

New Castle City Board of Health Meeting
July 25, 2023 -- 6 p.m.
1 Municipal Drive, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Tish Gallagher, Chair
Jackie Metz, Vice Chair
Eleanor Green
Dr. Joanne Viola

Absent: Dr. David Bechtel
Furio Casale, Building Inspector

Ms. Gallagher convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Dr. Viola noted that Dr. Bechtel wrote an article on rabies prevention. Ms. Gallagher stated that she has not yet seen the article in The Weekly.

Meeting Minutes

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the April 25, 2023, Board of Health meeting as presented was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Playground Committee – Ms. Gallagher noted that the Playground is happening; however, efforts to have a member of the Playground Committee attend a BOH meeting have not come to fruition. Dr. Viola opined that the playground will be completed by the end of August. Ms. Gallagher stated she would like to know if the Playground Committee has any future plans for other playgrounds in the community, and if they have any plans for adult exercise equipment.

Update on Articles

- Tick-borne Diseases – Ms. Gallagher sent a draft of her article to Ms. Metz and will forward the draft to the other members of the Board.
- Fishing in the river – Ms. Gallagher noted that information on how much and how often to eat fish from the river is available on the DNREC website. Ms. Gallagher and Metz discussed timing for the article, and decided to hold off publishing it until after the fishing pier has been completed.

Train/freight passage through New Castle – Ms. Gallagher stated that she has been unable to get any information on this topic. Captain Moore did indicate to her that Good Will Fire Company is not aware of what comes through town. Ms. Gallagher noted that she has also had communication with Chief Majewski.

Mosquito control measures – Ms. Gallagher stated that she has not seen any dusting for mosquitos yet. Dr. Viola noted that she has seen an increase in the mosquito population and suggested that the Board remind people how to avoid getting bitten. Ms. Gallagher said she wants to know the contents of the dust and whether the public should be made aware of any

harmful ingredients. A discussion of dusting ensued. Ms. Gallagher will reach out to Mr. Barthel to discuss dusting and the concern with standing water being a breeding ground for mosquitos.

Report from the Building Inspector

In Mr. Casale's absence, Ms. Gallagher read his report.

- 190 Code violations were issued since January 1st.
- 90 Code violations were issued for various quality of life issues throughout the City.
- There are 39 vacant properties, 11 of which have been issued Building Permits and that are being renovated.
- 6 properties have been listed as nuisance properties.
- 2 properties have been boarded.
- \$5,002 in fees has been assessed this calendar year.

General discussion of boarded properties ensued.

General Discussion

New Castle Senior Center Health Center – Dr. Bechtel inspected the location and informed the Board via email that the space is too small to house a full-service practice center that includes multiple services and multiple practitioner offices. 2,500 square feet is the minimum that is required. Dr. Viola noted that the nearest medical facility is the Christiana Care facility at Hare's Corner. She added that Christiana Care is finding it difficult to provide services due, in part, to staff leaving and issues hiring new staff. Ms. Gallagher expressed her hope that the Senior Center will find a tenant to rent that space. A discussion of available rental space at the Senior Center ensued.

New Business

Fall BOH Activities – Ms. Metz suggested that the Board members attend the training for emergency procedures at Good Will Fire Company. (*Stenographer's Note: This came up in conversation with Mr. Bill Emory prior to the meeting being called to order.*) Mr. Emory noted that Chief Majewski is working on emergency procedures relative to a train incident. A discussion of matters connected with the trains ensued.

Board Leadership – Ms. Gallagher suggested that the members discuss the position of Chair. After discussion, the members agreed that Ms. Gallagher will continue as Chair of the BOH.

Public Comment

Ms. Green expressed her concern that the contents of the train cars are not necessarily known. Mr. Emory stated that the Fire Department is made aware of the contents, but added that it is possible that an unauthorized car is attached to a train. Dr. Viola commended the Fire Department's outreach events and the information that is being imparted to the community.

A discussion of the demographics of the City was held during which it was noted that there has been an increase in young families coming to New Castle.

Mr. Emory concurred that adult exercise equipment would be a good idea for the Playground Committee to address. Ms. Gallagher noted that she thought the Playground Committee was starting to look into other parks as well. Discussion of the care of and improvements to the park ensued. Ms. Gallagher suggested that Mr. Zubaca from the Playground Committee be invited to the next BOH meeting. Further discussion was held regarding adult exercise equipment. Mr. Gross suggested that the picnic tables be put back in the park and discussion of issues that were faced with the picnic tables were noted. Mr. Gross noted visitors to the park come from not only Delaware, but other states and countries, and the importance of maintaining a certain look in the park.

Ms. Gallagher asked Mr. Emory about the State's plans to update evacuation routes. Mr. Emory noted that work is being done in conjunction with DeIDOT and WILMAPCO, and the work is not yet completed. It was noted that DeIDOT continues to push back the timeline for required infrastructure improvements.

Additional discussion included flooding and flood mitigation and the role of the Sea Level Rise Task Force.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Gallagher called for a Motion to adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The Motion was carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer