PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on June 11, 2012, at 12:00 noon, with Chairwoman Russell presiding. Members present were Mr. Anderson (arrived at 12:08 p.m.), Mr. Bonar, Mrs. Horsey, and Mr. Lewis (departed at 12:40 p.m.). Mr. Perza was also present.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

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

Proposed Amendment to 2011 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reminded members that the 2011 CDBG Action Plan included an allocation in the amount of $60,081 for the City of Dover Streets Program to repave South New Street. She noted that the funds had not been expended during the program year because of the need to replace a water line before the repaving of the street. Since Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations require expenditure of funds in a timely manner, she stated that it would be feasible to reallocate the funding to other CDBG projects in order to ensure timely expenditure.

Mrs. Harvey advised members that the Housing Rehabilitation Program incurred unexpected expenses during the program year and additional environmental testing must be completed to bring a home into compliance with HUD guidelines, at a projected cost of $2,500. In addition, a budget request for a chair lift to be installed in Council Chambers would make Council Chambers compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and satisfy the HUD requirement for all City buildings to be handicapped accessible. The cost estimate to install the chair lift in Council Chambers was $19,214, with an existing balance of $3,931.76 in the ADA line item account. Staff recommended that $20,000 be allocated to cover any additional expenses that might be required to complete this project.

Mrs. Harvey explained that the remaining balance of $37,581 would be divided among the FY 2012 CDBG projects, excluding public service projects which are capped at 15%, bringing the remainder of projects close to their requested amounts, as follows:

CDBG FY2012 funded amounts		Increase
Serenity Place	$27,983	$ 2,017
Homeownership Assistance Program	$30,000	$10,000
MHDC Homeowner Rehabilitation Program	$40,000	$12,782
Elizabeth W. Murphey School	$20,000	$12,782
Total		**$37,581**

Staff recommended authorization to reallocate $60,081 in FY11 CDBG funding from the City of Dover Streets Program to provide funding for the aforementioned projects.

Mr. Bonar moved to recommend that staff be authorized to reallocate $60,081 in FY11 CDBG funding from the City of Dover Streets Program to provide funding for the FY11 Housing Rehabilitation Program, American Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements to Council Chambers, and FY12 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects, as presented, seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance - #2012-13 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 5 - Supplementary Regulations, Section 4 - Supplementary Sign Regulations

Mrs. Ann Marie Townsend, Director of Planning and Community Development, advised members that in January 2012, staff began meeting with members of the business community to discuss changes to the Zoning Ordinance. She stated that this group identified a number of areas where the Zoning Ordinance created impediments to business. The top priority identified was the Sign Regulations. She explained that since that time, monthly meetings have been held to work through proposed revisions to the Sign Regulations. As a result of these efforts, a draft ordinance has been developed that includes a combination of clarifications, simplification of the requirements, and significant relaxation of the regulations currently in place.

Mrs. Townshend provided a brief summary of the proposed changes to the substance of the regulation. She noted that the proposed ordinance was the result of detailed discussion about how the regulations could be more business friendly, while still protecting the character of Dover and avoiding sign clutter that could contribute to driver safety concerns. She assured members that there were a number of concessions made by the Planning Office and the business representatives to ensure that the product achieved this delicate balance.

In response to Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Townshend explained that the regulations would be applicable for any new sign permit and would not affect existing signs that may be non-compliant.

Staff recommended that Proposed Ordinance #2012-13 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 5 - Supplementary Regulations, Section 4 - Supplementary Sign Regulations be forwarded to City Council for First Reading on June 25, 2012, that a Public Hearing be set before the Planning Commission on July 16, 2012, and that a Public Hearing and Final Reading be set before City Council on August 13, 2012.

Mrs. Horsey moved for approval of staff's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance - #2012-14 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 3 - District Regulations, Section 23 - Agricultural Zone (A)

Mrs. Ann Marie Townsend, Director of Planning and Community Development, presented members with a proposed ordinance that would permit the sale of agricultural supplies and products, accessory to the agricultural use, within the A Zone (Agricultural) in Dover.

Mr. Bonar advised members that the proposed ordinance was the result of a request of a constituent who desired to open a farm pole building with existing office and warehouse space available for the sales of agricultural products. The property was located on a farm that was currently within the farmland preservation zone. It was anticipated that the business would generate no more than six (6) to seven (7) vehicles per day.

Staff recommended that Proposed Ordinance #2012-14 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 3 - District Regulations, Section 23 - Agricultural Zone (A) be forwarded to City Council for First Reading on June 25, 2012, that a Public Hearing be set before the Planning Commission on July 16, 2012, and that a Public Hearing and Final Reading be set before City Council on August 13, 2012.

Mrs. Horsey moved for approval of staff's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Bonar and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance #2012-15 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 3 - District Regulations, Section 9 - General Residence and Office Zone (RGO)

Mrs. Ann Marie Townsend, Director of Planning and Community Development, presented members with a proposed ordinance that would remove the prohibition of alcohol sale in restaurants within the RGO Zone (General Residence and Office). She explained that restaurants are a conditional use in the RGO zone, subject to approval by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Bonar advised members that the proposed ordinance was developed at the request of a constituent who owns property known as the "Governors Club", who would like to be permitted to have alcohol sales in the establishment. He explained that the establishment was currently licensed as a restaurant and was requesting to provide limited alcohol beverage sales on the premises only.

Responding to Mrs. Horsey, Mrs. Townshend explained that restaurants are permitted as a conditional use in the RGO zone subject to a public hearing; however, alcoholic beverages are currently prohibited. Other restaurants in the area that serve alcohol are within a different zoning classification. She advised members that a public hearing would also be required in order to obtain a liquor license; therefore, there would be ample opportunity for public comment.

Staff recommended that the Proposed Ordinance #2012-15 - Amendment to Appendix B - Zoning, Article 3 - District Regulations, Section 9 - General Residence and Office Zone (RGO) be forwarded to City Council for First Reading on June 25, 2012, that a Public Hearing be set before the Planning Commission on July 16, 2012, and that a Public Hearing and Final Reading be set before City Council on August 13, 2012.

Mr. Anderson moved for approval of staff's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Bonar and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance #2012-16 - Amendment to Chapter 114 - Vegetation, to Create a New Article III - Bamboo

Mrs. Ann Marie Townsend, Director of Planning and Community Development, reviewed a proposed ordinance that would prohibit the planting or growing of bamboo in the City of Dover. She indicated that it would also authorize the City to abate bamboo that has encroached onto adjacent properties and public ways and charge the cost of this abatement to the property owner. She advised members that bamboo is a highly invasive plant that spreads underground. Treating overgrowth of bamboo under the current code requirements does not prevent the plant from invading adjacent properties and the right-of-way. She noted that the only way to effectively control bamboo was to remove it and that the proposed ordinance would allow the City to require removal of bamboo on private property when it has spread. In addition, it would prohibit the planting of bamboo on private property except under certain conditions and in accordance with practices that would prevent the spreading thereof.

Mrs. Townshend advised members that the proposed ordinance would prohibit the planting of bamboo unless planted within a planter or if a steel barrier were installed that would prevent the spreading of the bamboo underground. It would not affect bamboo that is currently in place unless there is expansion and overgrowth of the bamboo that causes it to intrude into other properties.

Staff recommended that the proposed ordinance be forwarded to City Council for a First Reading on June 25, 2012, and a Final Reading and action by City Council on July 9, 2012.

Mr. Bonar moved to recommend adoption of Proposed Ordinance #2012-16 - Amendment to Chapter 114 - Vegetation, to Create a New Article III - Bamboo, as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

FY2013 - Five-Year Capital Investment Plan (CIP)

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, reviewed the Fiscal Year 2013 draft Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal Year 2013 through Fiscal Year 2017.

Referring to the Dover Park - Roof Replacement Project for FY2013 in the amount of $30,000, Mr. Koenig explained that staff has been contemplating whether or not the facility would continue in the future. He stated that staff planned to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) after June 1, 2012 to determine if a third party, non-profit organization would be interested in renting and/or using the facility. If there was such interest, staff would present a lease and allow Council to determine whether they wished to keep the facility in operation through a third party. Should Council wish to keep the facility in operation by the City, roof repairs would be necessary. If no interest was expressed by a third party and the City had no interest in maintaining the facility, Mr. Koenig stated that the $30,000 could be utilized to demolish the building and create open space for future redevelopment.

Mrs. Russell stated her desire to maintain the Dover Park facility, explaining that there is a need for the children who reside in this area and are not able to travel across town to use other facilities. She indicated no objections to a third party using the facility as long as it is utilized for youth and/or senior citizens.

In response to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Koenig stated that the $10,000 to be budgeted in FY2016 for Skate Parks would be used to begin designs. Referring to the need for the Splash Pad, which is proposed for FY2015 and FY2016, Mr. Anderson suggested the possibility moving the project forward to begin prior to FY2015. Responding, Mr. Koenig stated that the project was delayed due to lack of funding in the General Fund.

Mr. Bonar suggested that staff investigate the possibility of obtaining grant monies and other opportunities to help fund the Splash Pad project. In addition, he felt that the City should take steps to clean Silver Lake and felt that there were funds available through the Federal Government. He noted that such a project would include draining, excavation, capping, and allowing the Lake to refill.

Noting that Mr. Zachery Carter, Parks and Recreation Director would be retiring, Mrs. Russell relayed appreciation for his work and dedication to the youth in the community and wished him well in his future endeavors.

Mr. Bonar moved to recommend acceptance of the FY2013 Five-Year Capital Investment Plan (CIP), seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

UPDATES

The following updates were provided to members:

Planning and Funding for New Library

Mr. Zachery Carter, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that construction on the new Dover Public Library remained on time and within budget. He reminded members that a $100,000 matching challenge pledge donation was received and that, to date, the City needs to raise an additional $44,000.

Within the next month, Mr. Carter stated that the parking lot should be paved and the Reading Garden should be completed. He noted that the "green" roof is currently being installed and most of the exterior and interior work has been completed.

Mr. Bonar moved to recommend acceptance of the Update on Planning and Funding for the New Library, seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

CDBG Program

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reported on the Status of FY2011 CDBG Projects as of June 2012. She assured members that staff has met the requirement for the expenditure of funds in a timely manner and that grantees are continuing to draw down funds.

Housing and Recovery Act of 2008 Funds (Neighborhood Stabilization Fund)

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reviewed the Update on the Housing and Recovery Act of 2008 Funds (Neighborhood Stabilization Program) for Fiscal Year July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

Dover Youth Advisory Committee

Mrs. Russell advised members that the Committee members have now graduated from high school and are moving on to college. As a result, she noted that it would be necessary to appoint new members; however, the president would continue to serve since she will be attending Delaware Technical and Community College and had a desire to continue to serve.

Mrs. Horsey moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Bonar and unanimously carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

Sophia R. Russell
Chairwoman

SRR/jg/dd
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