

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 12, 2008

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Bennett, presided until the arrival of Steve Dentel, Steven Beard, Wayne Casanova, Thomas Fruehstorfer, Kurt Philipp, Fred Stiegler,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ajay Prasad, Kass Sheedy

STAFF PRESENT: Charlie Emerson, Parks & Recreation Director

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 8, 2008

Mr. Bennett requested that item 6(a) be reworded as follows: Mr. Bennett reported that David Bartoo, Trails Manager for the Delaware State Parks System is currently planning a redesign of the trail system in the lower portion of the Carpenter Recreation Area of White Clay Creek State Park. Probably within the next eight months trails there will be closed for an indefinite period of time, once a plan has been authorized for execution.

MOTION BY MR. STIEGLER, SECONDED BY MR. BEARD: THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 8, 2008 MEETING BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. VOTE: 6 to 0.

AYE: Beard, Bennett, Casanova, Fruehstorfer, Philipp, Stiegler

NAY: 0

ABSENT: Dentel, Prasad, Sheedy

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments forthcoming.

3. CURBSIDE RECYCLING/RECYCLING OF PLASTIC BAGS

Mr. Dentel noted the curbside recycling resolution passed by the Conservation Advisory Commission was sent to the City Manager and Council in January.

Mr. Dentel would like the City to implement some type of program to reduce the use of plastic bags (those used by retailers for consumer purchases). Some of the environmental reasons to do that were: approximately 500 billion plastic bags were manufactured yearly, or 1 million per minute; an estimated 1%, or 5 billion, of these bags become windblown litter every year taking up to 1,000 years to biodegrade; large quantities of non-renewable resources are used to produce them; and they are a serious problem for marine animals. Mr. Dentel felt if Newark implemented a program to reduce plastic bag use, it would get publicity to help raise consciousness about the detrimental impact on the environment and might provide some momentum for the County or State to follow Newark's lead.

Mr. Dentel cited an article in the New York Times about the virtual elimination of plastic bag use (a 97% reduction) in Ireland which imposed a usage tax of \$.33 per bag (U.S. dollars). Ireland did not totally ban plastic bags, but allowed their use in packaging fresh fish, meat, poultry, unpackaged fruits, nuts, or vegetables, confectionary dairy products, cooked foods and ice. Mr. Dentel researched a study that compared Ireland's mandatory policy to a voluntary program implemented in Australia. Australia instituted a voluntary reduction in plastic bag use by businesses accompanied by a publicity campaign, and a 25% reduction was achieved.

The alternative to plastic bags would be for retailers to provide paper bags or for customers to use their own cloth or reusable bags. Although it was acknowledged consumers might initially see this as an inconvenience, it was felt peer pressure and education would play a large part in persuading the public to accept and adapt to the change. It was agreed that any plan would require a phase-in period.

Retail opposition was recognized as an issue that might be a difficult obstacle. Some stores have invested in carousel-type equipment designed for the plastic bags. However, it was noted that if the plan the City implemented allowed the retailer to charge the consumer for bags (as opposed to creating a City tax), expenses incurred would be offset by the income generated from the bag fee.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion on whether it would be preferable to recommend an outright ban on bags or charge a fee or tax for them. Mr. Philipp suggested the CAC needed to develop a reasonable framework for how the City would implement and enforce this change since there currently were no mechanisms in place for collecting a usage fee or tax.

Mr. Bennett recommended talking with retailers to get their opinions on implementation and find out where they saw stumbling blocks and offered to contact the Acme at Suburban Plaza. Mr. Fruehstorfer volunteered to contact a cross section of other retailers at the corporate level. Mr. Bennett suggested the Parks & Recreation

Department might give out cloth bags to the runners at Turkey Trot instead of t-shirts. Mr. Casanova mentioned it might be a good idea to ban plastic bags at Newark Nite. Mr. Emerson remarked this might make a good educational topic for the CAC's booth at Community Day.

Mr. Dentel will do more research on how other small municipalities in the United States have handled implementation. This item will be on the agenda for the March CAC meeting.

4. 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

CAC members were encouraged by Mr. Dentel to work on the sections they agreed to amend for the Annual Report. Mr. Beard agreed to revise the recycling section. Mr. Dentel e-mailed a file with all the minutes combined for 2007. Ms. Van Veen was asked to remind members of their assignments.

5. REVIEW OF PLANNING DEPT. REPORTS RE POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

There were no comments forthcoming.

6. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

(a) Mr. Stiegler referenced an article in the December, 2007 issue of The Delaware Business Ledger about PNC Bank's environmental efforts. The J. Richard Carnall Center in Wilmington, DE, headquarters of PNC's mutual fund processing division, opened as the financial service industry's first gold level LEED-certified green building. When the PNC Firstside Center in downtown Pittsburgh opened in 2000, it was the largest LEED-certified green building in the world at 650,000 square feet.

(b) Mr. Stiegler advised that at the February 25th Council meeting, there would be a second reading of Bill 08-02, an ordinance amending the Zoning Code by establishing a LEED program for the City of Newark.

(c) Mr. Fruehstorfer talked about soil contamination on golf courses and his concern about possible potential environmental ramifications with the Newark Country Club site. Mr. Fruehstorfer thought the CAC might want to raise this as an issue of possible concern.

(d) Mr. Dentel asked if the Pomeroy Trail would go under Delaware Avenue, and Mr. Emerson replied it would be a surface crossing as a tunnel was cost prohibitive.

(e) Mr. Dentel requested a status report on Kells Park. Mr. Emerson said the park re-opening scheduled for fall, 2007 was delayed due to turf problems, and he hoped the park would re-open in May or June.

(f) Mr. Stiegler mentioned a notice he received from DNREC/Solid Waste Authority regarding the yard waste ban.

(g) Mr. Bennett questioned if the resolution passed by CAC regarding development of the Newark Country Club had been communicated to the developer. The Conservation Advisory Commission sent this resolution to the Planning Commission with copies to Messrs. Luft and Lopata on July 27, 2007.

7. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:45 PM.

Alice Van Veen
Secretary

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