

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting

Minutes

April 26, 2021 -- 6:30 p.m.

Meeting via Zoom Technology

Members Present: David Baldini, Chair
William Walters, Vice Chair
Erin Sabatella
John Lafferty
Gail Seitz
George Velitskakis
Vera Worthy
Jonathan Justice

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official
Ryan Mawhinney, AECOM Senior Planner

Mr. Baldini called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Mr. Baldini announced that Joseph Day had resigned his seat on the Planning Commission as a result of his successful election to the City Council of the City of New Castle.

Minutes

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the March 22, 2021, meeting as amended was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

New Business

90 Lukens Drive, (Tax Parcel # 21-021.00-003), Site Plan Approval for New Warehouse

Mr. Mario Gangemi, owner of the subject property, explained the project and noted how PLUS comments will or have been addressed. It was also mentioned that the construction site is not in the flood plain, the NCCD is agreeable to the proposed stormwater plan, and wetlands on the property will not be impacted.

Mr. Gangemi noted that the landscape plan meets the intent of the Code, and explained that the plan includes the overall required number of trees, but the number of trees per parking space has not been met in order to maintain maximum flexibility in that area. He added that if the Commission required more trees in the parking lot, he would accommodate that request. Mr. Mawhinney gave further clarification of landscape requirements in the Code. Relative to Ms. Sabatella's suggestion that native plants be considered in the landscape plan, Mr. Gangemi stated he would explore that with the landscape architect.

During discussion, it was noted that installing electric vehicle charging stations in the parking lot is up to the tenant. It was suggested that it would behoove the property owner to make the

parking lot “EV charger ready” and that Mr. Gangemi have a conversation with Mr. Lafferty on the subject after the meeting.

Mr. Bergstrom stated that all comments from AECOM and the PLUS review would have to be met before a building permit is issued.

A Motion to approve the site plan as presented with the conditions established was made, seconded, and unanimously carried.

Minor Sub-Division of Parcel Numbers 21-015.00-035 (600, 602, 604, 606, and 608 Tremont Street) and 21-015.00-036 (601 and 603 Deemer Place)

Mr. Bergstrom explained that when the seven lots were recorded, they were recorded on two different deeds and as two parcels (one parcel with five lots and one parcel with two lots). The minor subdivision and related variances will correct the issue. A recommendation from the Planning Commission to the Board of Adjustment is required.

A Motion for a recommendation that the minor subdivisions as presented be forwarded to the Board of Adjustment was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Planning Commission Projects

Site Plan Process

Mr. Walters explained the changes he and Mr. Rogers discussed to refine the proposed Permit Application Requirements and Procedures (§230-46).

After discussion, it was agreed that the proposed draft as presented will be submitted to Mr. Rogers for final review and comment. Thereafter it will be re-presented at the May Planning Commission meeting and if approved, it will be presented to City Council for consideration at the June meeting.

Charging Stations for Electric Cars

Mr. Lafferty updated the Commission on the status of EV charging stations. He opined that plans to have the first dual charging station installed at the 3rd Street Parking Lot are moving forward. Mr. Scott Blomquist (MSC) and Mr. Justin Day (HAC) visited other proposed locations for the installation of EV charging stations and made tentative recommendations. MSC is assessing the number of chargers that can be obtained under the rebate program that expires on June 30, 2021.

Mr. Baldini noted that a larger strategic plan is required, and recommended that the Commission begin the thought process for a long-term strategy, including residential and commercial. Mr. Velitskakis volunteered to explore the commercial side, and two volunteers to explore the residential side were requested. Mr. Rogers will be contacted for his assistance. Relative to residential chargers, Mr. Lafferty noted that the European model for on-street chargers is the utilization of lampposts. Relative to input from HAC, Mr. Walters suggested that first a solution should be established and then HAC can offer input. Mr. Walters also opined that on-street

parking will become an issue once chargers are installed for residential use. During discussion it was noted that funding may be available under the first COVID Bill and the Infrastructure Bill.

WILMAPCO Transportation Study

Ms. Seitz noted that an Advisory Committee meeting was held during which community input was reviewed. The Consultant is working on alternatives and solutions to review.

Comments From Commissioners

Election of Officers

Mr. Baldini noted that a Chair and Vice-Chair needs to be elected for the Planning Commission. He stated that he would not seek re-election as Chairman. Ms. Seitz suggested that Commissioners forward interest and/or nominations to Mr. Baldini. Mr. Baldini will send the slate of candidates to the Commissioners prior to the May meeting.

Budget

Currently, a sum of \$5,000 has been suggested for the Planning Commission in the upcoming Budget; however, Mr. Baldini asked that Commissioners contact him with any projects/items that may require additional funding so he can notify the City.

Grant Searches

Mr. Baldini stated that he would like to add Grant Searches to the project list.

Comprehensive Plan

The Annual Report for the Comprehensive Plan is usually prepared by the Planners and is due in June. Mr. Baldini will follow up on the status of the Plan from the State.

Public Comment

Mr. Phil Gross

Mr. Gross made a number of comments relative to electric vehicle charging stations:

- Mr. Gross stated he is in favor of running wiring to the Wharf during the Delaware Street project.
- Mr. Gross recommended that other neighborhoods are also targeted. Mr. Baldini noted that the project is City-wide.
- Mr. Gross asked how residential charging stations will be monitored for time and how it will be managed. Mr. Lafferty noted that a number of ideas are being considered, including overage and idle fees and time limits for parking spaces with EV charging stations.
- Mr. Gross expressed his approval of hidden public charging stations in areas such as the Courthouse.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Baldini called for a Motion to Adjourn.

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A Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. On vote, the Motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer