could put a smoothie shop in my porch, I would but I
875 would make bank every morning. Just like energy drinks and smoothies and I'd be done by 10
876 but cause it's like, all the dorms are at the end of my street and there's a lot of housing and
877 they're all walking to Campus and they're just coming right through there. So, I think that's, like
878 that kind of thing, it's all foot traffic. There are no cars, there's no parking issues you know as a
879 way to sort of pilot and think about ok we can start there and then like how can we go to,
880 maybe do something on Park Place or just off Park Place or that kind of those kind of edges.

881 Planner Edwards: Definitely and if that's something that you know we take at a public workshop
882 and we really want to get good feedback we can take examples from around different
883 communities in Delaware, show them real examples of what it is you know to have...I live up
884 near Belafonte, so we have a Belafonte Café, very close walking distance again neighborhood
885 style type of commercial very small footprint.

886 Chair Hurd: Right and I know Portland 's been very successful with that sort of micro
887 commercial in the residential areas.

888 Planner Edwards: Yeah, so anything on economic development anyone else would like to get
889 on?

890 Commissioner Williamson: We might want to somehow say certain kinds of economic
891 development are not welcome. I don't think we really want a data center. Or giant warehouses,
892 or another power plant trying to pretend to be something else and...

893 Planner Edwards: Sure, so really harsh uses.

894 Commissioner Williamson: Right, yeah. That might technically be allowed by zoning, so we got
895 to be careful.

896 Planner Edwards: All right, environmental sustainability we've got 2 really popular
897 recommendations down at the bottom, the first preserve natural areas streams woodlands and
898 wetlands. And then the second is expanding the tree canopy for shade cooling and habitat. So
899 again, I think big priorities will keep as recommendations throughout this plan and kind of detail
900 out further as we work through. Next most popular is improving stormwater management and
901 green infrastructure within the City. I know that's been a focus of the town over the past 10
902 years, but we can you know, examine and look for more ways to improve it, identify what
903 successes of the program have already been and where we can move forward with that. Then
904 green streets, stormwater management, shade and trees focused around certain areas.
905 Programs for composting and food waste reduction, so working with the residents to educate
906 them as well as providing opportunities for people to you know leave their compost at the local
907 neighborhood garden that they can also have a plot at for example.

908 And then there are a few that got one vote each as well, EV charging infrastructure, energy
909 housing, energy efficient housing retrofits, suburban or sorry support, urban agriculture and
910 community gardens, and then green building and standards climate resilient buildings.

911 Commissioner Silverman: We already do two of those activities. We have leaf recycling and free
912 compost, and we have community gardens.

913 Planner Edwards: Good, good.

914 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I think the food waste specifically though, if there could be, for me at least if
915 there were a broader like green Wednesday if there was a way for me to collect it and have the
916 City pick it up, I would love that because I really feel bad when I throw out so much spoiled
917 food. And again, I think we have the density, and we have the manpower for a lot of these like,
918 for some of these efforts you know, we have trucks driving around the streets, so we could like
919 somewhere to...

920 Planner Edwards: And there's been some communities that have even you know done so in a
921 way with the restaurants in their community and they've worked to establish programs to
922 collect the food that's left over at the end of the evening and then deliver it to the food bank or
923 another business like that so again there's a lot of opportunities that it can look like if we
924 wanted you know explore those further. Any other thoughts on the sustainability issues.

925 Chair Hurd: I guess I'll just generally say I think I'm kind of inspired that we're like, some of those
926 things didn't get a lot of points because I think we're already doing a number of those things
927 well I think we're doing a lot of like the parks and the bike paths and the pedestrian
928 connections, there's a lot already working for this for us and at the City, so I'm kind of pleased
929 that we're not getting like we didn't ding, a lot of those little things.

930 Planner Edwards: It speaks to the values of the community, and I think why people locate here
931 and continue to live here. Ok, transportation, so we didn't get as many stickers on the
932 transportation board overall but the most popular recommendation on the transportation
933 board is green streets as well. So, similar to sustainability you know how can we kind of look to
934 tie the 2 priorities together. Downtown parking availability and management, and safer
935 crosswalks and intersections for the next 2 most popular. Then moving on from there
936 expanding DART, SEPTA, mark routes and frequency which we've talked about tonight. Parking
937 again wayfinding and signage improvements, so not just whether there's parking there or not
938 can people actually find it. And then improve signage, timing, coordination, the use of smart
939 technology such as you knows, adapting the signals to align with each other to either slow
940 traffic down so that it can't go over 20 or 25 miles per hour because you want a slow corridor, or
941 speeding it up so you don't have congestion happening depending on the priority of that area.
942 So, any of the transportation issues that we want to talk about more? I know we talked about

943 the train a little bit today parking or multimodal anything from there you guys want to talk
944 about?

945 Chair Hurd: We talk about parking a lot.

946 Planner Edwards: I can pass on parking, that's ok.

947 Commissioner Silverman: Some has yet to be implemented.

948 Planner Edwards: All right, housing and community development. So, the top priority over here
949 is zoning reform for small scale infill housing, duplexes, triplexes and ADUs. So, we had talked
950 about you know with the opportunities but also challenges and threats. The cost of living,
951 housing, single family neighborhoods versus student housing. So again, I think that kind of
952 speaking to you guys, noting this is a priority that really needs to be looked at throughout this
953 year. Next most popular is supporting reinvestment in older neighborhoods, housing for
954 vulnerable populations, low income, disabled, homeless are some of those noted on the board.
955 And then from there we kind of sparse out, but a lot of votes overall in the board I'll say a lot
956 more than like transportation for example so just to run through those with 2 votes, affordable
957 rental housing, preserving and upgrading the existing housing stock, affordable home ownership
958 opportunities, student housing balanced with community needs, promoting walkable mixed-use
959 neighborhoods, first time homebuyer support programs. And then with one vote senior age
960 friendly housing and workforce housing. So, I will say the only one that didn't give votes on this
961 one was incentives for mixed income housing, a little bit interesting but I think that focuses
962 more on the Developers, whereas the rest of them are kind of focused on you know, having the
963 supports out there and making sure the resources are available to people.

964 Commissioner Cloonan: Can you explain the investment in older neighborhoods one? It seems
965 like a lot of our older neighborhoods are wealthy and I couldn't quite figure out where that was
966 coming from.

967 Planner Edwards: So, supporting reinvestment in older neighborhoods. You know typically I
968 would see that being like facade grants for historic restorations in a community. I don't know if
969 that's exactly appropriate for Newark, but when you say older neighborhoods, you're looking at
970 something that has historic importance typically, and trying to give incentives for people to
971 update those homes.

972 Director Bensley: I think also just from a practical perspective for Newark, with some of our
973 aging housing stock, even though the value of the home may have gone up the income of the
974 individuals who live in it has often gone down particularly through retirement. So, we see a lot
975 of folks particularly for our home improvement program who are looking for loans to help make
976 upgrades and keep their you know, fix things for their properties that they can't otherwise
977 afford the repairs. So, I think you know, when talking about you know supporting some of our
978 older neighborhoods, some of it is just as the housing is aging and repairs need to be made at
979 times the income of the individual is not keeping up with the paper wealth of the property itself
980 and what the property itself is worth.

981 Chair Hurd: Right. So, sometimes it's a way to keep residents here rather than selling, then
982 possibly having that property redevelop or or... get rebuilt as some, or teardowns or things so.

983 Director Bensley: And allowing people to age in place.

984 Commissioner Cloonan: But I'm assuming there is an income requirement we don't give this out
985 to everyone?

986 Director Bensley: Correct

987 Commissioner Tauginas: I mean College Park is an older neighborhood that could use a facelift.

988 Chair Hurd: Yeah, absolutely

989 Commissioner Tauginas: It's getting one, but you know.

990 Planner Edwards: Any other community development priorities? All right I'm going to touch on
991 the last board for anything we missed and then open it up to you guys for any last final
992 thoughts. So again, underground Main Street power lines, we did touch on that as one of the
993 opportunities I believe. Protecting the City utility income, have a strategic plan to talk about
994 that money coming in and how to sustain it. What are the States and feds going to do to us?
995 Always a moving needle, we're trying to keep up with we do know of the new elements in this
996 Comprehensive Plan like to touch on sustainability which you guys are already doing a great job
997 at but again we will see. And then disaster emergency planning. So not only what would
998 happen in case of a hurricane or something where I-95 might have to be might have to be the
999 conduit for a lot of traffic but like noted any kind of hazmat from a rail kind of incident or truck
1000 freight for that matter as well.

1001 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I'll just sort of add one thing. I know we've been talking, at least I know we've
1002 been talking about for a while. We're talking about the City utility income, a while back when
1003 we started talking about like we need to be more sustainable, we need more solar we need
1004 more like there's a conflict at times with the city promoting that which cuts into their income
1005 and trying to reconcile sort of like find that balance and part of that could be, can the City find
1006 alternative income streams. Because certainly for a long time we depended almost entirely on
1007 utility income to do anything. We have thankfully found other ways to fund our capital
1008 programs, and so that's taken some of the pressure off, but I think we still have like, and
1009 certainly Council is dealing with this every budget cycle. It's like, how do we pay for the things
1010 that the residents want us to do in you know in an efficient way that doesn't burden the
1011 residents excessively. You know we're like, well how else can we get money into the City that's
1012 not just you know electricity, water, property tax you know sort of like what other you know,
1013 we've got the student fee now coming on but like, sort of like and that sort of that strategic plan
1014 like what other ways can we do this. So, that we could start to say yeah let's actually have more
1015 on site solar generation and cut down on the amount of power we're delivering and not have
1016 the City sort of go into an economic crisis because of that.

1017 Director Bensley: And I think related to that, just the diversification of revenue one of the
1018 challenges that has been the you get one thing, but another thing goes away. So, for example
1019 with the new Student Fee, that is something that the State Legislature then took \$2,000,000.00
1020 out of funds for Newark that we previously received and that's that was kind of the offset. So, it
1021 was pretty much revenue neutral it's not additional money. For the funding of the more diverse
1022 funding for capital projects, a lot of that is through the State revolving loan fund for water and
1023 sewer, that is one of the programs that is on the chopping block in the next federal budget. So,
1024 it's definitely, you know the diversification of revenue is definitely related to the what are the
1025 State and Feds are doing to us question. And it's been a challenge in that you know as we work
1026 to diversify the revenue we are also, we're not necessarily seeing it increase the amount
1027 available, just substitute for other things that have been removed.

1028 Chair Hurd: Right, which doesn't help us cause you know a number of those items in housing
1029 community development, a number of our strengths, that will cost money you know all those
1030 programs to fund first time home buyers and home improvement and it's like that's you know,
1031 that's city money theoretically that we don't have.

1032 Commissioner Silverman: The open space program.

1033 Chair Hurd: Open space programs, you know, maintaining our parks, maintaining all that sort of
1034 untaxable non developed land. Definitely a challenge.

1035 Planner Edwards: Ok, any other thoughts, any final comments? Again, keeping everything
1036 relatively high-level tonight but building us in the direction...

1037 Commissioner Williamson: I have two comments, may I?

1038 Chair Hurd: Go ahead.

1039 Commissioner Williamson: One is, we all are familiar with the geography that gets described
1040 here the Student areas the Main Street and so forth. So, I'm sure you're going to have maps of
1041 the City of course, and you may be doing this anyway but instead of a plan map with all of our
1042 usual colors I'm wondering if it'd be useful to have as a reference a large format map but it more
1043 like bubbles. You know this is the student area, this is UD, this is what we think of as Main
1044 Street, this is South College, you know as a quick reference for people, and they don't have to
1045 try to understand our CompPlan designations and look things up. They just have 5, 6, 8 bubbles
1046 and that have big text and maybe a picture.

1047 So, there's that. Oh, and the other comment was also out of this, we've defined some things
1048 that are working really well, right? Maybe we don't need to spend a lot of time we kind of group
1049 them together and say "look this is working fairly well we don't need to spend a long time
1050 revisiting these topics that work well. We got good parts, we can always make them better but
1051 that's although that's an issue and we want to talk about it, you know we it's almost the, when
1052 you have conflict management or whether the term is what do we all agree on? And then let's
1053 move on and focus on the key things that take time.

1054 Planner Edwards: Yeah, and I think you know we want to take in the Steering Committee's initial
1055 input on these variety but exactly after that it's focusing down.

1056 Commissioner Silverman: I think the recent tax situation with property tax particularly with the
1057 school districts, bringing focus on the school districts, I think we should consider reuse of every
1058 school parcel within the city limits of Newark. I believe that this may, the emphasis and may
1059 precipitate consolidation and closing of schools. We talk about the Country Club, and what's
1060 gonna happen there. And what's going to happen with Park Place Elementary, what back fills
1061 that we go out on Casho Mill Road what's going to backfill that? If Newark High School is
1062 named obsolete, what's going to go on that parcel. So, you know kind of hanging out there in
1063 the what if. I think we should have some ideas about the direction that those parcels should go
1064 in.

1065 Chair Hurd: I think I'd add there's a couple of largeish University parcels on Main Street the
1066 English language institute and I think there's a couple out there that you know are kind of
1067 distant from the campus and if I were the University at some point I might go, I don't need that
1068 out there. So, you know sort of those larger parcels that can have an impact on the
1069 neighborhood I think is, I think what Commissioner Silverman is sort of talking about like having
1070 some sort of plan without just sort of turning them loose. Yeah, but I'll just say it's like ideal for
1071 affordable housing for some of those because they are close to downtown. They're not too
1072 distant to it, not as car dependent as some other neighborhoods would be.

1073 Planner Edwards: Transit services.

1074 Chair Hurd: Yeah, well just sort of walkable to things. Because I think there are some
1075 neighborhoods that wouldn't be appropriate for affordable housing just because of their car
1076 dependency and their remoteness. I don't want to feel like oh we put that over there it's like
1077 here's a nice spot right in the middle.

1078 Commissioner Williamson: I'm just making lists a couple topics that did not come up
1079 homelessness...I can't remember the other one, well that's one, I might think of it later sorry.

1080 Planner Edwards: That's all good. We're at the beginning you'll have opportunities.

1081 Commissioner Silverman: And the one of the other things that was touched on, that
 1082 Commissioner Williamson mentioned, the railroad line's constraining. We have no viable street
 1083 grid in Newark.

1084 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I guess we have a couple of choke points for sure.

1085 Commissioner Silverman: Yes.

1086 Commissioner Williamson: Oh, the other topic was childcare, in some places it becomes big
 1087 topic and may anyway, just keep in mind childcare and handicap ADA access.

1088 Planner Edwards: Alright well I think we got a lot of good ideas to get the ball rolling tonight.
 1089 Mike, did you wanna open up for any public comments?

1090 Chair Hurd: Sure, we can take public comment at this point if there's any anyone present who
 1091 wishes to give public comment. I mean you're on the steering committee, you're gonna talk
 1092 about this a lot anyway. I just need your name for the record. Oh, it's not on...

1093 Ms. Dinsmore: The handheld mic.

1094 Chair Hurd: Yes.

1095 Mr. Pan: Hi everyone, my name is Brian Pan. I'm a Delaware native also Student here at the
 1096 University of Delaware, I really appreciate the session I think there were a lot of great insights
 1097 here. I think it's pretty evident that a lot of the tensions between the City and the University a
 1098 lot of it lie in the in kind of the student housing, so I am curious you know I've had conversations
 1099 with Senior Administrators at the University of Delaware with VP Jose last week. Landlords
 1100 within the Newark Landlord Association, has a has a City sort of explored any kind of ordinances
 1101 or rules that would possibly allow more like private Public Partnerships of housing? Because I
 1102 know that the University obviously has a lot of the open land like I was talking with Vice
 1103 President for Student Life, Jose Riera last week, you know he has open parcels with South of the
 1104 library, South College Avenue, one by the parking garage. Many open parcels, but the school
 1105 you know they're at this financial state where they have all this deferred maintenance, you
 1106 know lack of capital, and then you have the Developers here a lot of them are sitting on pretty
 1107 nice you know cushions of cash. They have the capital that they're able to deploy but
 1108 oftentimes it's finding the right opportunities, land. So, I'm wondering has there been much
 1109 kind of exploration of this, you know, private public partnership? I've seen some strong
 1110 successes up in Philly and at many other schools so I'm wondering if maybe part of the
 1111 incentives might be that you know when private Developers build the student housing I'm just
 1112 looking things from the finance side, there's that revenue the property tax, electric, water, and
 1113 then you know if maybe the University chooses to build dorms, I'm wondering if maybe some of
 1114 those incentives are removed. So just curious some of your thoughts and perspectives on that.

1115 Chair Hurd: Director Bensley:

1116 Director Bensley: So, I would say there's nothing in our code right now that would prohibit
 1117 public private partnerships with the University, the University 's property the majority of it is
 1118 owned UN and they're actually very few zoning regulations on that. So it's actually very
 1119 attractive to developers to partner with the University because they are not bound by some of
 1120 the restrictions that are placed on Non-University owned property we are working with at least
 1121 one developer right now that is looking at a public private partnership for some University
 1122 property, there's I know been some RFP 's put out by the University in the past for some of
 1123 those parcels for one reason or another they haven't moved forward. But I would say that, that

1124 side of the, there's not anything from the City 's perspective that is preventing that so it would
 1125 be up to the University to decide how they want to use that land.

1126 Chair Hurd: I guess the only thing that, doesn't UN have to be...didn't we decide at some point
 1127 that UN means University owned and operated facilities? So, if I if someone puts a private you
 1128 know, apartment building on their it stops being UN, doesn't it?

1129 Director Bensley: If it's owned by the University, it's either UN or STC.

1130 Chair Hurd: Oh, it's owned by, ok so it's not the use it's just the ownership, ok. Because I think
 1131 the University Courtyards were financed by the University and then assumed by them and took
 1132 them back into their into their network. So apparently, they have done that in some time.

1133 Mr. Pan: (inaudible) part of the public and then kind of exchanged hands and, yeah.

1134 Director Bensley: So that project in particular was privately developed but with a contract with
 1135 the University to, for them to eventually take it over.

1136 Chair Hurd: So, it was a planned...

1137 Director Bensley: Yes, and they actually acted on that contract I believe 10 years in advance of
 1138 when they were supposed to so that ended up being a significant chunk of property tax revenue
 1139 that came off of the rolls as part of that. And I will say it came off of the rolls because they are
 1140 using it as University student housing. So if you are paying room and board to the University,
 1141 you can live in the University Courtyard for a place like the new building that's going up on STAR
 1142 Campus that is going to be leased and maintained by the private Developer, that would come
 1143 back on the tax rolls that would have the retail electric and water rate not the electric service
 1144 agreement rate that the University has all of those things.

1145 Mr. Pan: I heard that property was largely marketed towards more young professionals, not
 1146 necessarily students, correct?

1147 Director Bensley: Correct.

1148 Mr. Pan: All right, thank you.

1149 Chair Hurd: Thank you, you're welcome. Is anyone online that wishes to give public comment?
 1150 All right it's been quiet. Thank you all. Planner Fortner are we basically done? All right we're
 1151 going to close this item, thank you all.

1152 **6. Informational Items**

1153 Chair Hurd: Moving to the back end of the agenda, to informational items, so I'll start with the
 1154 Director 's report. Oh yeah, sorry, I'm going to utilize Chairs privilege to extend the meeting to
 1155 9:30.

1156 Director Bensley: Try really hard not to make it go later than that.

1157 Chair Hurd: Well yeah.

1158 Director Bensley: Alright, so since our last meeting I've been out of town for quite a bit of it but
 1159 here's what I've got. The August 11th Council meeting, the 118 to 129 Lovett Avenue project
 1160 was actually removed from that agenda. We had some late uncertainty with Council
 1161 attendance, so not knowing if there was going to be a quorum that night the applicant elected
 1162 to postpone so they will be rescheduled for November. However, they did have enough for a
 1163 meeting so the 2 Special Use Permits for restaurants with alcohol at 168 East Main Street and
 1164 230 East Main Street, Suite 205 did move forward, both were approved 168 East Main Street is
 1165 the new Nashville barbecue place that used to be Arenas and then Two Stones Pizza and then
 1166 230 East Main Street, Suite 205 is the existing Friendship Barbecue restaurant. August 18th, we

1167 have the kickoff budget overview for fiscal year 2026, more expenses less revenues. We've got
1168 to figure out how we're going to close that gap so. The hearings for the individual departments
1169 have begun and ours is scheduled for September 15th, the August 25th Council meeting, we had
1170 a Special Use Permit for restaurant with alcohol for Cafe Neo which is at 139 South Main Street,
1171 Suite 101 that was approved. We do not have anything specific on the September 8th agenda,
1172 September 15th as I mentioned we will have our budget hearing as well as the discussion of the
1173 CAC 's recommendation of their request to have the Planning and Development Department
1174 work with them on making amendments to the development code to make it more
1175 environmentally sustainable. We asked at the time, and we'll be asking Council that night that
1176 while we are fine to work with the CAC on that, that they consider that as part of the larger
1177 Council prioritization process because it's very easy to give Planning and Development one off
1178 instructions to do things, but it really needs to be done in the larger contexts of all of the things
1179 that Planning and Development is being asked to do. And I will say that I may have mentioned
1180 this at the last meeting, but the initial prioritization discussion did take place in July and
1181 surprise, surprise, almost everything is targeted toward Planning, Code Enforcement or Parking.
1182 Which are all under the Planning and Development Department. So that on top of the 16-
1183 month kickoff that we started tonight, for the Comp Plan, we got a lot we've got a lot on our
1184 plates. So, we just want to make sure that everything gets considered holistically.

1185 Looking out from there September 22nd, that meeting was originally going to be canceled
1186 because of the special election, however as you may have heard only one candidate filed for the
1187 District 4 special election former Councilwoman Marge Hadden is now Councilwoman Elect
1188 Marge Hadden. So, she's going to be sworn in at the September 8th meeting and that
1189 September 22nd meeting will not be canceled. We did have, we had not scheduled anything for
1190 that agenda, I did have an initial conversation with the City Manager about putting an item on
1191 that agenda to get Council's feelings on Newark potentially applying for some of the technical
1192 assistance funds for updating our zoning code in relationship to affordable housing that the
1193 State has approved as part of Senate Joint Resolution 8. So, and before we put a ton of work
1194 into it because basically whatever we say we're going to do through that process Council then
1195 has to follow through and adopt after they're created with the consultants funded by the State.
1196 We don't want to go down the road of applying for this and then not having Council be willing
1197 to implement any of the changes that are funded by Consultants by the State. So that
1198 discussion is tentatively going to go on for September 22nd, there is no meeting on September
1199 29th cause it's a 5th Monday and then October 6th will be the budget roll up meeting, so
1200 basically we have the initial overview, we're having the departmental changes, and then the
1201 financial workshop on October 6th will kind of roll up all those changes still say you know this is
1202 what's left as far as the gap and provide potential solutions for closing that. And then our next
1203 meeting is October 7th since I, we had the discussion at our Staff meeting today that I needed
1204 to be in the office more than 45 minutes to talk about the October Planning Commission
1205 agenda, so I don't have a preview for you yet this evening. But I promise we'll have something
1206 good.

1207 We are moving forward, we did relate to the Comp Plan, select a final public engagement
1208 software, so PublicInput is going to be the program that we use for that, so we are working to
1209 scale that up to be ready in advance of Community Day. We are, as we mentioned, doing our
1210 full our public kickoff for the Comp Plan at Community Day, so Mike has been working with our
1211 Consultants on that. And then, just as I had mentioned for several months, the free parking
1212 downtown over the summer I thought you all would be interested to know that we did actually
1213 see a net revenue increase even though we offered parking for free 2 days a week during that
1214 time. So, the last update I got was that it was around \$26,000.00 increase in revenue over the
1215 same time period for last year when we just offered discounted parking 7 days a week but that

1216 was before it was over, so we anticipate that it has increased since then. And I'm happy to
1217 answer any questions.

1218

1219 Chair Hurd: So, in October we also have the Capital Improvement Plan.

1220 Director Bensley: Yes.

1221 Chair Hurd: What's the date for that again?

1222 Director Bensley: The 21st.

1223 Chair Hurd: The 21st thank you.

1224 Director Bensley: Yep, it's Scott 's birthday we're bringing cupcakes.

1225 Chair Hurd: That's how you get a quorum all right, any questions for the director? All right
1226 Deputy Director Velazquez?

1227 Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez: For new projects that the department has received 305
1228 Ashley, which was heard today which was just a Comp Amendment. On the 14th we received
1229 an application for a Special Use Permit for home occupation at 56 Fremont Road and 40 Benny
1230 Street was received on the 19th for a Comp Plan, Rezoning, Major Sub with Site Plan Approval.
1231 We did receive a second submission for their Council review for Cleveland Station II. No SAC
1232 letters have gone out and no additional projects at the time.

1233 Chair Hurd: Ok, any questions of the deputy director? All right Commissioner Williamson wants
1234 to report on a conference.

1235 Commissioner Williamson: Yes, thank you and I'll be brief. On August 14th there was a
1236 statewide conference on homelessness, sponsored by the state government of course and I
1237 must have had over 100 people from all around the state I'll just give you a quick couple notes I
1238 took. The 2025 point in time count of homeless people, where they actually go out and you
1239 know physically see people who are homeless was 1,500 statewide of which 167 were
1240 unsheltered. And 1,500 were the others were in various facilities, I guess. The different
1241 speakers during the morning and the early afternoon New Castle Hope Center presented quite a
1242 bit about their programs up by Wilmington and came up with this interesting phrase "if you
1243 keep doing what you did, you'll keep getting what you got". I thought that was clever.

1244 Then there was a presentation by HCD on something called the State Rental Assistance Program
1245 going on for 13 years, it's kind of like a federal section one...what's the section?

1246 Commissioner Silverman: Section 8.

1247 Commissioner Williamson: Section 8 similar to Section 8 only state money to some extent and
1248 they had under 822 vouchers scattered around the State. They did talk a little bit about how
1249 jurisdictions can propose to work with the State and then have a focused program for that
1250 jurisdiction. And they're talking about a 2-year commitment, a pilot program etc. available to
1251 jurisdictions.

1252 ACLU gentleman was quite...I don't wanna say animated, that's, I don't mean that in a bad way.
1253 He spoke to some length about the Federal Government and the Trump Administration as you
1254 can imagine. The program that he was telling us about was titled Housing Not Handcuffs and
1255 went into detail about that. Finally the one thing I wanted to bring you here to that may affect
1256 our Comp Plan, is a State and you may have heard of this Staff, the State's goal to reduce
1257 homelessness by 50% in I think by one or 2 years and there is an interagency collaborative to
1258 end homelessness that has had 2 initial meetings in state government of the different agencies

1259 at that level and it will continue. And it sounded, you know, like they're motivated, and it may
1260 come down to the towns and the cities at some point. That's all, thank you.

1261 Chair Hurd: Thank you.

1262 **7. New Business**

1263 Chair Hurd: That takes us to item 7 new business introduction of new items for discussion by
1264 City Staff for Planning Commissioners, new items requiring public notice will be added to a
1265 future agenda. Anyone have anything for new business?

1266 Commissioner Williamson: Mr. Chair did this come up last time? The Beech tree disease. I think
1267 everyone 's heard of the Beech tree disease, it's now attacking Beech trees all over the East
1268 Coast. I mean I have about 30 Beech trees unfortunately on 2 parcels and I can see the leaves
1269 are dying. I've had arborists out twice, 2 different arborists who, they have some treatments
1270 available they can't guarantee anything it's going to be bad. And that's not strictly a land use
1271 issue of course, but it's part of context of the City, the State, the parks maybe have bad impacts
1272 in the parks you're going to have in 3 to 5 years maybe significant die offs in some areas. So, I
1273 just bring it up as an awareness.

1274 Chair Hurd: Yeah, I think it is difficult to, because you constantly have to update sort of your list
1275 of resilient plants and trees as disease diseases like these come along. So yeah, certainly
1276 something I hope the Parks Department is looking at all right thanks.

1277 **8. General Public Comment**

1278 Chair Hurd: Ok, that takes us to our last item, number 8 general public comment for items not
1279 on the agenda but related to the work of the Planning Commission. Have we had any items of
1280 general public comments submitted online Katie?

1281 Ms. Dinsmore: No, Mr. Chairman.

1282 Chair Hurd: Anyone present wishing to give general public comment? Anyone online wishing to
1283 give general public comment?

1284 Director Bensley: Katie.

1285 Ms. Dinsmore: Yes, one person does.

1286 Director Bensley: Yes, there was a comment from, I believe he's gonna speak online.

1287 Chair Hurd: So, can we enable them to?

1288 Ms. Dinsmore: Sir I've enabled your mic; you should be able to unmute yourself now.

1289 Mr. Khan: Hey, good afternoon. How are you guys?

1290 Chair Hurd: Good

1291 Mr. Khan: Hey, my name is Adnan Khan I actually sent in a comment last month as well
1292 regarding the zoning for the BC for the daycares. I wasn't able to get online, but I heard the
1293 recording, and I heard you guys talking about how you guys do some special...I forget what the
1294 exact term you guys mentioned, but I guess per demand you guys help out with the zoning. So I
1295 was, I really just wanted to follow up on that, basically, I sent an e-mail earlier, last weekend.
1296 Long story short, I have a property in mind that's vacant right now, the only thing that's stopping
1297 me from moving forward with it is the BC zoning thing. And I know you guys are working on it
1298 and I've been following up with Mr. Fortner for the past couple months, and he's been a great
1299 help. Basically, the only thing that's really stopping me is the BC zoning issue. I know you guys
1300 are working on it, and I remember last month you guys mentioned something about October
1301 20th and my only concern is like I just don't want to have to wait another few more months and

1302 then the property gets taken up and that's what I really want to talk to you guys about. I heard
1303 you mention something about you do help out regarding people's demands, you guys help out
1304 the zoning and I wanted to know if there was anything you guys can help out with that.

1305 Chair Hurd: So unfortunately, we can...ok, I'm gonna need you to mute yourself now. So, we can
1306 only act on basically code revisions that are brought to us from the department. So, I expect
1307 that perhaps Planner Fortner is working on language to change to add to the BC zoning when
1308 we get that, then we would review it, comment it, recommend it to the Council who then would
1309 review it and vote to approve it at which point it would then become changes to the zoning
1310 code. But we can't sort of do ad hoc on the fly changes we have to do it as a considered
1311 process. But I do thank you for investing wanting to invest in the city as Commissioner
1312 Williamson pointed out earlier childcare is an ongoing issue, so I think recognizing that there's a
1313 hole in the zoning code that's preventing uses is something we want to look at.

1314 Mr. Khan: Hey, do you guys mind if I ask you one more question?

1315 Chair Hurd: Sure.

1316 Mr. Khan: As far as October 20th goes, the meeting goes. Do you guys have any idea how long
1317 it is gonna take for you for it to go through 100%?

1318 Chair Hurd: I'm not sure what the...is the 20th supposedly a Council meeting?

1319 Director Bensley: So this is related to the discussion that we had on Special Use permits and
1320 potentially making some changes to move some things from special use permit to by right uses
1321 and also looking to potentially fill some holes right now for this specific issue, daycares are not
1322 an allowable use in BC or BB which are 2 of the things that we had looked to change as part of
1323 that. Because of the Council scheduling we were not able to get that discussion on in front of a
1324 majority or in front of the full Council until October 20th. That discussion is meant for the, that
1325 topic the special use permit topic as a whole. This will be part of that discussion, once that once
1326 that is completed and we get feedback from Council then we would look to start moving items
1327 that had support from Planning Commission and Council forward through the normal ordinance
1328 amendment process so through Planning Commission and then with the first and second
1329 reading through Council.

1330 Chair Hurd: Ok, yeah so all of these changes have to happen at public hearings with the
1331 opportunity for people to participate. So that is unfortunately part of the process is that we
1332 have to we have to follow those steps. Ok, anyone else? All right, having reached the end of the
1333 agenda the meeting is adjourned.

1334 **The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM**

1335

1336 Respectfully submitted,

1337

1338 Karl Kadar, Secretary

1339 As transcribed by Katelyn Dinsmore

1340 Planning and Development Department Administrative Professional I

1341