

City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting
Meeting Held in Person and via Zoom
Tuesday, March 14, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: 7:00PM

Roll Call

Present: Council President Michael M. Platt
Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder
Councilperson Joseph F. Day, III
Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

Also present: William J. Barthel, City Administrator
Mayor Michael J. Quaranta
Christopher Griffiths, Esquire, City Solicitor
Richard P. McCabe, Chief of Police
Jeffrey Bergstrom, City Building Official

Absent: Janet E. Carlin, City Treasurer

Council President Platt called the March 7, 2023, regular City Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The assembly stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Approval of the Minutes by Date

A motion to approve the Minutes of the February 7, 2023 Regular City Council meeting as presented was made, seconded, and unanimously carried.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Ms. Carlin was absent from the meeting.

Reports from the City Administrator and Staff

City Administrator:

City Paving – Mr. Barthel stated that the bid for city-wide paving contract was awarded to Greggo & Ferrara at a cost of \$671,385. The project will include milling and repaving of the Boothurst subdivision and Plum Alley, as well as curbing and sidewalk ramps at the intersection of 2nd and Chestnut Streets. A bid for the walkway in Battery Park was received for a cost of \$23,000. Mr. Barthel explained the increase in the estimate for the Boothurst subdivision.

Delmarva Project – Phase 3 final paving should be completed by early June 2023. Phase 4 construction should begin in mid- to late-April and should be completed by October 2023. Communication letters will be mailed this week. Mr. Barthel explained the construction area for Phase 4. The City should receive plans for Phase 5 in the fall.

Tourism Position – One candidate was interviewed; however, before he could come before Council he informed Mr. Barthel that he had taken another position. Mr. Barthel will advertise the position again. During discussion additional avenues of advertisement were suggested.

Playground Equipment – In response to a question from Council President Platt, Mr. Barthel stated that it was previously agreed that the City could use the \$60,000 grant for the walkway and playground equipment.

Report from Chief McCabe

Chief McCabe reported on the following:

- Officers were dispatched to a shooting just outside the city that resulted in a homicide. They successfully apprehended the suspect.
- Officers were the subject of two swatting incidents in March. The incidents were resolved peacefully. Chief McCabe explained swatting, noting that it is being done nationally and that the FBI is involved.
- There has been an uptick in frauds and phone scams. He stated that the Department will never phone anyone to ask for money.
- A complaint was received about the Attack Addiction event, and Chief McCabe noted that several tactical elements were missing due to the weather.
- Chief McCabe urged Council to carefully review Senate Bill 4, which pertains to probation. He explained some of the elements of the Bill and the ramifications of the proposed Bill.

Council Communications

Councilperson Day

- Councilperson Day stated that the Attack Addiction event was well run and commended the Police and Fire Departments on their participation in the event.

Councilperson Leary

- Councilperson Leary stated that Restaurant Week was a success.

Councilperson Souder

- Councilperson Souder concurred that the Police and Fire Departments and first responders did a great job at the Attack Addiction event.

Business from the Mayor

- Mayor Quaranta thanked the Police and Fire Departments and the volunteers who helped with the Attack Addiction event.
- Mayor Quaranta noted that the Senior Center fundraiser was a great event.
- He commended the organizers of MickeyFest.
- The Mayor noted that the News Journal included an excellent handout that listed Summer Camps, noting that he will share it with The Weekly.
- Mayor Quaranta noted several nominations being considered by Council for the Board of Health, the Board of Adjustment, and MSC.
- March is National Women's Month.

- Mayor Quaranta read a Proclamation commemorating the Anniversary of Arbor Day and proclaiming April 23, 2023 as Arbor Day in the City of New Castle.

Business From the Council President

- In response to a question from Council President Platt, Mr. Barthel stated that the City does not get reports of when the train tracks are inspected. Captain Tim Moore stated that Good Will Fire Company has procedures in place and resources that can be contacted. He added that MSC and the County both have a reverse 911 system.
- Council President Platt asked Mr. Barthel to look into purchasing new recording equipment. Mr. Barthel suggested that be included in the upcoming budget.
- At Council President Platt's suggestion Mr. Barthel will have Mr. Griffiths contact the Trust attorney regarding the Dog Park.
- Council President Platt suggested installing a gazebo where the bank building was. Mr. Barthel stated that would be a Resolution and suggested that style options and cost be researched. He recommended that Council decide if that is something they want to move forward with, and how much would be allocated to next year's budget.
- Council President Platt thanked Daniel Knox, former MSC Commissioner, for his years of service to MSC.

Public Comment

Phil Gross – 1301 13th Street

Mr. Gross agreed that new recording equipment should be purchased.

Mr. Gross suggested that Council look into bringing back the Beautification Committee to put new plants in the planters at the wharf.

Mr. Gross noted that the Partnership and the Historical Society are very involved in promoting the City and doing events, and suggested that the idea of hiring a Tourism Director be revisited.

Mr. Gross opined that MickeyFest should not be brought back to the City.

Rod Miller – East 3rd Street

Mr. Miller spoke in opposition to the Lukens Drive project. In response to a question regarding a traffic study, Mr. Griffiths noted that his office is working on it. Mr. Miller asked that DelDOT be included in discussions. He expressed his deep concern about the traffic.

Carol Hickman

Ms. Hickman spoke in opposition to the Lukens Drive project and expressed her concern about traffic, opining that the best use for people now at the river is at the Park.

Brian Mattaway – 628 Delaware Street

Mr. Mattaway read a prepared statement into the record recommending a comprehensive recruiting strategy and making a number of recommendations.

Council Discussion and Possible Vote on DelDOT's Plan to Change Ferry Cut Off at Delaware Street.

Council President Platt noted that DelDOT's proposal was discussed at the February meeting and since that time Council members had the opportunity to inspect the site. After discussion, Council President Platt called for a roll-call vote:

Council President Platt – Yes

Councilperson Day – Yes

Councilperson Leary – No

Councilperson Souder – Yes

The proposal carried with a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed.

Mr. Barthel will notify DelDOT that Council approved their proposal.

Council Discussion, Motion and Vote on Resolution 2023-11; A Resolution Approving the Movement of the Fort Casimir Monument to Trustees of the New Castle Common Property.

Mr. Griffiths read the Resolution, and a motion to consider Resolution 2023-11 was made and seconded. On vote the motion was unanimously carried.

Council Discussion, Motion and Vote on Resolution 2023-12; A Resolution Appointing Sheila Shannon to the Municipal Services Commission.

A motion to consider Resolution 2023-12 was made and seconded, and Mr. Griffiths read the Resolution. Ms. Shannon introduced herself and stated her experience and qualifications for her appointment.

On vote the motion was unanimously carried.

Council Discussion, Motion and Vote on Resolution 2023-13; A Resolution Reappointing Dennis Anuszewski to the Board of Adjustment.

A motion to consider Resolution 2023-13 was made and seconded, and Mr. Griffiths read the Resolution. On vote the motion was unanimously carried.

Council Discussion, Motion and Vote on Resolution 2023-14; A Resolution Approving the Appointment of David Bechtel, MD to the Board of Health.

A motion to consider Resolution 2023-14 was made and seconded, and Mr. Griffiths read the Resolution. Dr. Bechtel introduced himself and stated her experience and qualifications for his appointment.

On vote the motion was unanimously carried.

Council Discussion Regarding Holding the MickeyFest Event in the City of New Castle.

Council President invited the organizers of MickeyFest to address the Council. Ms. Molly Morrill stated that MickeyFest was held in New Castle in 2019 to raise funds for research of Sanfilippo syndrome, and the organizers wished to bring the event back to New Castle in 2023. The organizers proposed holding the event in a similar manner as the 2019 event. It was noted that the event was held in other locations since 2019; however, the organizers stated that they wanted to bring it back to New Castle because they feel a deep connection to the City. Councilperson Souder recommended that the event be moved to Battery Park to avoid disruption to the residents around The Green. Council President added that recently local events have been held at the pier. Council President Platt recommended that the organizers meet with Chief McCabe and the City Administrator to discuss the particulars of the event. The recommendation to move the event to Battery Park was echoed by Councilperson Leary and Mr. Barthel.

There being no further business to discuss, Council President Platt called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer

Next Regular Meeting Date: April 11, 2023
Posted: 03/07/2023