

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
April 24, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.
New Castle Senior Center, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Brie Rivera, Vice Chair
Margo Reign
Tamara Stoner
Kristin Zumar
Timothy Gibbs
Keaira Faña-Ruiz

Absent: Matthew Lovlie, Chair
Cynthia Batty
Vera Worthy
Keaira Faña-Ruiz

Also Present: Chris Rogers, City Planner

Ms. Rivera called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. The assembly rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call followed. Commissioner Tamara Stoner joined the meeting at 6:36 and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Minutes

February 27, 2023

A motion to approve the February 27, 2023, minutes as presented was made Ms. Zumar, seconded by Mr. Gibbs, and unanimously carried.

March 27, 2023

A motion to approve the March 27, 2023, minutes as presented was made by Mr. Gibbs, seconded by Ms. Reign, and unanimously carried.

Public Comment

Phil Gross – 1301 13th Street

Mr. Gross noted that some large projects were approved by the Board and asked the Planning Commission to take into consideration the residents in regard to traffic, noise, and other issues when considering upcoming projects.

Mr. Gross stated that he submitted a request to City Council to remove Commissioner Batty from the Planning Commission, referencing unethical postings and voter intimidation.

Angela Marconi, DNREC Director of Air Quality

Ms. Marconi stated that she watched the video of the January and February Planning Commission meetings and sent an email that did not get on the March Planning Commission Agenda. She distributed copies of the email to the Commissioners. Ms. Marconi stated she attended the April meeting in order to answer any questions the Commissioners may have

regarding Air Quality and/or studies that have been conducted and urged the Commissioners to reach out to the Agency with questions at any time.

Christopher Rogers, City Planner

Mr. Rogers noted for the record that the Riveredge rezoning will be discussed at the May 9th City Council Public Hearing and regular meeting.

Ms. Rivera noted that Commissioner Keaira Faña-Ruiz joined the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Annual Report

Ms. Reign – Mr. Sean O’Neil will attend the May Planning Commission meeting to make a presentation on Comprehensive Plans.

Update from the City Planner

Mr. Rogers noted that the Board of Adjustment Decision on The Battery special exception and variances for a multi-family development on West 7th Street that the Planning Commission recommended to the Board of Adjustment has been appealed to the Court. In response to a question from Ms. Reign, Mr. Rogers stated that he did not know which Court would hear the appeal.

Mr. Rogers noted that the application on 702 and 706 Delaware Street for a multi-family development in the DG Zone consisting of 36 units that the Planning Commission determined to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended to the Board of Adjustment was approved by the Board of Adjustment for 24 units. In response to a question from Ms. Reign, Mr. Rogers stated that it was the Board’s decision and recommended that she read the minutes from the Board of Adjustment hearing.

Mr. Rogers noted that the Sea Level Rise Task Force is hosting a public workshop on May 10th at the New Castle Senior Center. In response to a question from Ms. Zumar, Mr. Rogers stated that there will be discussion about sea level rise and its impact, but the workshop will focus largely on educating the public on flood plain, flood insurance, and related matters. Several State and County agencies will be represented to answer questions and speak to the City’s Flood Plain Ordinance. Mr. Rogers suggested that it would be beneficial for the Commissioners to attend the workshop.

Mr. Rogers noted that Sean O’Neil is the President of the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association and opined that he is an excellent person to speak to the Commissioners.

Comments from Commission Members

Ms. Zumar asked for clarification about the Planning Commission’s role. Mr. Rogers gave the Commissioners background of the Zoning Ordinance and explained the Planning Commission’s role in recommending concept plans and approving site plans, and provided examples of how the process works. He also explained that the Comprehensive Plan is created by the Planning Commission.

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There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Rivera called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Zumar. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reign and unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer