

City of New Castle Delaware  
City Council Public Hearing  
Meeting to be held electronically via Zoom  
Tuesday, October 13, 2020  
6:30 p.m.

**Call to Order: 6:30 PM**

**Roll Call**

**Present:** Council President Linda Ratchford  
Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder  
Councilperson Russell P. Smith  
Councilperson Michael M. Platt

**Absent:** Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

**Also present:** William Barthel, City Administrator  
Daniel Losco, Esquire, City Solicitor  
Mayor Michael J. Quaranta  
Pam Patone, General Manager MSC  
Kimberley Schlicting, DEMEC  
Debbie Pfeil, KCI Associate/Planning Manager  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
Brian Whittaker, City Clerk

Council President Ratchford called the October 13, 2020, Public Hearing to order and introduced the Council and attendees.

**Public Hearing for the City Council to Receive and Review Comments on a Proposed Update to the 2019 City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan.**

Council President Ratchford introduced Ms. Debbie Pfeil from KCI. Ms. Pfeil gave an update relative to Public Comments received on the Comprehensive Plan. No controversial comments were received. Ms. Pfeil will release all comments to the public on the website.

Council President Ratchford opened the floor to public comment on the Comprehensive Plan.

**Ms. Arleen Harris**

Ms. Harris asked how the City will pay for the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Pfeil explained that implementation of the Plan will be reviewed by City Officials annually to determine what Goals will be proposed for the next year's budget based on Federal and State funding.

Ms. Harris expressed her concern that one Map shows a section in the NE that is identified as a wetland; however, another Map indicates it is zoned as Light Industry/Office Park and asked if that area should not be developed at all. Ms. Pfeil explained the different Maps and how they are

synchronized, noting that the City is required to assign a Future Land Use to all parcels in the City.

Ms. Harris noted that many Strategies call for someone to be appointed to do things she feels should be handled by the City Administration and asked for clarification. Ms. Pfeil explained that appointments are sometimes made if the task requires a specific skill set or if, due to workload, City staff is unable to take on a larger project.

Ms. Harris asked how the Plan addresses repaving of City roads. Council President Ratchford explained paving is an operational item that is addressed by City Council.

**Mr. Philip Gross**

Mr. Gross expressed his opinion that areas designated as wetlands should not be allowed to be zoned usable. Ms. Pfeil explained why the City is required to assign a Future Land Use to all parcels and noted that in addition to Future Land Use regulations, a developer is also subject to Federal, State, County and Municipal zoning regulations. The City Solicitor explained the legal ramifications of the City designating a property as unbuildable.

There being no further Public Comments, Council President Ratchford called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Smith and seconded by Councilperson Platt. On vote, the Motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Weirich  
Stenographer

**Next Regular Meeting Date: November 10, 2020**  
**Posted: 10/06/2020**

City of New Castle Delaware  
City Council Public Hearing  
Meeting to be held electronically via Zoom  
Tuesday, October 13, 2020  
6:45 p.m.

**Call to Order: 6:45 PM**

**Roll Call**

**Present:** Council President Linda Ratchford  
Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder  
Councilperson Russell P. Smith  
Councilperson Michael M. Platt

**Absent:** Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

**Also present:** Mayor Michael J. Quaranta  
William Barthel, City Administrator  
Daniel Losco, Esquire, City Solicitor  
Mayor Michael J. Quaranta  
Richard P. McCabe, Chief of Police  
Pam Patone, General Manager MSC  
Kimberley Schlicting, DEMEC  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
Brian Whittaker, City Clerk

Council President Ratchford called the October 13, 2020, Public Hearing to order and introduced the Council and attendees.

**A Public Hearing concerning Ordinance No. 529:** An Ordinance to Amend and Restate Chapter 28 of the City Code entitled “Emergency Management.”

Mayor Quaranta opined that due to the complexity of the issue adequate time should be taken to review and discuss the proposed changes to Chapter 28 of the City Code.

**Mr. Philip Gross**

Mr. Gross stated his agreement with the Mayor’s suggestion that the proposed changes are carefully reviewed and recommended that action on the Ordinance be delayed.

**Ms. Arleen Harris**

Ms. Harris asked for clarification of edits made to the discussion draft Ordinance. Mr. Losco explained items highlighted or stricken out were made subsequent to the First Reading.

Mr. Losco noted that late edits to §28-2 (c) are not reflected in the Council Packet version of the Ordinance and added that a Motion on that edit is necessary.

City Council Public Meeting  
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There being no further public comment, Council President Ratchford called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Platt and seconded by Councilperson Smith. On vote, the Motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Weirich  
Stenographer

**Next Regular Meeting Date: November 10, 2020**  
**Posted: 10/06/2020**

City of New Castle Delaware  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Meeting to be held electronically via Zoom  
Tuesday, November 10, 2020  
7:00 p.m.

**Call to Order: 7:00 PM**

**Roll Call**

**Present:** Council President Linda Ratchford  
Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder  
Councilperson Russell P. Smith  
Councilperson Michael M. Platt  
Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

**Also present:** William Barthel, City Administrator  
Daniel Losco, Esquire, City Solicitor  
Mayor Michael J. Quaranta  
Richard P. McCabe, Chief of Police  
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official  
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer  
Kathy Walls, Finance Coordinator  
David Athey, City Engineer  
Brian Whittaker, City Clerk

Council President Ratchford called the November 10, 2020, Regular City Council meeting to order and introduced the Council and attendees.

Council President Ratchford recognized and thanked all the Veterans who have served and who keep us safe.

**Minutes**

A Motion to approve the October 13, 2020 Public Hearing (6:30 pm), the October 13, 2020 Public Hearing (6:45 pm), and the October 20, 2020 Budget Workshop/Special Meeting as presented, and the October 13, 2020 Regular Meeting as amended was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

**Approval of the Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Carlin presented the unaudited Treasurer's Report as of October 31, 2020:

Total unrestricted funds	\$4,091,483.93
Total restricted funds	\$2,369,308.30
Total cash	\$6,460,792.23

A Motion to approve the unaudited Treasurer's Report as presented was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

## **Reports from the City Administrator and Staff**

### Delaware Street

Mr. Barthel stated Delaware Street is ready to be milled and overlaid; however, MSC has advised that not all of the poles can be removed until approximately the end of December. To ensure the new pavement is not damaged, the City recommended waiting until spring to finish the project. It was noted that finances are on track for completion of the project, and winter snowplowing will not damage the street or curbs if the project is not completed until spring.

### Vacant Properties

Council President Ratchford noted there are five boarded-up properties in the City and asked how long a property can remain vacant or boarded up. Mr. Barthel explained that the process to have a property put up for Sheriff's Sale can be lengthy. Further discussion included legal processes and actions the City could take.

Council President Ratchford requested that the City Administrator and City Solicitor discuss options and present recommendations at the December Council meeting.

### Seasonal Events

Mr. Barthel gave an update of Holiday events in the City that are being held in person or through technology, have been down-sized, or have been cancelled. Chief McCabe gave an update on the Adopt-a-Family program.

### Report from the Police Chief

- The Department has investigated a rash of recent vehicle break-ins and Chief McCabe recommended that all residents keep their vehicles locked and that they do not leave the keys in their vehicles.
- The Department investigated a recent domestic-related kidnapping. The victim was recovered safely and the appropriate individuals were charged.
- The Detectives found evidence that a firearm was discharged during their investigation of a reported shooting in the Penn Valley area. Chief McCabe will update Council at the December meeting.
- The Department has received complaints of "shots fired" in the Marsh Area that may have been related to illegal hunting. Chief McCabe encouraged residents to call 911 if they hear shots being fired or what they think are shots fired.
- The Police Department website was launched 10 days ago that will provide information to Residents as well as a link to report incidents. [www.newcastlecitypolice.com](http://www.newcastlecitypolice.com)

Council President Ratchford encouraged residents to call 911 if they see or hear anything suspicious.

### **Council Communications**

#### Veteran's Day

Councilperson Platt thanked and congratulated all Veterans for their service, and wished all Marines a Happy Birthday ... Semper Fi!

### **Business From the Mayor**

#### Small Business Saturday

Mayor Quaranta read a Proclamation declaring Saturday, November 28, 2020, as Small Business Saturday and encouraged support of local businesses throughout the area.

#### COVID-19

Cases of COVID-19 have risen in Delaware, which was predicted as the weather turned colder, and Mayor Quaranta encouraged all residents to continue to follow the Governor's Guidelines.

Mayor Quaranta noted that Pfizer announced very favorable results of its tests of a COVID-19 vaccine.

#### Arts Council

The City and Arts Council co-sponsored event with Opera Delaware was very successful.

#### Performing Arts Facility

Mayor Quaranta will continue to discuss the idea of creating a permanent performing arts facility in Battery Park with community leaders. Councilperson Smith reiterated his suggestion to be cautious about proceeding with a permanent stage structure in Battery Park, noting that many residents who commented on the Comprehensive Plan were very protective of Battery Park.

#### Veteran's Day

Mayor Quaranta thanked all who have served in the armed services.

#### Elections

Mayor Quaranta thanked all the men and women who ran for public office in the last election and congratulated the winners.

#### Separation Day

Mayor Quaranta said he would welcome the opportunity to participate in a Separation Day Committee to gather ideas for more public involvement and entertainment for young people.

#### Thanksgiving

Mayor Quaranta wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

## **Business From the Council President**

### Bike Delaware

Bike Delaware is having a free virtual conference on Designing Delaware Intersections for People on November 19. Three intersections in New Castle will be part of the conference: 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Rt. 273, Rt. 141 and Rt. 273, and Hare's Corner. More information can be found at <https://www.bikede.org>

### Donations/Contributions

Residents can contribute to the New Castle Cares Fund to help residents pay utility bills at <https://newcastlemsc.delaware.gov>. Information on contributions to the Christmas Party for Kids can be found at [www.newcastlecitypolice.com](http://www.newcastlecitypolice.com).

## **Public Comments**

### Mr. Philip Gross

Mr. Gross asked if there is a mandate requiring the City to take bids on contracts given by the City. City Administrator Barthel stated there is no mandate requiring the City to take bids; however, the City is accountable to the Council and residents of New Castle for its actions.

Questions from Mr. Gross relative to trash cans and Separation Day funding were deferred to the Budget discussion later in the meeting.

Mr. Gross opined that management of Separation Day should be brought back under the purview of the City.

Mr. Gross opined that fines should not be turned into a revenue stream and that Council should proceed carefully in dictating how people should manage their property.

## **Old Business**

### **Council Discussion and Possible Action on City's Operations, Budget or Recovery due to COVID-19**

#### COVID-19 Cases

Council President Ratchford noted that positive cases are on the rise and echoed Mayor Quaranta's recommendation that residents continue to follow the Governor's Guidelines.

#### Playgrounds

City Administrator Barthel stated that fencing around City playgrounds has repeatedly been unofficially removed. He suggested not putting fences back and just using signage to encourage residents to be cautious when using playground equipment.

A Motion to open the City playgrounds with appropriate signage was made and seconded.



During discussion, Mr. Losco stated signage is recommended but is not a requirement. Councilperson Leary noted the State handout contains suggested wording for signage and recommended that Council review the handout for playground signage.

Council President restated that the Motion is to open City playgrounds with appropriate signage.

On vote, the Motion passed unanimously.

City Facility Review

City Administrator Barthel stated Facility Reviews were completed and he will be meeting with Ms. Leila Hamroun for recommendations to open the City offices. He anticipates that required equipment will be purchased before CARES funding closes.

**Second Reading of Ordinance No. 529;** An Ordinance to Amend and Restate Chapter 28 of the City Code entitled "Emergency Management."

A Motion to dispense with the second reading was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Ordinance No. 529;** An Ordinance to Amend and Restate Chapter 28 of the City Code entitled "Emergency Management."

A Motion to discuss and vote on Ordinance 529 was made and seconded.

Mr. Losco reviewed the changes that were made to Ordinance 529 and responded to Council questions.

After discussion, Council President Ratchford called for a vote on Ordinance 529 to amend and restate Chapter 28 of the City Code entitled "Emergency Management". The Motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

Council President Ratchford – aye  
Councilperson Souder – aye  
Councilperson Leary – aye  
Councilperson Smith – aye  
Councilperson Platt – nay

**Budget Discussion and possible action** including, but not limited to, allocation of funds for various City needs, grants and other expenditures and a **Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2020-28;** A Resolution amending fiscal year 2021 budget for the above mentioned reasons.

City Administrator Barthel reviewed changes to the 2021 Budget recommended at the Mid-Year City Council Budget Workshop.

Council also held in-depth discussions of non-profit contributions, grants, trash cans, the feasibility study, and wayfinding signage. After discussion it was agreed to amend the Budget to include funding for trash cans, the FEMA Grant and Wayfinding signs, with the remainder unallocated. Unallocated items will be revisited at a later date.

A Motion on Resolution 2020-28 to amend the fiscal year 2021 budget was made and seconded. Council President Ratchford read the Resolution.

On vote, the Resolution 2020-28 was unanimously passed.

### **Separation Day 2021 Discussion**

A Motion to postpone Separation Day 2021 discussion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2020-29;** A Resolution approving the submission of the Separation Day Grant in Aid application for FY 2022.

A Motion to approve Resolution 2020-29 was made and seconded. Council President Ratchford read the Resolution.

On Vote, Resolution 2020-29 was unanimously passed.

**Motion Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2020-30;** A Resolution authorizing the acceptance of FEMA's Pre Disaster Mitigation grant (PDMC-PL-03-DE-2019-006), allocation of \$33,000 as part of the City "match", and authorizing the City Administrator to enter into all necessary agreements involved.

A Motion to approve Resolution 2020-30 was made and seconded. Council President Ratchford read the Resolution.

On Vote, Resolution 2020-30 was unanimously passed.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2020-31;** A Resolution to Establish a Temporary Transportation Plan Update Advisory Committee.

A Motion to approve Resolution 2020-31 was made and seconded. Council President Ratchford read the Resolution.

On Vote, Resolution 2020-31 was unanimously passed.

### **Discussion Regarding Floating Dock**

Career Captain Tim Moore of the Goodwill Fire Company gave Council an update on needs of the Fire Company relative to the floating dock. He explained that the Coast Guard is closing their satellite station in New Jersey and the Goodwill Fire Company is the first line of defense

until the Coast Guard can respond for water rescues on the Delaware River. In addition, he stated that:

- Approximately 70-100 rescue calls are received each year, and roughly 40-50 calls are on the Delaware River.
- Goodwill Fire Company is the only Delaware station with direct access to the Delaware River north of the C&D Canal.
- The floating dock would provide a safer environment to move injured persons off the boat and to the wharf.
- The 24' Boston Whaler would be moored on the floating dock from March/April – November. The boat ramp would still be used year-round.
- The floating dock would provide better positioning of the fire boat relative to wake from shipping traffic on the river.
- Having the fire boat moored at the floating dock would save response time for water rescues.

Captain Moore also noted that the Goodwill Fire Company is seeking funding to replace the existing boat ramp that has deteriorated over the years

It was noted that the City's permit does not allow pleasure day-boats to dock at the floating dock.

**Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2020-32;** A Resolution Approving the Encroachment into the City Right-Of-Way on West 3rd Street to Allowing New Construction of Steps Located at 46 West 3rd Street.

A Motion to approve Resolution 2020-32 was made and seconded. Council President Ratchford read the Resolution.

Mr. Bergstrom explained the purpose of the Resolution and answered Council questions.

On Vote, Resolution 2020-32 was unanimously passed.

A Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. On vote, the Motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Weirich  
Stenographer

**Next Regular Meeting Date: December 8, 2020**  
**Posted: 11/02/2020**