

**The City of Newark**  
**Conservation Advisory Commission**  
**Annual Report for 2018**

# The City of Newark Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC)

## Annual Report for 2018

### Contents

CAC Accomplishments in 2018.....	3
CAC Background.....	5
CAC Membership.....	5
CAC Goals for 2019.....	6

## CAC Accomplishments in 2018

This report summarizes the activities of the City of Newark's Conservation Advisory Commission in calendar year 2018. The CAC focused on a range of environmental and conservation policy issues in 2018, including: continuing to raise citizen awareness about the importance of conservation and the work of the CAC; reforestation in the city; promoting the anti-idling ordinance to reduce air pollution and health problems; reducing the use of plastic straws and bags in the city; and the expenditure of Green Energy funding to support energy efficiency and lighting projects in the city. In addition, CAC members conducted research about and looked into environmental and sustainability funding for the City from the State of Delaware and other sources.

Key CAC accomplishments in 2018 include the following. Additional details about each of the accomplishments listed below can be found in the CAC meeting minutes that are available from the City Secretary's office. The minutes contain detailed descriptions of the presentations to the CAC and descriptions of the CAC's discussions about conservation policy issues.

1. In January, the CAC hosted researchers from the University of Delaware (Dr. John Byrne and Dr. Michael Chajes and their graduate students) to discuss the merits of installing solar energy production capacity on City buildings. The researchers returned in April to present to the CAC and to discuss the various financing options for such a venture, which could be implemented by the city alone or in cooperation with the University of Delaware through a new sustainability partnership. The three options include self-financed installation by the city (similar to McKees solar park), a grant/loan from the Sustainable Energy Utility or a purchase power agreement with a private investor – solar operator combination. The CAC appreciated the research by Dr. Byrne and Dr. Chajes and encouraged them to meet with Acting City Manager Tom Coleman to explore the concept in greater detail. (See January and April meeting minutes for complete details.)
2. The CAC discussed and made changes to the Better Newark Award Nomination form in order to entice greater public participation with the award program. The CAC has noticed a lack of interest in nominating citizens for the award. The CAC believes that it may be time to discontinue the award in its current form. An alternative would be for the CAC to proactively award an environmental commendation to businesses, organizations and citizen in the City who are implementing innovative conservation programs and efforts.
3. The CAC provided two short articles to the City Secretary's office about conservation issues facing the city. This allows for greater public awareness of conservation policy and the work of the CAC. The topics were invasive plants and anti idling.
4. The CAC explored the possibility of applying to the DNREC electric car charging station rebate program. The CAC determined that given that there are only 36 all-electric vehicles in the City as of March 2018 and that the city would have to front the cost of the installation and receive a portion of the funding back from DNREC via the rebate program that it may not make sense at this time to install such chargers. The CAC will revisit this issue in 2019 as part of its examination of encouraging electric car use by and in the city. (See March meeting minutes.)
5. In June, the CAC recommended that City Council use up to \$12,000 of Green Energy Funding to install lights on the Creek Road Trail Connector. The lighting will increase safe public access to

the White Clay Creek Park and encourage the use of the trail for recreation and health and wellness reasons. (See June meeting minutes.)

6. The CAC explored the possibility of installing solar panels at the Newark Senior Center.
7. The CAC explored the merits of incentivizing restaurants to decrease their use of plastic straws.
8. The CAC approved the expenditure of up to \$975 to purchase conservation-themed t-shirts and re-usable shopping bags for distribution at the Newark Community Day. At Community Day, the CAC members promoted energy efficiency to citizens in a fun and engaging way, and, in turn, heard about citizens' conservation and environmental policy concerns and questions.
9. For a portion of the year, a CAC representative (Sheila Smith) served on the Sustainable City planning project at the invitation of the Planning Department.
10. The first annual Newark Reforestation Day was held on November 9, 2018. This is the result of a CAC recommendation passed by City Council in March 2018. 68 volunteers from the city, Amazon, Newark High School among others planted over 400 trees in the park adjacent to the Newark reservoir. The trees were entirely donated by the National Wildlife Federation. They included Beech Black Gum and Red Maple.
11. In September, the CAC heard public concerns about the proposed development of the 0 Paper Mill Road property and discussed the proposed development's potential impact on the environment, the White Clay Creek riparian zone, and the cost of future city services and environmental degradation vs. the benefits of increasing development. The CAC decided that to take a position on the proposed development was outside the mandate of the CAC, as envisioned by the City Charter. (See September meeting minutes.)
12. In October, the CAC recommended that the City Council not approve the proposed revision of Chapter 32, Article XXV Landscape Screening and Treatment Ordinance on the grounds that it would adversely affect tree cover in the City and it would discount the habitat value of trees. (See October meeting minutes.)
13. The CAC recommended that the City spend up to \$40,000 to pay for the ASHRAE Level 2 energy audit for the Newark Municipal Building and Police Department in order to determine the best path forward for the City to save money on its energy consumption and to determine needed investments in the building.
14. The CAC provided input to the Planning Commission's efforts to reform the City's Building Code to encourage greater use of LEED building practices.
15. In December, the CAC invited the Newark Charter School's marine science club to present their research into proven public policies designed to decrease the use of single-use plastic straws. In part as a result of the students' presentation, the CAC recommended to City Council that the city consider one of three policy options: 1) ban the distribution of single-use disposable plastic straws at restaurants, food service establishments; 2) adopt a city-wide policy whereby restaurants and food establishments only provide straws on request; 3) phase in the ban over a 2 year period while starting with the request-only option. (See December meeting minutes.)

## CAC Background

Ordinance 77-56 created the CAC in November 1977,

“to advise in the development, management, and protection of its natural resources with appropriate consideration of Newark's human and economic resources. The Commission shall concern itself with conservation in its broadest sense and may, among its activities: (a) Recommend to City Council a program for ecologically suitable utilization of all wet lands, valley streams, and flood plains and other land areas, the condition and use of which will affect the environmental quality of life in the City of Newark; (b) Shall file an annual report; (c) Maintain informal liaison with the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, the City Manager, and the City Council, and cooperate with other public and private bodies organized for similar purposes; (d) In addition to the foregoing, carry out any other duties, tasks, or responsibilities, consistent with the objectives of this Commission assigned to it by resolution of City Council.”

Ordinance 77-56 gave examples of programs that may be considered by the Commission, such as street tree replacement; improved recycling; beautification plans for volunteer groups; guidelines for multiple use of open space and public areas; community gardens; energy conservation; and review of Zoning Code amendments to encourage conservation, and also stated that “the above list shall not, however, limit the program which the Commission may undertake or be requested to undertake.”

## CAC Membership

The CAC has 9 members when all positions are filled.

<b>Appointment Type</b>	<b>CAC Member</b>	<b>Term Expiration Date</b>
Mayor's Appointment	John Hornor	3/15/21
Mayor's Appointment	Kismet Hazelwood	3/15/20
Mayor's Appointment	Katherine Sheedy	3/15/22
District 1	Ajay Prasad, Ph.D.	3/15/19
District 2	John Wessells	3/15/20
District 3	Bob McDowell	3/15/21
District 4	Sheila Smith	3/15/20
District 5	George Irvine (Chair as of May 2015)	3/15/21
District 6	Jason Kramer appointed in January 2016.	3/15/19
Staff Representative (ex officio)	Tom Coleman, Director, Public Works & Water Resources or Tim Filasky, Deputy Director	NA
Staff Secretary	Tara A. Schiano and Whitney Potts, City Secretary's Office	NA

An updated CAC roster is maintained on the City's web site at [www.cityofnewarkde.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/620](http://www.cityofnewarkde.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/620) (pdf format).

## CAC Goals for 2019

Throughout the year, the CAC continuously discusses new environmental conservation ideas. These ideas form the basis of future CAC recommendations to City Council. A list of the ideas for 2019 is listed below:

- Help the city reduce the use of single-use plastic bags by supporting relevant State legislation and if such legislation fails, action at the city level.
- Increase the use of electric cars by the City of Newark and by residents.
- Revisit installing charging stations for electric vehicles through the DNREC charger station rebate program.
- Increase CAC's Outreach & Education efforts via continued presence at Newark's Community Day, articles in the City newsletter and articles in the Newark Post.
- Emphasize the importance of abiding by the Anti-Idling ordinance – what else should CAC do to decrease idling of motor vehicles in the City?
- In keeping with the Boards and Commissions Review conducted in 2016, the CAC will have more of its members be FOIA trained.
- Reform the Better Newark Award so there is greater citizen interest in it and it promotes conservation behavior.
- Provide guidance to City Council about how the pending Sustainability Plan for the city can best be implemented.
- Help the City Parks and Recreation Department re-write the Tree and Shrub ordinance.
- Grow the Newark Reforestation Day for the Fall 2019 by getting more tree donations from the National Wildlife Federation, Rotary Clubs and involvement of volunteers from corporations and organizations.
- Educate the public about the importance of riparian buffer zones.
- Promote open space in downtown Newark so development does not impede people.