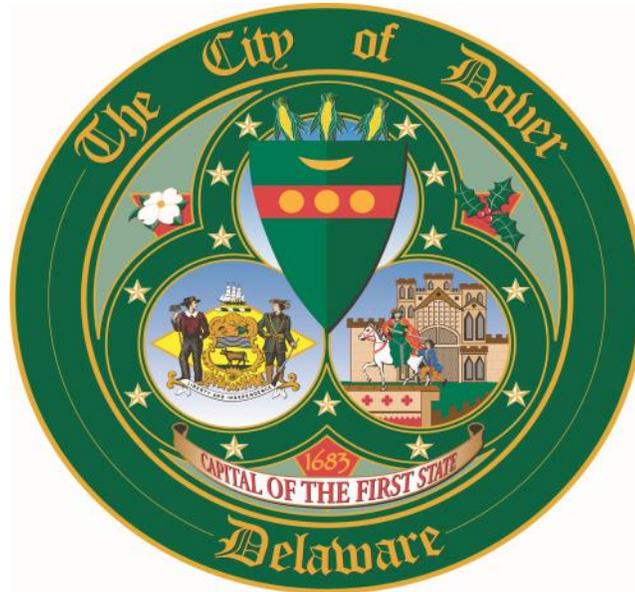


City of Dover, Delaware

Department of Planning,
Inspections & Community Development



2023 Annual Report

Planning, Inspections & Community Development

2023 Annual Report



Front row left to right: Greg A., Chris S., Nichole A., Dawn M-W., Tracey H., Maretta S-P., Michael B., Ray M., Eddie K.,

Back row left to right: Sharon D., Kristen M., John E., Taryn B., Sierra B., Matthew B., Lauren E., and Phillip L.

Not pictured: Jason O., Sean C., and Katherine O.

Introduction

The Department of Planning, Inspections & Community Development (Department) continued to serve the community in 2023 through the combined efforts of the five Department Divisions: Building Inspections, Office of the Fire Marshal, Code Enforcement, Permits and Licensing, and the Planning Office. The staff associated with these Divisions have made it clear that they are a team, striving to make Dover a safe place for people to live and work. It has been a challenging year, particularly with various staffing shortages, but staff could always be counted on to work together to meet critical objectives. One of the personnel changes within the Department was the departure of the Director in October 2023. This led to the Assistant City Manager Sharon Duca providing administrative assistance to the team until this position is filled.

The **Building Inspections Division** guided new construction, renovations, additions and tenant fit-outs through the performance of 4,108 building inspections and 174 Certificate of Occupancy inspections. We saw a decrease in Building Permits issued for new homes in 2023 (81 in 2023 vs. 116 in 2022). However,

2023 also many non-residential projects including the start of the Kent County Family Courthouse and Parking Garage structure. We also saw the completion of the Delaware Solid Waste Authority Administration Building, the new Dover Middle Schools at 1 Pat Lynn Drive, and the Rail Haus Beer Garden.

The **Office of the Fire Marshal** was fully staffed throughout the year. This Office is responsible for conducting annual inspections on public occupancies to ensure a building is safe prior to an emergency occurring. Staff performed 388 annual fire/life safety inspections which identified 1,345 deficiencies. They also investigated 309 fire/life safety complaints, issued 97 Fire Protection Permits ,and performed 61 fire investigations.

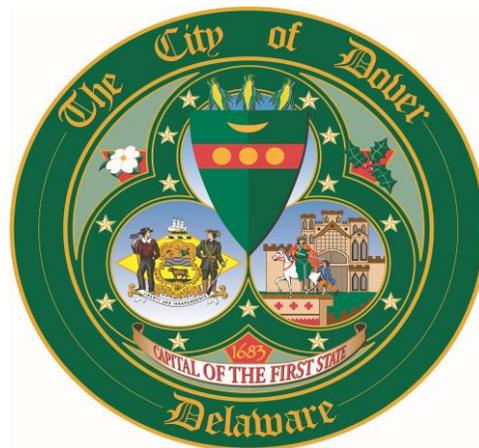
To ensure properties are within the confines of the *Dover Code of Ordinances*, the *Zoning Ordinance* and the *Property Maintenance Code*, the **Code Enforcement Division** performs inspections and responds to complaints. In 2023, staff opened 4,520 cases relating to violations and conducted a total of 10,904 inspections. This Division was down one position at the close of 2023.

Permits and Licensing was also fully staffed throughout the year. They continued to provide customer service to contractors and the public alike. They are responsible for the receipt and processing of all Permits, Business Licenses, Occupancy Permits and Rental Dwelling Permits. Total Rental Dwelling Permits came in at 3,460 licenses which is down 2.1% from last year. Business Licenses at 3,684 were also down by 2.4%.

Focused on zoning and land use administration, the **Planning Office** provides support to three Boards and Commissions and administers various programs. These programs include the Community Development Block Grant Program, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund disbursement, and Downtown Development District (DDD) City incentives. Additionally, the Planning Office processed 44 new development applications for plan review as well as 817 permits during the period. This Division was down two positions at the close of 2023.

While some numbers were down, possibly due to economic factors in a post-COVID environment, actions required of all staff still remained high. As noted above, this Department is a team, working hard to address the needs of the community, while striving for friendly and efficient services.

*We look forward to 2024 as we continue to make the City of Dover
a place where people want to live, work, play, and visit!*



Department of Planning, Inspections & Community Development

Our Mission remains:

- Guide and direct future development;
- Provide timely, friendly, helpful and efficient services;
- Protect the public health, safety and welfare; and
- Strive for a vibrant, balanced and sustainable economy.

The Report that follows describes the activities of the Department of Planning, Inspections & Community Development and its Divisions of Building Inspections, Office of the Fire Marshal, Permits & Licensing, Code Enforcement, and Planning.

Personnel Changes

The continued dedication and professionalism of the staff of the Department of Planning, Inspections & Community Development is a critical element in providing services to the community. These qualities allow Staff to successfully interact with the residents of our City and support continued community improvement. At the end of 2023, the Department consists of 19 Staff (authorized level is 22 positions). There were a number of staffing changes within the Department during 2023. The change is as follows:

- **Katherine Oehmke** joined the Planning Staff as a Planner I on January 3, 2023.
- **Michael Bailey** joined the Inspections Staff as an Inspector I on May 1, 2023.
- **Lauren Eisenbraun** joined the Code Enforcement Staff as an Inspector I on July 24, 2023.
- **Mike McGregor** (Inspector II) retired from the City of Dover on May 19, 2023 with 22 1/2 years of service.
- **Ron Coburn** (Inspector II) retired from the City of Dover on October 27, 2023 with 22 1/2 years of service.
- **Julian Swierczek** (Planner II) departure from the City of Dover was October 6, 2023.
- **Mary Ellen Gray** (Director) departure from the City of Dover was October 13, 2023.



Welcome to the Department of Planning & Inspections team!

And Thank You to all Staff for their continued dedication to **DOVER!**

Building Inspections

Staff:

Michael Bailey, Inspector I

Greg Akers, Chief Building Inspector/Plans Examiner

Chris Scott, Licensed Plumbing / HVAC Inspector II



New Construction, Renovations, Additions and Tenant Fit-Outs

Mr. Akers supervises construction inspectors, reviews construction documents and permits, meets with design professionals regarding construction projects and Dover's permit process. Mr. Bailey reviews plans and permits, performs inspections of residential buildings and related commercial building items. Mr. Scott's responsibilities include plans review and performance of plumbing and HVAC inspections for commercial and residential buildings under construction. The combined efforts of all staff resulted in the performance of 2,123 Building Inspections, 1,985 Plumbing/Mechanical Inspections, and 174 Certificates of Occupancy Inspections this year. A total of 1,914 Permits were applied for in 2023 of all Permit Types (Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fire Protection, Demolition, and Sign Permits).

Additional Duties

The Building & Inspections Staff assists in revitalizing existing structures through the plans and permits process, responds to inquiries related to construction, assists in property damage assessment after significant damage causing events occur, and enforces licensing of contractors and design professionals. The team provides guidance, support and proper enforcement of the codes for construction and/or repairs regulated by the Building and Life Safety Codes.

Summary Description

Building and Life Safety Codes address occupancy, structural strength, means of egress, sanitation, adequate lighting and ventilation, accessibility, energy conservation, and life safety in regard to new and existing buildings, facilities and systems. These issues are specific to structures and adjacent structures as they may relate. Staff continues to look forward to Dover adopting the International Code Council's, (ICC) latest codes to replace previous versions.

Qualifications

Dover's Building Inspectors are qualified via a combination of certifications and licenses. Our inspectors are required to achieve or exceed 45 hours of training within 3 year time periods in order to maintain their certifications. These qualifications combined with years of experience in both private and public sectors places them among the best in the industry. Greg has 20 years of private sector experience, this combined with 21 years of City service brings 41 years of industry experience to the team. Greg holds certifications in Building, Commercial, Residential, and Housing. Chris over the years has achieved 10 ICC certifications in several disciplines and is also licensed through the State of Delaware as both a Plumber and HVAC Mechanic. In addition, Chris has taught the Plumbing trade at Polytech night school for over 11 years. In May 2023, this Division experienced the retirement of Mike McGregor (Building Inspector II) after over 20 years of service. Mike was also ICC certified in various Building, Commercial, and Residential areas. Michael Bailey (Inspector I) joined the staff of this Division after serving in the Code Enforcement Division and is working towards achieving the appropriate certifications.

Fire Marshal's Office

Staff: (left to right)

Jason Osika, Fire Marshal/Inspector III

Sean Christiansen, Deputy Fire Marshal / Inspector I

Matthew Brown, Deputy Fire Marshal / Inspector II

Phillip Lewis, Deputy Fire Marshal / Inspector II

The Fire Marshal's Office has a staffing level of 4-full time employees. The breakdown is the Fire Marshal/Inspector III and three Deputy Fire Marshals which can hold the position of Inspector I or II. Currently, the office has two Inspector II's and one Inspector I.

The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for conducting annual inspections in various public occupancies to include assemblies (facilities used for gathering of 50 or more people). This includes but not be limited to, auditoriums, assembly halls, club rooms, conference rooms, courtrooms, dance halls, drinking establishments, gymnasiums, libraries, chapels, motion picture theaters, places of religious worship, restaurants, and theaters. Other public occupancies inspected are educational facilities, day cares, health care, ambulatory health care, residential occupancies (such as lodging and rooming, hotel, dormitory, apartments, and bed and breakfast), residential board and care, mercantile over 10,000 SF, business over 10,000 SF, industrial, storage over 10,000 SF, and assembly special provisions (such as special events, outdoor facilities which are not part of the normal every day operation of the building/land use, carnivals, circus, fireworks, pyrotechnics displays, and outdoor music concerts/festivals). The Fire Marshal's Office handles a variety of fire related complaints such as over-crowding, blocked means of egress, fire lanes, and impaired fire protection. New fire suppression systems (sprinklers), fire alarm systems, hood suppression systems, and other forms of fire protection are accepted into service by the Fire Marshal's Office. The Fire Marshal's Office is also part of the Certificate of Occupancy approval process.

In addition to the inspection related responsibilities the Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for the investigation of origin and cause of fires and explosions within the City of Dover. All employees of the office are on an on-call rotation for any after-hours fire or life safety complaints received, structural complaints, and buildings/residences needing condemnation. When not on call, all deputies are subject to call back. All employees also work special events such as race weekend, music concert/festivals, fireworks, Comic Con, Delaware Pride, Dover Days, Delaware State University Homecoming, OctDoverfest, African American Festival, History Heritage and Hops, St. Patty's Day, and Hispanic Heritage.



Kent Budget Motel



New Street



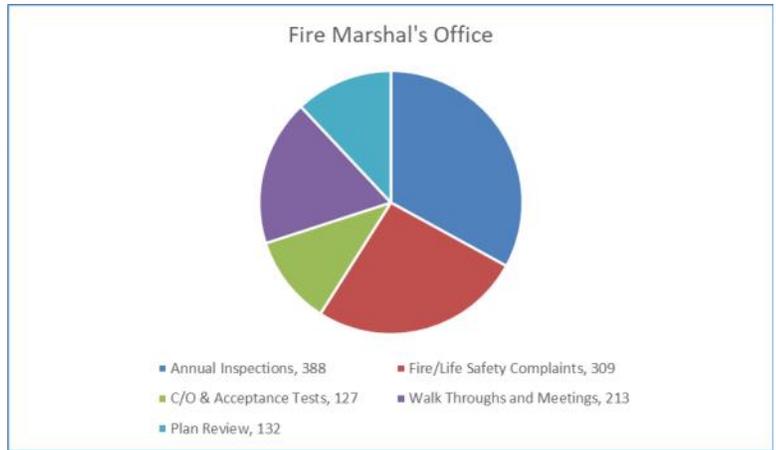
Riverside Road



Target

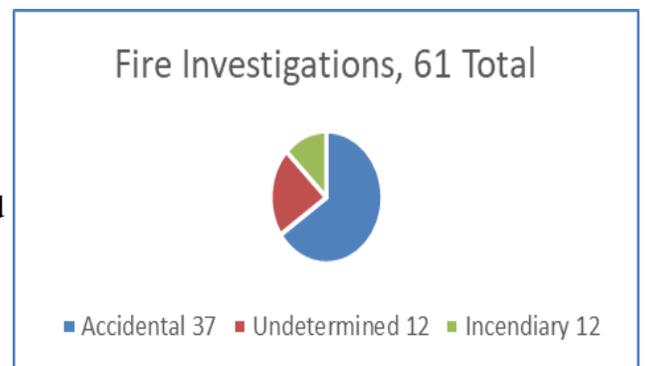
For the Calendar Year 2023, the following is a breakdown of activity for the Fire Marshal's Office:

- Annual Fire/Life Safety Inspections: 388 with 1,345 deficiencies—This is where deficiencies are noted for correction to make sure the building is safe prior to an emergency happening.
- Certificates of Occupancy Inspections /Fire Protection Acceptances Tests: 127—This number identifies new areas being occupied, and new/additional fire systems being put into place.
- Administrative Walk-through Inspections & Meetings: 213—This is a very important function that Dover does, and many other municipalities do not do. When you have an upcoming project in Dover, you can meet the Chief Building Inspector and Fire Marshal on site for a walk through to help guide you towards a plan for success!
- Fire/Life Safety Complaints: 309—These are citizen complaints on life safety items and deficiency reports from authorized contractors reporting issues with the fire system. We check on all of these to ensure compliance.
- Plan Review: 132
- Fire Permits: Issued 97 with an income of \$59,303



Total of 61 Fire Investigations with a Total Fire Loss of \$6,141,857:

- Accidental: 37 with a total amount of \$1,254,602 in damage.
- Incendiary: 12 with a total amount of \$4,087,253 in damage. Arrest in conjunction with Dover Police Department-Total 4.
- Undetermined: 12 with a total amount of \$800,002 in damage.
- Subject Injured/Burned Investigations: Total of 4
- Fire Deaths: Total of 0
- Investigation Time: 233 hours
- Fire System Saves: 14 Saves—This is where a smoke detector, fire alarm system, fire suppression system (sprinkler), or fire extinguisher played a factor in providing early notice to occupants to exit or suppressed the fire until the fire department arrived.



Code Enforcement & Property Maintenance

Staff: (left to right in photo)

John England, Inspector II

Sierra Brown, Inspector II

Eddie Kopp, Inspector III-Supervisor (center)

Ray Morris, Inspector I

Lauren Eisenbraun, Inspector I



The Code Enforcement Division is responsible for Property Maintenance enforcement activities within the city. The Division hired a new inspector in the year but the Division is down one Inspector following the retirement of Ron Coburn (Inspector II) in October 2023.

Staff opened a total of 4,520 cases with regards to violations of the *Dover Code of Ordinances*, *Zoning Ordinance*, and *Property Maintenance Code*. Code Enforcement staff also conducted a total of 10,904 inspections related to property maintenance. (Note: more than one case may exist on a property)

Staff observed a total of 5,811 violations. The top 3 violations were Tall Grass (777), Smoke Detectors (418), and Junk and Debris (310).

The Code Enforcement Officers registered a total of 110 new Vacant Buildings within the City limits of Dover. Currently, Staff estimates that there are approximately 150 of these structures still vacant.

The Code Enforcement Officers investigated and found 101 Dangerous Buildings throughout the City. Staff estimates a total of 70 active Dangerous Buildings.

Types of Cases	
Annual Rental Housing Inspections	1,297
Property Maintenance Exterior/Interior	327
Tall Grass and Weeds	777
No Valid Business License	87
No Valid Rental Permit	285
Dangerous Buildings	101
Dover City Ordinances (Violations)	781
Abandoned Vehicles	118
Other Cases	747
TOTAL	4,520

Causes for Case	
Citizen/Tenant Complaint	515
Owner	33
Other Department Referral	820
Routine Inspections	1,157
Staff Initiated	1,857
Other Cause	138
TOTAL	4,520

Permits and Licensing

Staff: (left to right in photo)

Nichole Arnold, Office Assistant II

Kristen Mullaney, Licensing & Permitting Supervisor

Taryn Bauer, Office Assistant II



The Permits and Licensing Staff is the first contact most customers have with the Department of Planning, Inspections & Community Development with the City of Dover especially as they enter the City Hall Building. This Staff is responsible for the receipt and processing of all Permits, Business Licenses, Occupancy Permits, and Rental Dwelling Permits and their associated fee payments. These Staff schedule all Inspections performed by the Department, assist customers, and answer inquiries. They respond directly to questions regarding permitting and licensing procedures and schedule appointments and meetings as required. The charts included later in this Report are examples of the volume of Permits and Licenses received by this Staff. Their contributions to customer service are immeasurable. While much of their work cannot be directly quantified, without their efforts, the Department could not function. They present a high standard of prompt and courteous service.



For Example New House Construction Involves:

3 Permits, over 15 Inspections, Certificate of Occupancy Inspections and Permit, and various Licenses (i.e. Business Licenses and possibly a Rental Dwelling Permit).



Sometimes you just need a break! On a beautiful Fall afternoon, Department Staff participated in a team building activity with a round of mini golf at a local facility with lots of laughter, fun, and learning about our co-workers.

Planning Office

Staff: (left to right in photo)

Dawn Melson-Williams AICP, Principal Planner
Tracey Harvey, Community Development Manager
Maretta Savage-Purnell, Administrative Assistant
Katherine Oehmke, Planner I

The Planning Office is focused on both current and long-range planning activities including zoning and land use administration, support of three Boards and Commissions, and administration of various programs. The Planning Office is part of the review process for certain types of construction activity permits (Building Permits, Sign Permits, etc.) and Certificate of Occupancy permits. The review and inspection efforts of the Planning Staff resulted in a 2023 calendar year total of 817 Permits and 211 Certificates of Occupancy (Temporary & Final). Additionally, Staff reviews new applications for Business Licenses and Rental Dwelling Permits. The long-range planning activities include participation in the development of several studies and continued efforts in the implementation of the *2019 Comprehensive Plan*; see other sections in this Report.

The Planning Office coordinates the review and approval of all development applications including the associated support of the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, and Historic District Commission as they review applications. In 2023, the Planning Office processed 44 new applications and continued review of applications from previous years. See the Application Tables in this Report. For 2023, the Board and Commission Meetings continue

the use of a Hybrid meeting format with the In-person Meetings also presented with a Virtual Meeting component using WebEx as the audio/video conferencing system. This allows for various options for meeting participation by the public. Planning Staff continues to utilize the Municode Meetings software system for Meeting Agendas and Packet preparation for the three Boards & Commissions we support.

Training and learning activities for Planning Staff included numerous virtual workshops and seminars during the year including offerings by the Delaware APA Chapter Meeting and other workshops; training sessions by the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware; the Preservation Delaware Annual Conference; and the American Planning Association's National Planning Conference as the *NPC2023*. These are training opportunities for all Staff, but especially necessary for the AICP Planners (currently one) with continuing education (Certification Maintenance for AICP) requirements.

Staff changes for the Planning Office in 2023 began with the hiring of Katherine Oehmke (Planner I) who started on January 3, 2023 filling a vacancy. Then in October, the Division experienced the loss of two Planners with the departure of Julian Swierczek, AICP (Planner II) who left to join the Planning Department of the City of Alexandria, Virginia and departure of Mary Ellen Grey, AICP (Planning Director) who left to join the City of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. At year's end, these positions were still unfilled.



Community Development

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) expands opportunities and housing choices for low and moderate income persons living in Dover and protects the public health and welfare of Dover citizens. It performs the following tasks:

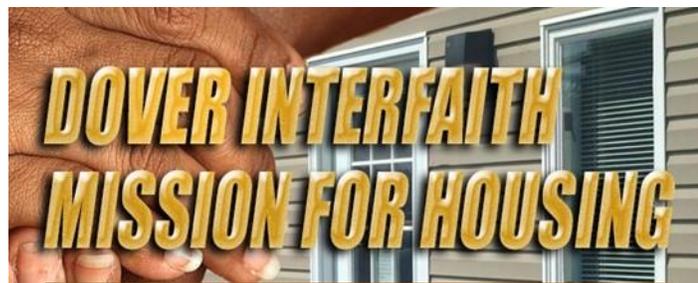
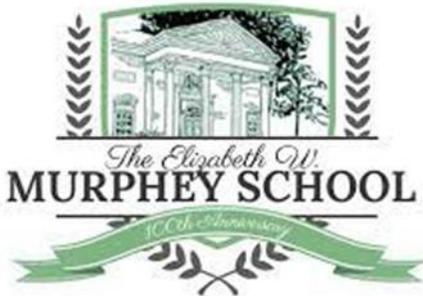
- Provides CDBG grants to sub-recipients that provide services to low/moderate income persons.
- Provides rehabilitation assistance to sub-recipients who service low/moderate income persons.
- Provides housing assistance to emergency shelters for the homeless.
- Provides homeownership assistance to first-time homebuyers that purchase affordable housing in the City of Dover.

The following projects were completed during the program year:

- ♦ **Homeownership Assistance Program**—Throughout the year, six (6) families received a grant from the City of Dover’s Homeownership Assistance Program and purchased affordable housing in the City.
- ♦ **Dover Interfaith Mission to the Homeless**—CDBG funds were used to provide operations costs for the homeless shelter. A total of 181 homeless men were serviced throughout the program year.
- ♦ **Milford Housing Emergency Repair Program and Homeowner Rehabilitation Programs**— CDBG funds were provided to complete emergency home repairs and minor rehabilitation repairs for six (6) owner occupied homes eliminating health and safety hazards.
- ♦ **Central Delaware Housing Collaborative**—CDBG funds were used to provide operations cost for a 16 bed women’s homeless shelter.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

City Council approved to award a little over \$1.8 million in ARPA grant funding for Housing and Community Service projects. All projects are underway. A little over \$1.4 million or 77% of funds have been spent on Round 1 of ARPA funding year at end of 2023. Dover Housing Authority, Murphey School and Reading Assist have completed their projects. ARPA Round 2 funding for a little under \$500,000 was awarded to subgrantees in April 2023. Projects are currently underway. Twelve percent (12%) of funds have been drawn down by calendar year end for Round 2 with Murphey School completing their project.



Downtown Development District

Dover received designation as a Downtown Development District in January 2015 as the cities of Dover, Seaford and Wilmington were selected as the first Districts in Delaware. In 2017, the City of Dover Planning Office dedicated staff to the administration of the Downtown Development District Program as well as increased cooperation with groups like the Downtown Dover Partnership to encourage program participation. This was done to help better ensure the continued success of the incentives program to attract new businesses and homeowners to the Downtown area. In 2022-2023, the Planning Director served the Administrator of the Downtown Development District with the City Manager then serving as the Acting Administrator with the departure of the Director (in October).



The City Planning Staff administers a series of City Incentives in the Downtown Development District. Over the course of 2023, the City authorized \$33,837.35 in Permit Fee Waivers for 14 properties for the purpose of new housing or business renovations. This is an increase of \$10,228.85 over 2022. Included in the projects for 2023 were 7 new single-family homes and 7 commercial renovations. The new homes were mostly credited to Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity with other entities like NeighborGood Partners (formally known as NCALL) also working on housing efforts with their *Restoring Central Dover* plan.



The City also waived Business License Fees in the amount of \$125.00 in the aim of incentivizing business growth in the Downtown Development District. Business License Fee Waivers may be utilized by an applicant for a period of no more than three years. The single new business license fees waived in 2023 was for the much-anticipated Rail Haus.



According to the Office of State Planning Coordination, the Downtown Development District inspires 13 dollars of private investment for every 1 dollar in DDD funds. The City's Incentives are a compliment to the State of Delaware's Rebate Program administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority. In the program eligible investors may qualify for rebates on a portion of their investment. In the calendar year 2023, Delaware State Housing Authority issued 7 rehabilitation project rebates totaling \$205,792. The largest of these was a project at 108 West Loockerman Street.

Associated with a focus on the Downtown area, the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) worked with multiple public and non-profit agencies and consultant the Mosaic Development Partners of Philadelphia, PA to study and develop a Strategic Plan. This new Strategic Master Plan known as *Transforming Downtown Dover: Capital City 2030* was issued in January 2023 will likely be the basis of the City of Dover's Application to renew the Downtown Development District designation as Dover's designation expires in 2025. A project for the next year will be the preparation of Dover's Renewal Application to renew the DDD program for an additional 5 years.

Special Studies & Projects

- **DAFB Compatible Use Study**

City Planning Staff was part of the Technical Committee for the *DAFB Compatible Use Study* in 2022-2023. As part of a Department of Defense program initiative, DelDOT led a study of uses in a Study Area of a 5-miles radius of the Dover Air Force Base. Consultant assistance for the Study included the University of Delaware – Institute for Public Administration and Century Engineering. In 2023, the Technical Committee was involved in review of the Draft Study Report providing comments with the Final Study Report issued in June. Moving forward, Planning Staff will be working with the DAFB to look at potential text amendments to the AEOZ (Airport Environs Overlay Zone) provisions of the *Zoning Ordinance*

- See the project website for more information on activities and the Final Plan.
<https://deldot.gov/projects/Studies/dafb/>

- **Downtown Dover Strategic Master Plan -**

The Downtown Dover Partnership’s Strategic Master Plan is known as “*Transforming Downtown Dover: Capital City 2030*” and was issued in January 2023. The Downtown Dover Partnership retained consult services (a Project Team lead by Mosaic Development Partners) for the development of this Strategic Master Plan. For 2023, various partners are focusing on aspects of Plan implementation. Beginning in April 2023, the Planning Office Staff Working Group focused on looking at potential ordinance and policy changes for the C-2 zoning district related to land use and zoning activities and other plan implementation items. In October, a series of stakeholder meetings and a Walk-in Workshop for the Public were held to gather input on concepts for changes to the C-2 Zone focused on uses, building height, parking, and miscellaneous issues. At the direction of City Council and the Council Committee of the Whole – Legislative, Finance and Administration Committee’s recommendation (of October 24, 2023), Planning Staff worked on drafting the text amendment language for the potential revisions to the C-2 zoning district focused on uses, building height, parking, and miscellaneous items. The proposed text amendment package will be presented in early January 2024.

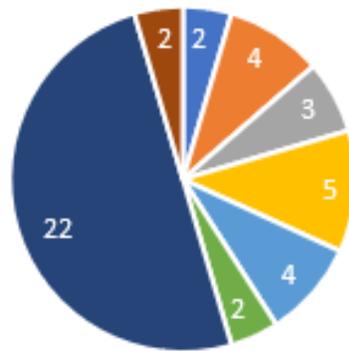
- See the project webpage for more information activities: <https://www.downtowndoverpartnership.com/ddp/Downtown-Dover-Strategic-Master-Plan/>

Ordinance Amendments: Research and Development

Several text amendments to the *Zoning Ordinance* were worked on in 2023. The process of text amendment and ordinance development and adoption involves research by the Planning Staff, consultation with stakeholders on specific topics, review by City Council Committees, and then formal review and public hearings by the Planning Commission (for recommendation) and City Council (final action). Adopted in early January 2023, there was the Text Amendment from 2022 focused on revisions to the permitted uses and conditional uses in the IPM-2 zoning district (MI-22-05; Ordinance #2022-21). One Text Amendment adopted in October 2023 focused on adding indoor recreation and amusement establishments as a permitted use in the C-2 zone. A Planning Staff Working Group also researched and began development of proposed amendments to the C-2 zone and related development regulations. See Summary Table as follows for 2023 activity.

Ordinance Amendments Adopted in 2023			
File Number & Ordinance	Topic	Text Amendment	Action Date
MI-23-03 Ordinance #2023-08	Text Amendment: C-2 Zone – Indoor Recreation Added permitted use of indoor recreation and amusement establishments	<i>Zoning Ordinance</i> , Article 3, Section 13	Recommendation by Planning Commission: October 16, 2023 Adopted: October 23, 2023
MI-23-04 Ordinance #2024-01 with LFA#1	Text Amendment: C-2 Zone: Uses and Standards Revises uses and bulk standards for C-2 Zone; add design standards for C-2 Zone; revises Dumpster provision; revises parking requirements; add definition	<i>Zoning Ordinance</i> , Article 3, Section 13; Article 4 Section 4.14; Article 5 Section 6; Article 6 Section 3.1; Article 12	<i>Starting formal review process in January 2024</i>

2023 Planning Office Applications



- Annexations
- Board of Adjustment
- Conditional Use
- Historic District Commission
- Misc.
- Rezoning
- Site Plans
- Subdivision

Boards and Commissions

Historic District Commission

The City of Dover, Delaware Historic District Commission currently consists of five members. In July of 2023, the Historic District Commission welcomed a new member, Mrs. Ellen H. Richardson to the board. The members during 2023 include Eric Czerwinski, Ann Baker Horsey, Jonathan Street, Mary Terry Mason, and new member Ellen H. Richardson. The Commission receives staff support from the Planning Office. During 2023 Eric Czerwinski served as Chair and Ann Horsey served as Vice-Chair. At the Commission's Annual Meeting in November 2023, Eric Czerwinski was reelected Chair. Ellen Richardson was elected Vice Chair.



The Historic District Commission held six meetings in 2023. The Historic District Commission reviewed a total of five (5) applications and referral items for consultation on Architectural Review Certificates in the calendar year. The applications included Parking Lot Improvements for 34 The Green (associated with the Kent County Family Courthouse Project) and then consideration of Permit Referrals for a Fence Permit, 2 Sign Permits, and a Demolition/Renovation Permit (still pending).

Of the fifty-one (51) permits in the Historic District area in 2023, a total of forty-two (42) required Architectural Review Certification for exterior work activities. The significant majority of the Permits were eligible for Staff Review during the Building Permit process due to their scope of work. For example, exterior renovations and restoration/repair of exterior finishes for a several buildings Downtown area were completed. Several other locations implemented fence projects or new signage that were accordance with the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*.

Certified Local Government Program

The City of Dover was designated a Certified Local Government in 2015 as associated with the Historic Preservation program efforts. As part of the Certified Local Government Program comes the opportunity to apply for grant funding for studies, education, and outreach efforts. While the timeframe to utilize a FFY2019 CLG Grant was extended into 2023, the grant project was not pursued.

Planning Commission

In 2023, the Planning Commission consisted of nine members with Ms. Andrea Maucher as Chair and Mr. Robert Hartman as Vice Chair. At their Annual Meeting in July, Ms. Andrea Maucher was re-elected Chair of the Planning Commission and Mr. Robert Hartman was re-elected Vice Chair. One new member was appointed to the Planning Commission to take the seat previously held by Holly Malone (did not seek reappointment at end of term in June 2023); Mr. Mark Reaves was appointed to the Planning Commission in late October and participated in his first meeting in November. Mr. Robert D. Hartman resigned in late November 2023; a new member for his seat was scheduled for appointment in January 2024.

The Planning Commission met in eleven months in 2023 and reviewed a total of 24 applications. All meetings were hybrid meetings where meetings were held In-person in the Council Chambers and also presented virtually through the Web-Ex audio/video conferencing software. The Site Plans reviewed by the Planning Commis

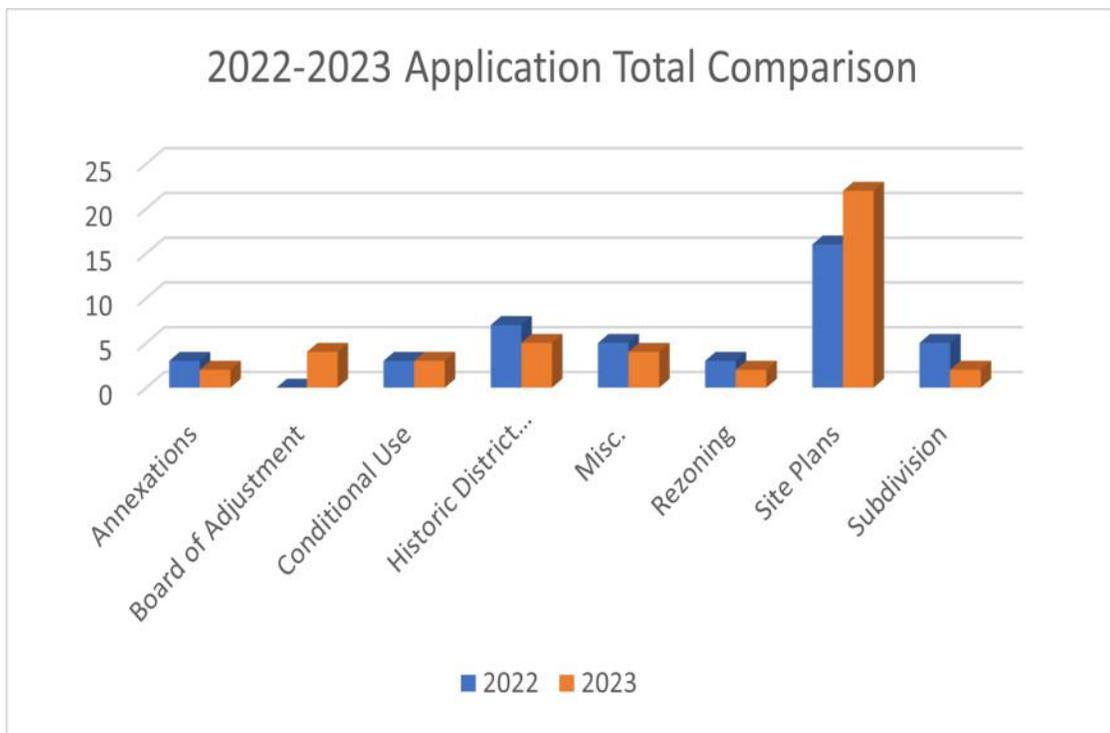
sion included two (2) new buildings for the Delaware State University Main Campus; a warehouse project near Ridgely Street; two (2) office building projects; another car wash near DuPont Highway; four (4) apartment projects; and revisions to the Implementation Plan for Eden Hill Farm TND – Residential District. The most significant Site Development Plan review activity involved three (3) lots at the Garrison Oak Business and Technology Center with proposals for Byler’s Warehouse (Lot #2 – under construction); a Cold Storage Warehouse facility (Lot #8); and the Blue Hen Disposal Operations Facility (Lot #11).

The Conditional Use approvals were granted to The Hive on Loockerman Street (Business & Event Center) and for a Building Addition to Mt. Zion AME Church. The Planning Commission made a recommendation to City Council on one rezoning application at 2161 Forrest Avenue to rezone the property to RM-2/COZ-1 for a potential multi-family (apartment) project. There were three applications for Subdivision in 2023 to create or rebalance residential lots. One Annexation application brought into the City an existing single-family residence on Acorn Lane.

A total of eight (8) applications were submitted to the Planning Office for Administrative Review including seven (7) Administrative Site Plans focus on several small buildings and parking lot improvements and a Minor Lot Line Adjustment Plan. See the Application Table Charts for mor detailed information on all Applications.

Board of Adjustment

The Planning Office received four (4) applications for review by the Board of Adjustment in 2023 and held three meetings. The applications dealt with several residential properties and a place of public assembly. Three of these applications were for area variances related to bulk standards (lot width, lot coverage, lot area for a specific use, and maximum area coverage). One Appeal application was dismissed due to lack of jurisdiction. During 2023 long-term member Colonel Arthur G. Ericson did not seek reappointment. Mr. Clarence Wagner II was appointed to the Board of Adjustment in October 2023. Ms. E. Jane Warren resigned in November 2023 as a member of the Board of Adjustment; her seat has not been reappointed.



Construction Progress in Dover!

110 Lafferty Lane - Warehouse



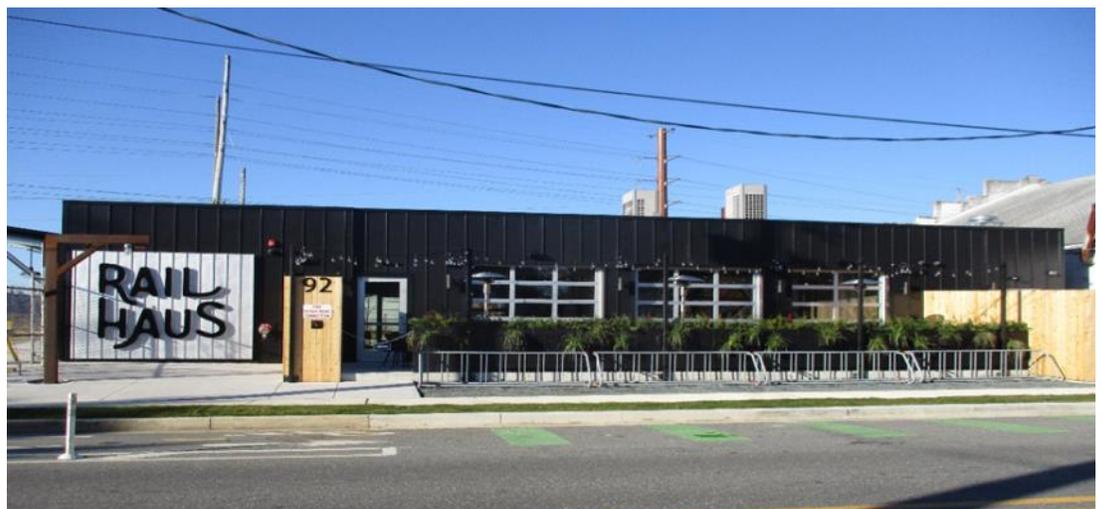
Starting Construction...

Adding the Details and Signage...

Final Inspections...

Ready to Open and Serve!

655 Bayhealth Conference Center



2023: Dover by the Numbers

Certificates of Occupancy, Building, Plumbing and HVAC Inspections

5 Years View 2019 thru 2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Certificates of Occupancy	329	73	64	141	174
Building Inspections + Preliminary Meetings	5,726	3,710	3,024	3,590	2,123
Plumbing and Me- chanical Inspec- tions	7,402	2,931	2,869	3,859	1,985
Total for that year column	13,128	6,714	5,967	7,534	4,108



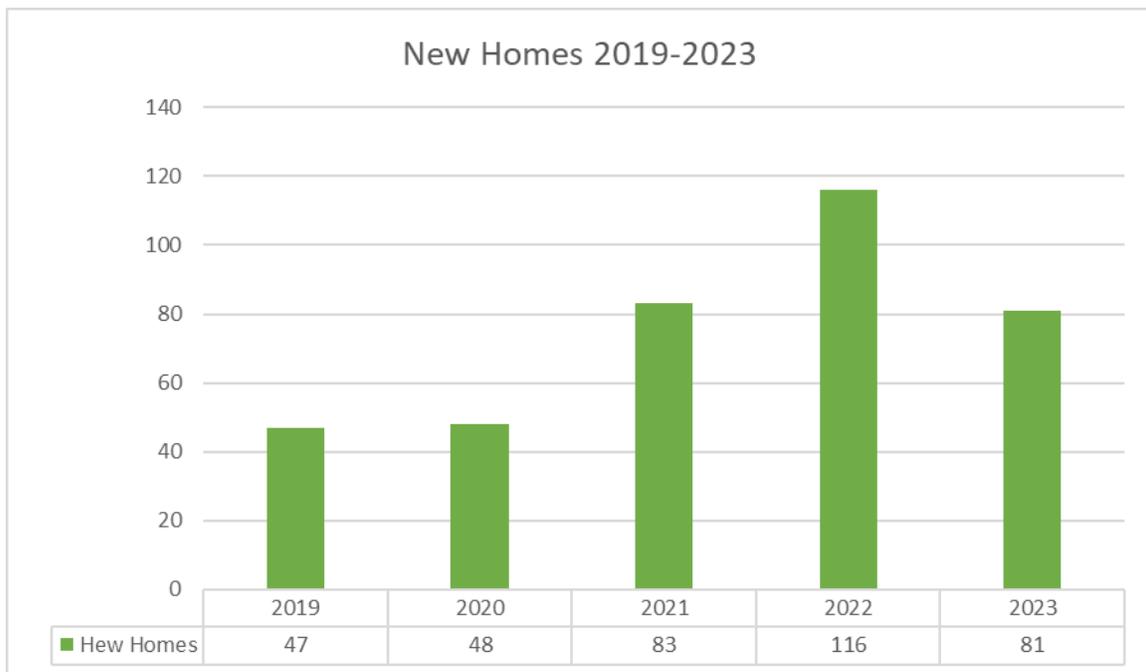
RENTAL PERMITS ISSUED 2019-2023

■ Rental Dwellings
 ■ Public Occupancies
 ■ Lodging Houses

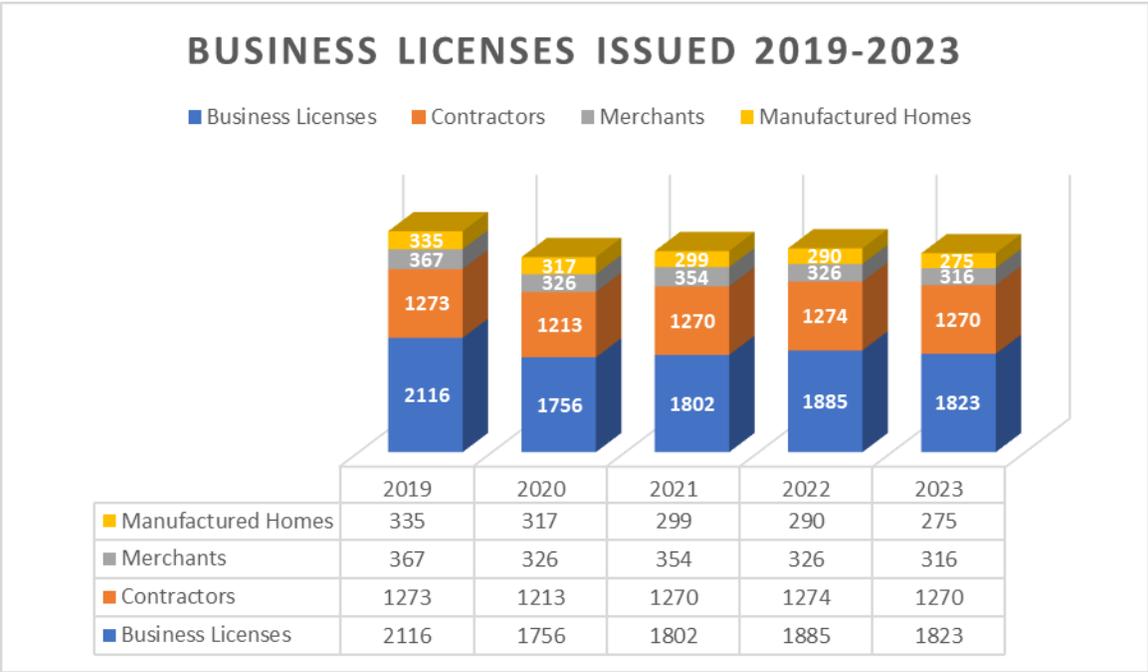


Rental Licenses	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lodging Houses	49	48	52	44	44
Public Occupancies	494	401	432	479	504
Rental Dwellings	3,249	3,176	3,111	3,013	2,912
TOTALS	3,792	3,625	3,595	3,536	3,460

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FOR NEW HOMES 2019-2023



BUSINESS LICENSING



Business Licenses	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Manufactured Homes	335	317	299	290	275
Merchants	367	326	354	326	316
Contractors	1,273	1,213	1,270	1,274	1,270
Business Licenses	2,116	1,756	1,802	1,885	1,823
TOTALS	4,091	3,613	3,725	3,775	3,684

Major Projects and Construction Activity 2023

Residential Construction Activity

Construction activities continued in residential subdivisions in 2023 with permits issued for a mix of one-family detached dwellings, duplexes, and townhomes. There was residential construction activity in **Eden Hill Farm TND, Patriot Village and Patriot Village III, Oak Shadows, Chestnut Grove Farms, Lexington Glen PND, and Rojan Meadows PND**. A series of permits for one-family dwelling infill projects were also issued including within the area of the **Downtown Development District** and other scattered lots citywide. Also Permits were issued for manufactured home placements in various communities. Approximately 128 new dwelling units were completed and received Certificates of Occupancy (or Temporary Certificates of Occupancy) by year's end. A majority of the new dwellings were in Eden Hill Farm TND and Patriot Village. While no new multi-family units were constructed, a major renovation project began for the apartments at **Owens Manor** and **Queens Manor**. 2023 also saw continued activity with Fence, Shed, and Deck Permits as people made improvements at their residences.



Non-Residential & Commercial Construction Activity

Commercial and other construction activity continued in 2023 with a variety of new projects starting, renovation activities establishing new tenants, and projects being completed.

New Permits Issued & Projects Underway in 2023

New Permits were issued in 2023 for a variety of renovation projects and new building construction projects. The following list consists of some projects that were started in 2023 and may not be fully complete as of yet.

- **Kent County Family Courthouse and Parking Garage Structure** project at 445 and 415 S. Governors Avenue (S-22-06)
- Building renovations on the **DSU Downtown Campus** and also at the **Delaware State University** main campus
- Renovations at **Bayhealth Medical Center**
- Building Renovations and HVAC projects at **Delaware Technical & Community College**
- Interior renovation project at **Blue Hen Corporate Center for Bayhealth**
- Various office renovation projects including **Delaware Restaurant Association**
- New commercial building: **Mod Car Wash** at 1414 N. Dupont Highway (S-21-10)
- New commercial building: **Neighbor-Good Partners Office Project** at 223 W. Division Street (S-23-03)



- Demolition of the **Scull Mansion** at 625 S. State Street and the **Gates Buildings** at 605 S. State Street in preparation for the **Bayhealth Staff Parking Lot Expansion** (S-20-10)
- Various **Parking Lot Improvement projects** at 30 The Green, 34 The Green, and 16 Old Rudnick Lane
- New building: **Dover Park Community Center and Spray Pad** (S-21-06)
- New building: **East Carolina Warehouse** at 100 Ridgely Street (S-23-01)
- New building: **Garrison Homes, LLC Warehouse project** at 110 Lafferty Lane (S-22-13)

Completed Projects for Renovation Activities

Building Permits were issued for building rehabilitation/renovation projects and tenant space fit-outs citywide in 2023. The following are samples of the Renovations Activities completed from the year.

- Various Office renovations citywide including at 911 S. DuPont Highway, 500 W. Loockerman Street, 1241 College Park Drive, the Department of Elections Offices, offices for **Brandywine Counseling & Community Services**
- Healthcare related office renovations at the **Eden Hill Medical Center Building** at 200 Banning Street and for **Bayhealth at Blue Hen Corporate Center**
- Tenant fit-outs for **State Farm Insurance Offices, Burrito Bar, and Crumbl Cookies** (pending) in **Capital Station**
- Tenant fit-outs at 515 S. DuPont Highway including **Pizza Hut** and **Cosmic Vape**
- Tenant renovations for **Sola Salon** at 192 John Hunn Brown Rd
- Tenant renovations for restaurants including **The Chicken House Restaurant** at 865 N. Dupont Hwy, **Coney Island Hotdogs** on Loockerman Street, and **Naz Halal**
- Tenant Fit-out for **Key to Life Juice Bar** at 136 W. Loockerman Street
- Tenant Fit-out at 60 Starlifter Avenue for **Canteen Vending Company**
- Tenant space renovations in the **Shoppes of the Hamlet** including the **Nest Play Café**
- Office renovations for the **Dover Motor Sports Offices** at the Fan Care Center Building on the Dover Motor Speedway property
- Tenant space fit-outs at **131 Rosemary Road** in multi-tenant warehouse and contractor businesses
- Renovations for **Marvis Discount Tire** and 280 Cowgill Street

Completed Projects for New Building Construction

The following projects involved the development of properties resulting in construction of New Buildings. They were completed in 2023 and note the associated Site Plan Applications.

- **Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DWSA) Administration Building** on Energy Lane (S-19-19)
- **Union Wholesale Warehouse** at 679 Horsepond Road (S-20-09)
- **New Dover Middle Schools** project at 1 Pat Lynn Drive (S-20-02/S-20-07) opened to students in Fall 2023 (operating under a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy)
- **Lion of Judah Church** at 951 White Oak Road (S-19-11)
- **Rail Haus Beer Garden** at 92 N. West Street (S-21-12)
- New building for **Chase Bank** at 837 N. DuPont Highway (S-22-11)
- New warehouse/distribution facility for **Frito Lay** at 300 Lafferty Lane (S-22-02)

2023: Welcome to Dover! Progress in Pictures

The Capital City – Growing and in motion, every day

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATIONS PERMITS KEEPS US MOVING FORWARD

D	O	V	E	R							
U	N	D	E	R							
C	O	N	S	T	R	U	C	T	I	O	N



2023: Activity in Dover! Progress in Pictures



445 S Governors Avenue Kent County Family Courthouse Footing



445 S Governors Avenue Kent County Family Courthouse Footing

2023: Welcome to Dover! Progress in Pictures

225 W Division St
–NeighborGood
Partners Office:
Foundation start
of Project



868 Woodcrest Drive Section I



411 S Queen St – Renovations at Queen Manor



1500 Hopkins Avenue
Patriot Village III



445 S Governors Avenue

Kent County Family Courthouse by Wholsen
Construction



106 Lotus Street



2023: Welcome to Dover! Progress in Pictures

515 S. Dupont Hwy Suite 1
Pizza Hut



60 Starlifter Avenue Ste 107 Canteen Vending



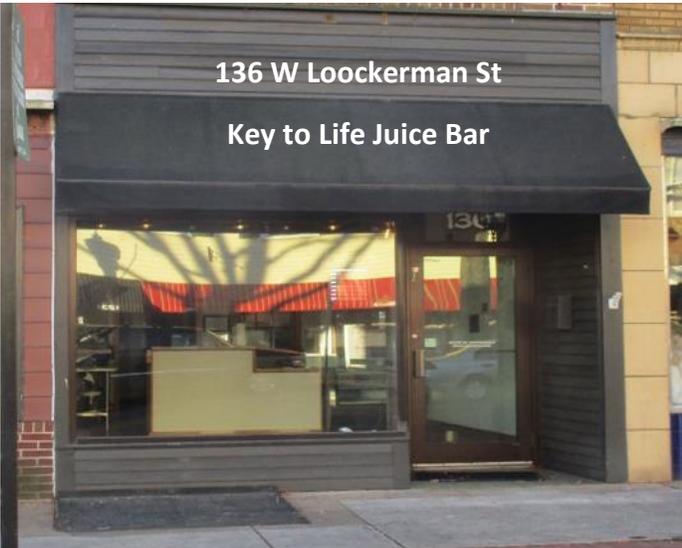
300 Lafferty Lane –Frito Lay Warehouse



5 pack of town homes
301-309 Stripes Ct
Patriot Village



136 W Loockerman St
Key to Life Juice Bar



837 N Dupont Hwy– Chase Bank



2023: Welcome to Dover! Progress in Pictures



1362 College Road



651 Garrison Oak Drive Byler's Warehouse



1241 College Park Drive



1517 Hopkins Avenue
Patriot Village III



517, 519, 521, 523, 525 Ridgley Blvd – Eden Hill



1505 Hopkins Avenue
Patriot Village III



1 and 5 Barrington Way – Chestnut Grove Farms

2023: Welcome to Dover! Progress in Pictures



640 S State Street (Kent General Endoscopy Procedure Room)



532 Ruth Way– Eden Hill Farm TND



542 Ruth Way –Eden Hill Farm TND



951 White Oak Road—Lion of Judah Church



515 S Dupont Hwy-Cosmic Smoke



300, 302, 304, 306, 308 Stripes Court– Patriot Village