

"A Historic Past"



"A Bright Future"

THE CITY OF DELAWARE CITY
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**MINUTES
CITY OF DELAWARE CITY
MAYOR & COUNCIL
MONTHLY MEETING 6:30p.m.
Monday, March 18, 2024
DELAWARE CITY FIRE HALL
815 FIFTH STREET**

CALL TO ORDER – MONTHLY MEETING

Mayor Johnson called the regularly-scheduled meeting to order at 6:30p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

In addition to Mayor Johnson and Vice Mayor Barrett; Council Members Saunders, Price, and Jackson were present. Also in attendance were Police Chief Henderson, Acting City Manager Graham, and City Solicitor Rhodunda.

ACTION UPON MINUTES

Vice Mayor Barrett pointed out an error on page one of the February minutes. It should read “Bill Harper the unofficial mayor....” (This has been corrected).

Mayor Barrett made a motion to accept the February 26, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jackson. A vote was taken, and all members were in favor. *Minutes were accepted as written.*

CERTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL ELECTION

Tim Dilliplane (Chairman of the Election Board) stated that since only one person applied for the vacant council seat, the “special election” was cancelled. George Dudlek was that candidate, and he will be sworn in tonight. Considering this, Vice Mayor Barrett made a motion to certify the special election results. This was seconded by Council Member Saunders. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The motion passed.*

SWEARING-IN OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

Mayor Johnson swore George Dudlek in as a member of the Delaware City Town Council. A family member held the Bible as he was sworn in. Council Member Dudlek took his seat at the council table.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Henderson gave the following report:

CALLS FOR SERVICE	TOTAL REPORTS
FEB 2024	YTD 2024
61	103
FEB 2023	YTD 2023
53	107
% CHANGE	% CHANGE
+15.0%	-3.70%

Significant Events:

- There were 19 traffic arrests and 7 traffic warnings. Also, there were 4 crime prevention checks; 23 crime reports; 17 field service reports; 2 accidents; and 10 criminal arrests.
- Lt. Clemons and Off. Webb acted off informant information and were able locate and apprehend a subject who was wanted by Newport P.D. for Terroristic Threatening. The suspect also had an outstanding court capias and was turned over to NPD without incident.
- Off. Williams investigated an incident involving a physical altercation between three (3) adults. This resulted in three (3) counts of Offensive Touching, Menacing, and Endangering the Welfare of a Child. One suspect was also arrested for violating a condition of bail – where a no contact was ordered with the alleged victim. This poor decision resulted in their commitment to the Howard Young Correctional Institute.
- The camera project is currently awaiting approval from DP&L to move forward. The latest delay is apparently related to the restructuring of their policies in regard to projects like ours.
- There has been “significant” interest in the formation of the Police Advisory Committee that the Chief discussed at the February meeting. Anyone else who is interested can contact the chief via email or call the police department. The chief will be moving forward with this in the near future.

PROJECT MANAGER’S REPORT (formally CITY MANAGER’S REPORT)

Acting City Manager Graham gave the following report:

Community Center HVAC Replacement:

- Amakor, Inc. is still gathering preliminary information. They have not submitted a construction schedule, as of yet.

Monroe-Madison Street Flood Mitigation Project:

- Currently waiting on notification from FEMA on the review of the phases of the project. Verdantas will reach out to FEMA, if there is no status update by the end of the month.

Sea Wall and Sea Level Rise Report:

- Met with Verdantas on Thursday, March 14th to review the draft report. The final report will be submitted to Mayor & Council in the coming weeks, and Verdantas will do a presentation of the final report at the April Mayor & Council meeting.

Community Center Generator Project:

- AECOM has provided the updated HVAC drawings for the Community Center to Fayda Engineering. Fayda Engineering is determining the size of the generator needed.

Questions/Comments from Council Member Saunders: Will Council see the Sea Wall and Sea Level Rise Report before the next Council meeting? Acting City Manager Graham said yes, she will be emailing it to council this week.

REPORT OF CITY SOLICITOR

Mr. Rhodunda gave the following report. His office has received around thirty-five resumes for the position of City Manager. They will be accepting resumes through the end of March. Other matters will be heard in executive session tonight.

ACTION UPON FINANCE REPORT

Finance Manager Graham gave the financial report as of February 29, 2024. (Full Report is available). Vice Mayor Barrett made a motion to accept this report (subject to audit). Council Member Jackson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The finance report was accepted.*

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/ORGANIZATIONS

Lynn Dilliplane / HPC: The Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Home came before the commission in early March. The funeral home is doing a complete renovation of their building (at 214 Clinton Street) both inside and out. The HPC applauds the architectural plans that will utilize officially-correct materials for the age of the building (early 1800's).

Dave Turley / Tree Commission: They previously had a "working session," and the Commission is trying to get together this week to determine their primary objectives for the year. They have done a few visits with individual homeowners (primarily in Harbor Estates) to answer questions and provide information on problematic city trees, as well personal trees. There will be an Arbor Day celebration in town at the end of April. On April 25th there will be a joint event with the library in celebration of this special day.

Loree Elton / Library: There will be an eclipse on April 8th, and they will be distributing special glasses. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt and a Scavenger Hunt on March 23rd held in connection with the parks' department. The Arbor Day celebration on April 25th will include tree rubbings and books on identifying local trees.

Darcey / Parks Commission: The annual "Easter Egg Hunt" will be held at the library on March 23rd at 1:00p.m. (line up at 12:45p.m.). This will be followed by the Scavenger Hunt.

Wendy Rogers / Delaware City Day Committee: Planning for this year's event is underway. It will be held on October 5th, 2024. Vendor and food truck applications are available on their website. The next planning meeting will be May 9th at 6:00p.m. in the "surfboard room" at the library.

Tim Konkus / Main Street: The “Town-Wide Yard Sale” will be the last Saturday in April (April 27th from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.). He encourages participants to go to one of the many “garage sales” apps and list their items for sale. This will help bring “shoppers” to town.

- Lynn Dilliplane (a local resident) will be presenting her photographic exhibition on Harriett Tubman at the Central Hotel Petite Social from June 16th to June 21st. Times to be determined.
- Best Kept Soul will provide music in Battery Park on June 19th from 6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m. The concert is free.
- He congratulated new Council Member Dudek on his years of “dedication and support” to Delaware City.

Mary Bricker-Jenkins / Friends of the African Union Church and Cemetery: She spoke on the upcoming Juneteenth celebration with activities between May 25th through June 19th. Some of these activities will be held at the library for the youth of Delaware City. There will be a BBQ on June 16th (Sunday). At the actual cemetery on June 19th at 10:00a.m., there will be a solemn ceremony. She distributed copies of the “Epitaph” – which is the annual newsletter of The Friends of the African Church and Cemetery.

Tim Dilliplane / Planning Commission: The Commission approved several variances for Preston Carden’s duplex project at the northwest corner of Hamilton and William Streets.

Randi Licciardello / Refinery: The refinery donated \$1,000 to the library and provided funds to the Tree Commission for six new trees in town.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1) Discussion and Vote on HELP Initiative, Inc. – Safer Community Campaign

Chief Henderson began the discussion on this. During the February Mayor & Council meeting, representatives from this organization had made a presentation. He does not see any negatives to the city’s participation in this program. It has helped the cities of Wilmington, Milford, etc. He has information on the statistics and maps from this program’s participation in other cities, if anyone is interested.

Questions/Comments from Council Member Saunders: According to the HELP website, they tend to focus on low-income areas. Are they going to assist all of Delaware City? Or just certain areas? Chief Henderson said “all” of Delaware City. HELP provides cameras, LED lightbulbs, smoke detectors, fire blankets, etc.

HELP will also go into homes and do safety checks and other things for residents. Are they insured to do this? Chief Henderson said that he would assume that yes, they are – since they have already helped a lot of cities, but he will double-check this.

Questions/Comments from Vice Mayor Barrett: She thinks that HELP is a great program. She is concerned, however, that if they go door-to-door, some residents will not open their doors to “strangers.” Is there anyway HELP can provide their services and supplies at a centralized location for residents to pick up? The Chief said he will check on this, but HELP puts informational “doors hangers” on homes before actually stopping by. Mayor Johnson said the HELP information could be included in the newsletter and social media, as well.

Vice Mayor Barrett made a motion to approve the HELP program – if they notify residents ahead of time via “door hangers,” etc. and don’t just randomly knock on people’s doors. This was seconded by Council Member Jackson. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The motion passed.*

2) Discussion on Community Center 501 (c)(3)

Mayor Johnson asked for this to be put on the agenda. City Solicitor Rhodunda said that he has looked into the 501 (c)(3) designation, and he does not feel that it is necessary. This designation has been on the Community Center for a while, but it has not been effectively used. It can be removed, as long as the city is the “owner” of the building.

Questions/Comments from Vice Mayor Barrett: What will the city lose, if the designation is discontinued? Tax breaks? Donations from residents for tax right-offs? City Solicitor Rhodunda said that there are a lot of obligations, paperwork, etc. to maintain this designation, but there are not really any benefits. There are no negatives to do away with the designation.

Council Member Saunders made a motion to dissolve the Community Center’s 501 (c)(3) designation. This was seconded by Council Member Jackson. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The motion passed.*

3) Discussion on Mayor’s Ball Funds

Mayor Johnson also asked this to be put on the agenda. There is a lot of money that has just been sitting in an account for some time. The amount left over is \$28,922. He wants to hear council’s ideas on how to get this money “off the books.”

Questions/Comments from Council Member Jackson: Why did the Mayor’s Ball stop? Mayor Johnson said it was stopped because of COVID and was “never reimplemented,” due to lack of interest. The mayor added, that if anyone wants to volunteer to organize another Mayor’s Ball, he would be all for it.

Questions/Comments from Council Member Saunders: Is all the money that is in the account donated from previous Mayor’s Balls? Mayor Johnson said yes. Is there any “inferred obligation” to the donators to use the funds for anything other than a Mayor’s Ball. Mayor Johnson said yes. Council Member Saunders said that some research needs to be done to determine the intent of these “obligations.” He thinks this research should be done in the next couple months. The mayor suggested using social media to gauge residents’ intentions for the money.

Since John Buchheit was the mayor when the ball started, Mayor Johnson asked him, if he had any thoughts? Mr. Buchheit said the money was supposed to be for a bandstand. He supports having the ball again. Lynn Dilliplane of the HPC said that her commission had approved a specific design for around \$45,000 – to be built with appropriate materials – for a bandstand.

4) Discussion on Ordinance 23-0717-01

This was moved to be discussed in executive session.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS

Vice Mayor Barrett: She wanted to thank everyone who has supported her position as Council Member and Vice Mayor over the years. She will not be seeking re-election. She will be staying in Delaware City and just “taking it easy” now. She will still run her “food closet.”

Council Member Saunders: None.

Council Member Jackson: None.

Council Member Price: She also thanked the town for their support. She will not be seeking re-election either. It’s just time for her to “step down.”

Council Member Dudlek: None.

Mayor Johnson: There will still be an open council seat after Council Members Barrett and Price leave. There will be a special election held for this open position, and a date will be determined at the April Mayor & Council meeting. (If only one candidate applies, there will be no special election).

- He thanked the refinery for their cooperation in allowing brush-clearing near Madison and Monroe Streets and also on Front Street.
- The city was awarded a \$45,000 grant from DENREC for the establishment of “pollinator gardens” in town. This will help the Monarch Butterfly migration. One “garden” will be at the community center and one at Fort DuPont.
- Trying to get the installation of cameras in town has been very “frustrating.” The city has everything ready and is waiting on DP&L’s approval.
- He is looking to form a five-person panel to review the city manager applications and bring the top candidates to Mayor & Council. There are currently four open seats on the panel.
- There has been interest expressed to restart the car shows in town. The Porsche Club is wanting to participate.
- He congratulated new Council Member Dudlek – who he has known for many years.

CITIZENS QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Tim Dilliplane / 118 Clinton Street: Two years-ago he told the city manager about two concrete panels in the seawall that had been stolen. He was told that they would be replaced – for months now. These panels were “temporarily” replaced with 2 by 12s. When he walked around the point today, he noticed that there are now four panels replaced with 2 by 12s. He is concerned that these boards are a couple inches shorter than the surrounding concrete panels. He said that these panels definitely need to be replaced by concrete soon. Acting City Manager Graham said that the new sea wall study has pricing and details outlined in a “plan” for the city that will deal with this.

Mia DeMarteleire: She thanked Chief Henderson and the Police Department for their assistance with some issues she recently had.

Mike McMichael / Washington Street: Are there any updates on the Clinton Street home that burned last year? It’s an “eyesore.” Mayor Johnson said that it is still tied up with the insurance companies

John Buchheit/30 Clinton Street: He is glad that the car shows are coming back, but thinks that Washington Street is not a good location, since parking is already so limited downtown. He thinks they should go back to being held in Battery Park. Mayor Johnson said that the car shows were stopped in Battery Park, due to the compaction of the soil that was hurting the trees in the park. Dale Slotter and he are opening another business in town at 36 Clinton Street. It will be named “Charmaine’s Place” in honor of his mother, and it will be an Airbnb.

Resident: She asked for an update on the potholes on Clinton Street? Mayor Johnson is working with The Cutting Edge and town hall on this issue.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Johnson recessed the meeting to go into executive session at 7:25p.m. At 8:17p.m. he reconvened the meeting.

Vice Mayor Barrett made a motion to appoint Britney Loveland as the Acting City Manager. This was seconded by Commissioner Dudlek. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The motion passed.*

Vice Mayor Barrett made a motion to appoint Michelle Graham as the part-time, interim Finance Manager. This was seconded by Council Member Jackson. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. *The motion passed.*

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Johnson entertained a motion to adjourn the Mayor & Council meeting. Vice Mayor Barrett made the motion. Council Member Price seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:20p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Tina Pincus
City Secretary*