PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting was held on June 8, 2015, at 3:34 p.m. with Chairman Anderson presiding. Members present were Mr. Lewis, Mr. Caldwell, and Mrs. Horsey. Mr. Hosfelt was absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mrs. Horsey moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Review of Youth Advisory Committee Membership Applications

Mr. Anderson advised members that several applications had been received for the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), noting that there were several slots on the Committee to be filled. He stated his belief that at least five (5) more applications could be accepted and that additional young people could still be involved if they wanted to. Mr. Anderson indicated that past history had shown that typically some members of the YAC may drop out, and members who are older students may leave the area to attend college. He stated that members would review applications and rank them in order of their preference and then discuss them.

Noting that there were potential applicants for the Committee in the audience, Mr. Lewis requested that Mr. Anderson provide a brief history of the YAC. Mr. Anderson stated that the Committee was originally started many years ago and then fell into disuse. Subsequently, former Councilwoman Sophia Russell attended a National League of Cities Conference where she heard about other successful youth councils. She returned to Dover, made revisions, and got a vibrant YAC started. Mr. Anderson stated that the YAC appealed to young people because it was about advocacy and provided an outlet for concerned young people to report to Council on issues relating to youth, so that their voices could be heard. Noting that many young people say there is nothing to do, Mr. Anderson stated that the YAC would also provide activities for young people. Having an official organization to access City facilities and connect with City events would help to cut through bureaucracy, and the young people would be involved with planning family-friendly events and recreational programs that are alcohol and drug free. Mr. Anderson stated that the Committee also has a leadership development aspect to it and would provide opportunity for participants to develop leadership skills, such as planning, goal setting, delegation, responsibility, budgeting, and being able to function in an adult world following structure and rules, which would benefit the participants throughout their lives.

Mr. Caldwell questioned if there were a vision and direction for the young people and specific ideas for what they would do. Responding, Mr. Anderson stated that the YAC had started to develop their vision and goals, noting that part of this must come from members as the beginning of their leadership development. Mr. Anderson stated that one (1) project would be absolutely non-negotiable, a good New Year's Eve event. He stated that this would give members a big goal that excites them, as well as many people in the community. He stated that there had been many financial and other types of pledges from the community to support this. Mr. Anderson stated that youth members had also asked to be involved with Parks and Recreation Department events, such

as a Concert on the Green. A First Friday event was being discussed with the Economic Development Office. Mr. Anderson felt that the youth members would be interested in asking questions and in advocacy, noting that some were very much touched by the violence that had been happening. He indicated the desire to make sure that there are outreach efforts, so there is a feeling that it is more "cool" to be with the people who are doing the right thing rather than those doing the wrong thing.

Mrs. Horsey felt that this was an amazing leadership opportunity, noting the desire to capture our youth now. She inquired if having two (2) references was a requirement for applicants or just a recommendation. Responding, Mr. Anderson stated that there was no code requirement for a reference for any committee; however, preference would be given to applicants with recommendations. This would help members to judge them better since it would indicate that someone besides their mother thinks they are worthy of participating, and that they showed initiative and were able to approach someone to get a reference.

Mr. Lewis moved that Application D (Michael Gardner-Adult Applicant) be sent to Council with a favorable recommendation pending successful criminal background and clean hands checks. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the rankings of the youth applicants for the Youth Advisory Committee.

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend approval of Application A (Zorana Ilic), seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Mr. Lewis moved to recommend approval of Application C (Lauren Scott), seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Mr. Lewis moved to recommend approval of Application F (Jordan Harmon), seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Mr. Lewis moved to recommend approval of Application B (Michael Kosior), seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend approval of Application E (Rocher Hopkins) for any slots that become open, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Review of Planning, Inspections, and Recreation 2014 Annual Report

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, advised members that the Review of the Planning, Inspections, and Recreation Annual 2014 Report would be considered by City Council during their Regular Meeting scheduled for later in the evening. Mrs. Townshend reviewed a presentation of the Planning, Inspections & Recreation 2014 Annual Report ***(Attachment #1)***.

Mrs. Townshend reviewed the 2014 highlights for the Department, noting that the Garrison Energy Center at the Garrison Oak Technology Park was scheduled to go online today and Uzin Utz had begun construction. In regard to Route 13 redevelopment, she advised members that the Produce Junction is underway at the former CompUSA site.

Mrs. Townshend explained that 1,704 building permits were issued in 2014, which was slightly fewer than 2013. There were 44 new home construction permits in 2014, slightly fewer than the prior year. Permits for 2015 were starting to pick up slightly and 25 permits had been issued by five (5) months into the current year. She explained that rental permits and business licenses were somewhat flat, noting that rental permits had spiked back when the housing crisis was at its peak, and business licenses had not rebounded from a drop that occurred when the economy declined.

Mrs. Townshend advised members that 34 applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission and 14 by the Board of Adjustment in 2014. She explained that architectural review certificates relate to administrative review of building permits to ensure compliance with Historic District guidelines, and some of these certificates are reviewed by the Historic District Commission.

Mrs. Townshend indicated that 735 inspections or complaints were handled by the three (3) staff members of the Fire Marshal's Office. There were 81 fire protection permits and 71 fire investigations, which was a significant increase over 2013.

In regard to code enforcement, Mrs. Townshend stated that 8,184 inspections were performed and there were 4,007 cases, 82% of which were initiated by either Planning Department staff or through referrals from other City departments.

In response to Mr. Lewis regarding the total amount of fines collected by the City, Mrs. Townshend stated that she could provide a breakdown of this amount at the Regular City Council Meeting scheduled later in the evening.

Mrs. Townshend stated that there were just under 400 housing inspections, 560 property maintenance exterior cases, and 924 grass cases in 2014, and other violations amounted to a quarter of the caseload.

Mrs. Townshend reviewed the statistics regarding vacant buildings. Responding to Mr. Anderson regarding how many of these buildings were commercial versus residential, Mrs. Townshend stated that there was no breakdown in the system; however, the vast majority of them are residential. She advised members that the vacant building ordinance was passed in 2006 to address a commercial issue; however, when the housing crisis hit, the ordinance became very important because there were so many vacant properties. The City now knows the location of these properties and can make sure they are secure and respond to issues that come up.

In reviewing information related to the City's Parks and Recreation Program, Mrs. Townshend informed members that leagues are a big revenue source for the Department, noting that a decline was being seen in softball, which had previously brought in large revenues. She indicated that the City's Sports Coordinator had been working to build other leagues and it was hoped that indoor field hockey and girls' indoor lacrosse would start to balance this out.

Mrs. Townshend expressed her excitement regarding the City's Challenger Sports Program, which includes football, cheerleading, and basketball. Students with disabilities from the John S. Charlton and Kent County Community Schools participate in this program, along with athletes from Dover High School who work as volunteers. Mrs. Townshend indicated that special needs participants benefit from the program, but it is also a valuable experience for the high school volunteers who work with them.

Mrs. Townshend stated that staff had been working on planning future needs, including a Recreation Needs Assessment, noting that the draft of this document would be presented to members during their next meeting. She indicated that the City's Second Annual Bike to Work Day was held in 2014 and participation increased in 2015, which was its third year. Mrs. Townshend advised members that community involvement in park planning is sought, explaining that a community meeting was held at Mallard Pond and children were invited to sit down with playground catalogs and draw the type of playground that they want. She stated that Super Summer Playground would be getting into full swing during the following week.

Responding to Mr. Lewis regarding where the $104,000 received from vacant building fees goes, Mrs. Townshend stated that these fees go to the City's General Fund.

In response to Mr. Anderson's request for information regarding the progress of the Capital City Trail and its link with the City recreation plan, Mrs. Townshend explained that this trail starts from Silver Lake, extends along Park Drive and runs behind the Delaware Public Archives, down Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and south along Route 13 to its intersection with Public Safety Boulevard. The trail can then be picked up from Public Safety Boulevard and extends to Route 10. Mrs. Townshend stated that, in looking at the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which is the statewide needs assessment, trails and pathways were included at the top of the list. This was also true in the City and Mrs. Townshend expected that planning for trails would be ramped up. She stated that people would like loop trails around Dover and Schutte Parks.

Mrs. Townshend noted that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee was working to push forward the Senator Bikeway project, which would be an on and off road route along the Route 8 corridor linking with the Capital City Trail. It would include trails as well as lesser stressed streets that would be a safe place to ride for those who are not advanced cyclists.

In response to Mr. Anderson regarding accommodating skateboarders, Mrs. Townshend stated that skateboarders could use multi-use trails. She indicated that skateboarding has two (2) components: 1) safe passage to and from destinations, and 2) a skate park. Mrs. Townshend stated that there is no place for skateboarders to do stunts, and they are currently using places like the steps of Legislative Hall for this purpose.

Mr. Anderson stated that skateboarding was a big item, especially since a skateboarder had recently been killed. Mrs. Townshend concurred, noting that this skateboarder had been on the roadway. She indicated that bicycle and pedestrian improvements, such as those on Kenton Road, would involve a multi-use path, which would be safer for skateboarders.

Mrs. Horsey concurred with the importance of addressing skateboarding, stating that she had seen skateboarders on Division Street and Governors Avenue going down the middle of the street, which was very dangerous.

Mr. Anderson inquired about safety in the parks, noting that he had heard quite a few complaints about people sleeping in Silver Lake and park users not feeling comfortable when walking or running there close to dusk. Responding, Mrs. Townshend stated that the Planning Department provides programming related to parks and recreation and the Public Works Department maintains the parks. She stated that complaints had been received related to Silver Lake Park and Dover Park and had been forwarded to the Police Department. In regard to planning for Dover Park, Mrs. Townshend felt that improvements could be made in terms of lighting and vegetation maintenance; however, a police presence was needed to discourage certain behaviors. She advised members that the parks are technically closed from dusk to dawn and this is an issue because some people live and sleep in the parks, and there are other activities that are even more concerning happening in parks when they are technically closed.

Mr. Anderson stated that perhaps these types of activities should be put on a future agenda and the police should be asked for grants for cameras, etc.

Mrs. Townshend stated that the Police Department had mentioned a grant for foot patrols and suggested that grant money could also be used to increase their presence in the City's parks. She felt having officers on bicycle or foot in the parks would be helpful.

In regard to the Capital City Bike Trail, Mrs. Horsey stated that she was unsure if people know they have to cross the highway to pick up the trail and how to accomplish this to access the other part of the trail off Public Safety Boulevard. She suggested that perhaps a sign should be posted to indicate that the trail continues on the other side of Route 13. Mrs. Townshend stated that there is a signal, but other ways of crossing the highway had been discussed. She indicated that she could bring this up with the Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT).

Mr. Lewis questioned if some of the employees from the Police Department's new Cadet Program could be utilized to patrol the parks. In response, Mrs. Townshend stated that this would be a question for the Police Department. She suggested that park safety be added to a future agenda, since there are a wide range of related issues that occur, including sleeping in the parks, drug deals, and umpires feeling threatened. She suggested that Police Chief Paul Bernat be asked to come to the next meeting.

Mr. Caldwell felt that safety would be a top concern with many of the people in the City and indicated that he would like to see more involvement by the Police Department. He stated that he was concerned about the behavior of the youth and programs established for them, noting that safety was his number one (1) concern.

Mr. Anderson expressed the desire for the Committee to look at City policies, possibly in September when the Recreational Needs Assessment is complete, stating his concern that some of the policies may not be constitutionally compliant. Responding, Mrs. Townshend stated that most of the provisions enforced in the parks are designated in the Dover Code.

In response to Mr. Anderson regarding a policy not to allow political activities in parks, Mrs. Townshend stated that this policy had been changed following a discussion with Mr. William Pepper, Deputy City Solicitor.

Mr. Lewis moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Anderson
Chairman

DLA/MK/js/dd/tm
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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Presentation - Planning, Inspections & Recreation 2014 Annual Report

Planning, Inspections & Recreation

2014 Annual Report

ATTACHMENT #1
PR&CE MEETING OF JUNE 8, 2015

What We Do

- Planning, Zoning, Plan Review
- Building Inspections
- Fire Inspections, Investigations, Plan Review
- Licensing and Permitting
- Parks and Recreation – Athletic Leagues, Fitness Classes, Recreation Programming

2014 Highlights

- Opening of Dover High School
- Downtown Redevelopment
  - Family Dollar
  - Downtown Development District

2014 Highlights

- Garrison Oak Technical Park
  - Uzin Utz
  - Garrison Energy Center
  - Park Infrastructure





2014 Highlights



- Route 13 Redevelopment
  - Winner Ford and Winner VW
  - Uno's/Dover Litho Site
- Downtown Redevelopment
  - Family Dollar
  - Inner City Cultural League
  - Downtown Development District

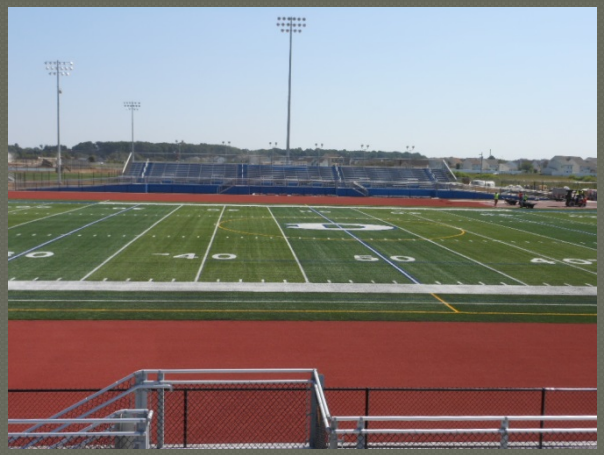




2014 Highlights
Opening of Dover High School

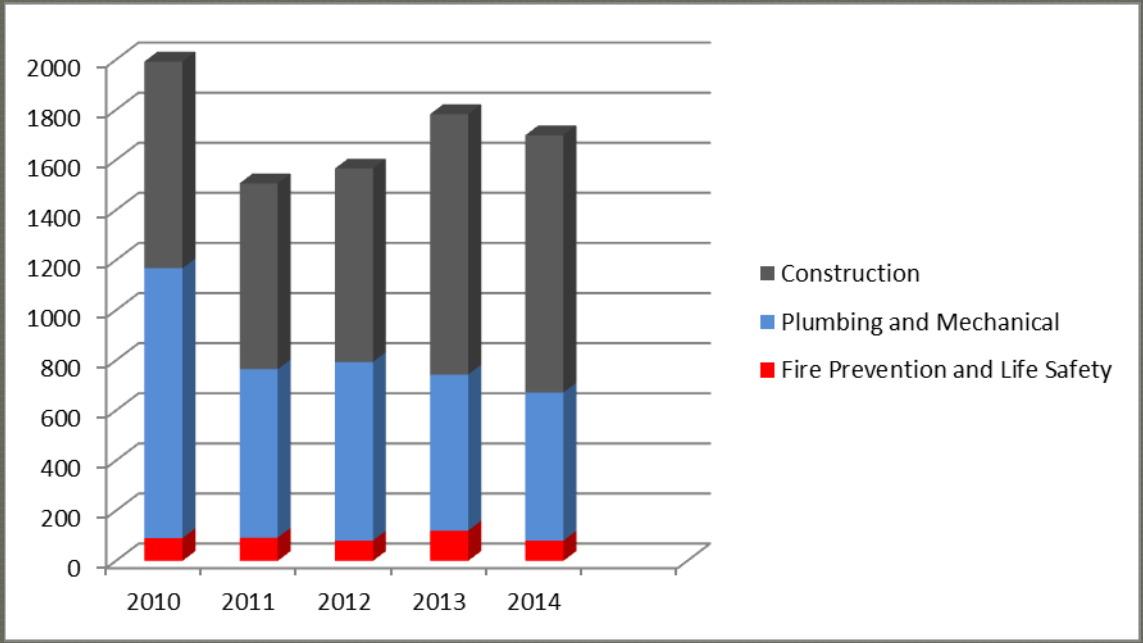






Building Permits

Permits Issued, 2010-2014

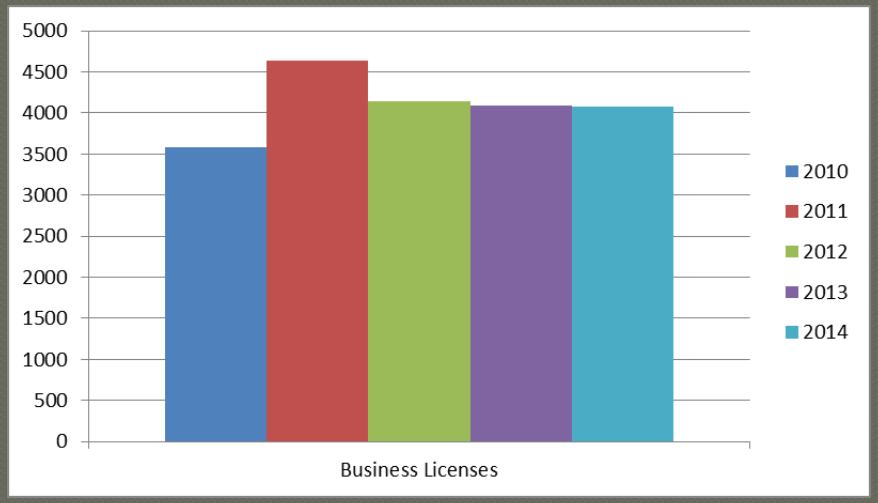


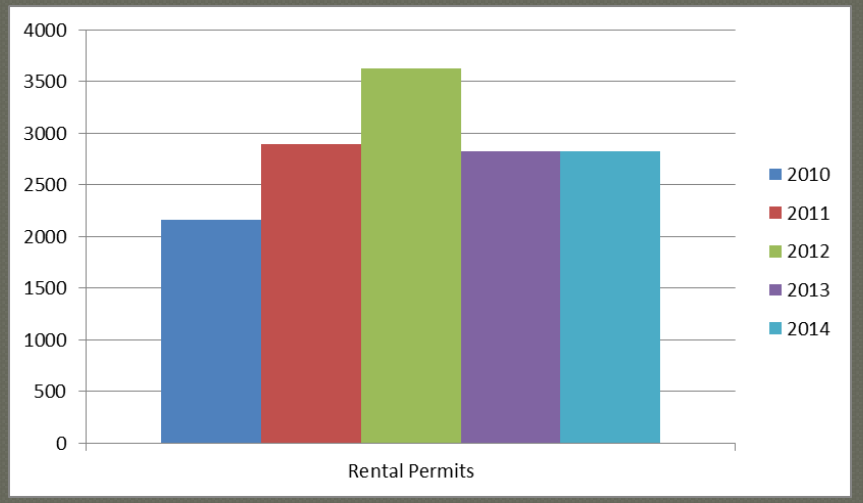
1,704 Building Permits Issued

New Home Construction:

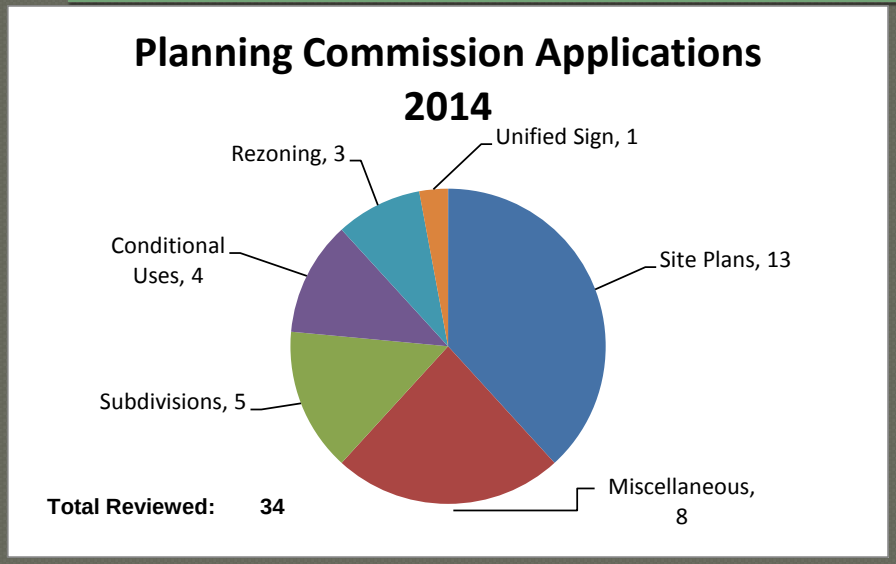
2011: 48
2012: 37
2013: 50
2014: 44

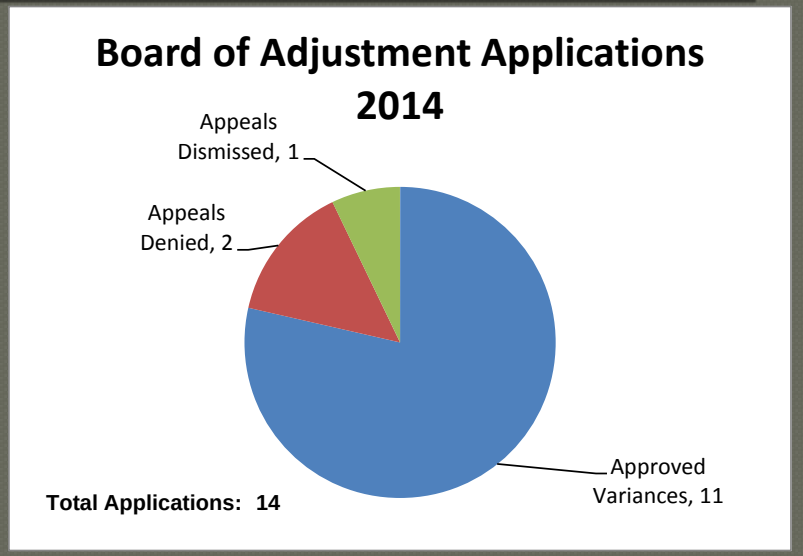
Rental Permits & Business Licenses

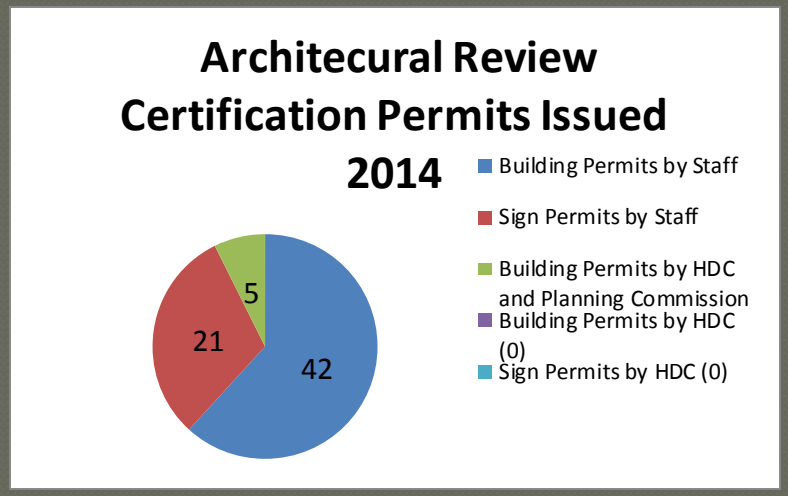




Planning Applications







Fire Marshal's Office

735 Inspections/Complaints Handled

- 379 Fire Code Inspections
- 77 Certificate of Occupancy
- 99 Administrative Walk Through Inspections
- 170 Life Safety Inspections

81 Fire Protection Permits

71 Fire Investigations

Fire Type	Number	Value of Loss
Accidental	44	$1,206,000
Incendiary	21	$171,600
Undetermined	6	$70,500
TOTAL	71	$1,448,100



Code Enforcement

Types of Inspections/Cases Entered	
Annual Rental Housing Inspections	398
Property Maintenance Exterior	560
Tall Grass and Weeds	924
No Valid Business License	108
No Valid Building Permit	79
Zoning	104
Dover City Ordinances	652
All Others	1182
Total	**4,007**



- 8,184 Inspections Performed
- 82% of Cases Staff Initiated

Vacant & Dangerous Buildings

- 277 Buildings Registered Vacant
- $104,000 Vacant Building Registration Fees
- 41 Active Dangerous Buildings
  - 8 Demolished by City of Dover
  - 4 Demolished by Others
  - 6 Repaired by Owners



Recreation

- 48,065 patrons & visitors were recorded in the John W. Pitts Recreation Center
- 3,000 (approx.) participated in our softball, field hockey, lacrosse and volleyball leagues
- 2,800 attended summer Concerts on the Green series
- Total FY14 revenues
  - $75,600 Leagues
  - $26,240 General Recreation
  - $18,600 Field/Building Rentals
  - $ 6,560 Trips
  - $ 13,500 Sports
  - $ 16,889 Camps



Recreation

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- Challenger Sports
- Indoor Field Hockey and Ladies Lacrosse
- Planning for Future Needs
  - Mallard Park Planning Process
  - Recreation Needs Assessment





Recreation













