COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Council Committee of the Whole met on June 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m., with Council President Slavin (departed at 6:54 p.m. and returned at 6:56 p.m.) presiding. Members of Council present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Sudler, Mr. Neil, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Polce, and Mr. Lindell (departed at 7:14 p.m. and returned at 7:17 p.m.). Mr. Cole and Mr. Hare were absent. Mayor Christiansen (departed at 6:34 p.m. and returned at 7:05 p.m.) was also present. Civilian members present for their Committee meetings were Mr. Caldwell (*Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement*), and Mr. Shevock and Dr. Stewart (*Legislative, Finance, and Administration*). Mrs. Horsey (*Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement*) was absent.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee met with Chairman Sudler presiding.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

By unanimous consent, the agenda was approved as presented.

Recommendations from Community Meeting of May 25, 2017

Mr. David Hugg, Acting Director of Planning and Community Development, estimated that there were more than 30 people in attendance at the community meeting of May 25, 2017. He stated that a lot of positive input was received from residents in the general area, as well as commitment to get involved in finding solutions for Dover Park. Mr. Hugg noted that there was also some discussion of Continental Park. He advised that recommendations included improving maintenance, addressing the general condition of some of the equipment and the pavement, and trying to find activities and create reasons for people to go to the park and participate in activities there. Mr. Hugg indicated that he advised meeting participants that the City had submitted grant applications to the State for both a Master Plan and Phase 1, which would identify what kind of facility or building may be needed at Dover Park. He stated that it would not be known until the fall if these funds would be granted; however, the City would be in the funding queue, and he thought master planning would move forward quickly. Mr. Hugg explained that Mr. Sudler had led a walk-through of Dover Park on Saturday, May 27, 2017 and identified a number of issues. He noted that some of the local residents were involved in the walk-through, which was a good sign that people wanted to take back ownership of the park and make it serve their needs. Mr. Hugg advised that staff had a subsequent meeting to discuss the next steps, such as looking into what would be required to provide electricity to the pavilions, possible sponsorships for park benches and playground equipment, and fundraisers. He stated that a community event with games and activities was scheduled to be held at Dover Park on July 22, 2017. Mr. Hugg indicated that there had been significant progress regarding this park.

Mr. Sudler explained that the event on July 22, 2017 would be a community fundraiser for Dover Park and Continental Park, with half of the proceeds going to each of the parks. He informed members that there would be a "rib-off" contest, as well as other activities, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

In regard to Continental Park, Mr. Hugg advised that a community workshop would be held on June 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the park site, or in the Dover Public Library in the event of rain. He explained that the purpose of the workshop was to get people to come out and talk about the parks, discuss what they would like to see at Continental Park, and develop a path forward.

Mrs. Donna Mitchell, Acting City Manager, stated that the Public Works Department had gone to Dover Park following the May 25, 2017 meeting and worked on many of the issues, including repainting the checkerboard tables. She noted that $80,000 had been earmarked in the Parkland Reserve Fund for Dover Park. She stated that $50,000 was included in the current budget and would carry forward into next year for the Dover Park Master Plan.

Mr. Sudler asked Mrs. Mitchell how she felt the community meeting went, and how the City would get in contact with Representative Andria Bennett in regard to her proposal to provide funding from the State Legislature. In response, Mrs. Mitchell stated that as soon as the City has identified and developed a project, Representative Bennett could be contacted through email regarding funding. Mrs. Mitchell indicated that she thought the meeting went very well, with a lot of conversation and participation, and the walk-through at the park was also very well attended.

Mr. Anderson stated that Kent County Levy Court Commissioners had offered to help match funding for Continental Park. He indicated that Kent County has a $600,000 source of funding in a park fund. Mr. Anderson advised that the City of Dover had a robust Park Reserve Fund at one time, and the Pitts Center was completed using $3M in cash. He noted that the City currently had no funding mechanism for park reserves and asked what other communities were using as funding sources for their park reserves. Mr. Anderson indicated that he did not need this information immediately but would like to have it within a month's time. Responding, Mrs. Mitchell stated that she would look into that, noting that some of the $3M used to build the Pitts Center was received through donations and contributions; however, a lot of funding came from carry-forward balances in the General Fund that were moved to the Reserve Fund to build the Center. Mr. Anderson noted that the City's unfunded liabilities were now a huge problem, which was a definite priority for the carry-forward.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Mrs. Mitchell explained that money from fundraisers could be placed into the Parkland Reserve Fund, and there was no problem with the City accepting money for that purpose.

Ms. Frances Thomas, a resident, stated that there was a nice turnout for the walk-through; however, a lot of the members of the panel who attended the community meeting were not present, and she and others wondered why they were not there to represent the community in the area. She advised that many things could be done at Dover Park, noting that she was not familiar with Continental Park. Ms. Thomas indicated that many people had grown up with Dover Park and questioned why it was not being built up more, noting that Dover is the capital of the First State. She stated that it was a waste that soccer, basketball, softball, and tennis activities were not being held there. Ms. Thomas stated that the park was located in an area of poverty and help was needed with interactive activities for children, who should not have to go all the way to Schutte Park. She noted that some parents do not have vehicles and there are transportation issues. Ms. Thomas indicated that she was glad that meetings were being held to discuss this; however, more needed to be done.

Mayor Christiansen stated that a number of people had been vocal when the Dover Park building was taken down, and a promise was made that this side of the community would not be forgotten. He advised that he thought that there was still a commitment, if the funding was available, to eventually rebuild Dover Park to what it was before, noting that he had used it himself when he lived on Willis Road. Mayor Christiansen indicated that he had never agreed with the strategy to move everything to Schutte Park, he did not think that the rest of the members of Council had, and they were committed to making sure that Dover Park would return as a viable entity on the east side of the City.

Mr. Sudler reviewed a presentation entitled "Dover Park & Recreational Center's Status Report - Dialogue Presentation for Master Plan!", which he stated was presented during the May 25, 2017 community meeting.

Ms. Rozalyn Chandler, Manchester Square, advised that she was interested in helping on this project, had participated in the walk-through, and had not known the park was so big. She indicated that she was upset because some of those who stated that they would come to the walk-through had not attended. Ms. Chandler stated that she had made a list of projects that could be done with children; however, no one had contacted her about it. She stated that some of the projects on her list were inexpensive and asked that someone contact her about them. Ms. Chandler stated that the more that could be done with the children, the fewer the problems would be in the community. She expressed concern about safety at her home, noting that she had called the police at 2:00 a.m. about drug interactions taking place at her front window, and there had also been people shooting at each other and running through her yard to the park to get away from police. Ms. Chandler advised that the City and the Dover Housing Authority should come together to do something about these problems. She indicated that she is living alone in fear and resides near the gate looking into Dover Park. Ms. Chandler asked for help before the summer begins, noting that she was unsure that the Dover Housing Authority would help.

Mr. Sudler noted that Councilman Neil was present and may be able to assist Ms. Chandler. He suggested that she obtain the contact information for the Third District City Councilmen for follow-up. Mayor Christiansen invited Ms. Chandler to the hall to discuss this matter further. Mr. Sudler advised that Council was aware of some of the issues taking place with the Dover Housing Authority, and Mayor Christiansen was working diligently to rectify them.

Mr. Lindell informed members that he recalled going to the Dover Park office previously while attending Wesley College as a student, and there had been problems with vandalism at that time. He noted that Ms. Chandler had spoken eloquently on this subject. Mr. Lindell stated that a beautiful park could be built at Dover Park; however, there must be a comprehensive plan or the City would be throwing money at fixing up a park that the City would continually have to rebuild. Mr. Lindell stated the need for a plan to deal with the other issues, along with the new park. Responding to Mr. Sudler, Mr. Lindell stated that he was referring to safety and drug issues, noting that 42% of the individuals surveyed cited the issue of safety. He questioned the sense of having a nice park if people were afraid to leave their homes or go to the park.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Mr. Sudler confirmed that Ms. Chandler resided in Dover Housing Authority housing. Mr. Neil advised that Mr. Sudler had been addressing problems with the Dover

Housing Authority, and Mr. Neil had supported this. He stated that putting up the park would not resolve the massive problems related to the Dover Housing Authority, people who are looking for housing, and homeless people who are asking for the same kind of help. Mr. Neil indicated that safety in the community is the most important thing that the City can provide and that the park would not suddenly turn those who are running around with guns into nice citizens who will play competitive games. Mr. Neil advised that a comprehensive plan was needed for the entire City that fits parks within the overall program.

Mr. Sudler expressed his belief that Ms. Chandler was trying to convey that there is a correlation between drug, safety, and youth issues and the lack of something for youth to do, and the park or new recreational facility could help to deter those issues. He noted that no one has the answer; however, something has to be put in motion.

Mr. Anderson indicated that he liked the idea of developing a master plan, noting that this plan would deal with safety and security because nothing else would work without security. He suggested starting with establishing security, which is vital; however, he stated that once this is established, there must be positive alternatives to fill the time. Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Sudler for the work he had done on this matter, especially the community meeting and the walk-through, noting that he had been unable to attend the walk-through due to his work schedule. He stated that he was also impressed by the work staff had done to start moving in the right direction. Mr. Anderson informed members that the broken windows theory states that when things are kept up, the likelihood of vandalism decreases; however, neglect sends a message that a location can be a haven for bad activity because no one is watching. He indicated that upkeep, security cameras, and other measures to get security on the ground would help everything, noting that the Dover Housing Authority would also have to do its part since they are a major part of the issue.

Mr. Slavin advised that he was not surprised by the current status of Dover Park, expressing his opinion that a path of benign neglect began approximately five (5) years ago through decisions made at the staff level at that time, and not by Council. He explained that those decisions led to a decision about demolishing the building. Mr. Slavin stated that several members of Council at that time, including him, Representative Sean Lynn, who was a Councilman at that time, and Mr. Anderson had requested that the demolition of the building not be allowed until there was money to build something new, or the result would be a vacant lot.

Mr. Slavin asked Mr. Hugg to look into the concept of pop-up parks, where parks are taken to locations instead of building infrastructure, or while waiting for infrastructure to be built. He stated that the National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor Research (NCALL) had closed a portion of New Street for an evening last year to create a pop-up park. Mr. Slavin noted that a previous speaker had mentioned the need for things for kids to do at Manchester Square, and this program would be a perfect application for that. He explained that the activity would occupy a four-hour or six-hour window, and staff could obtain donations or he could help. He stated that this model had been used with some success, and Dr. Chanda Jackson, NCALL, had put this activity together.

Mr. Neil stated the need to work with the Capital School District, which has safe buildings and areas, many with gymnasiums and facilities that would be immediately available for activities. He indicated that the Police Athletic League (PAL) should be extended. Mr. Neil stated that the sooner

the youth become excited about healthy sports and games that get them away from TVs, smart phones, and computers, the better off everyone would be. He noted that parents must become involved and help to lead this effort. Mr. Neil indicated that Towne Point/White Oak meetings are held in a school by special permission, and games and activities could also be held there. He stated that nothing would have to be created specifically within the park now and outdoor activities could be transferred there. Mr. Neil indicated that part of the master plan should include determining if schools can be utilized and what the cost would be.

As a recent member of the Capital District School Board, Mr. Lindell noted that one (1) of the issues would be the costs of the building, such as running the air conditioning in the summer. He offered to reach out to the District, if Chairman Sudler desired. Mr. Sudler requested that Mr. Lindell contact the District to see if they could provide research, finances, or other assistance. Mr. Lindell indicated that he could inquire about their buildings, as well as programs that the Capital School District may have over the summer compared to what the City has in mind.

Responding to Mr. Sudler, Mr. Hugg stated that the Parks and Recreation, and Planning Staff had taken to heart the commitment to address the issues being discussed. He indicated that the focus of the City's park activities had been at Schutte Park and in facilities related to the Pitts Center; however, there had been discussion about activities that could be transposed or duplicated and offered on an ad-hoc basis. Mr. Hugg advised that some activities, such as Frisbee football, could be relocated to the Dover Park without spending a great deal of money, noting that there were facilities already at the park in many cases. He advised that there had been discussion about trying to find outside mentors or coaches to run a tennis clinic at Dover Park for a couple of hours and expressed the desire to bring opportunities to the park that would not put a burden on staff.

Mr. Sudler stated that some of the activities that were requested were currently being provided; however, he suggested that there may be a need for additional advertising and outreach to make this known. He also indicated that there may be a need to provide transportation to the site if this is an issue. Responding, Mr. Hugg stated his belief that there was an opportunity for a fresh start. He indicated that there was not much programming at other parks because staff was wrapped up in the day-to-day activities and no one had asked or thought about it. Mr. Hugg noted that some programs could easily be offered at alternative locations, and it would just be a matter of deciding to do it. He indicated that there was a real opportunity to get people involved and provide additional resources and activities that the City had not been able to provide in the past.

Mr. Lewis stated that earlier in the day he had provided Mr. Hugg with an email from the Delaware League of Local Governments (DLLG) regarding park and recreation grant opportunities. He noted that "Meet Me at the Park" play space grants could help to provide and purchase play equipment and park structures. Mr. Lewis advised that the application deadline for this opportunity was June 23, 2017. Mr. Hugg indicated that staff was working on this grant and would apply. In addition, he stated that a grant proposal had been submitted to develop some of the detailed cost estimates for Phase 1 at Schutte Park. Mr. Hugg advised that if the City was going to commit to doing a parks program, this should be done right, which would take some work; however, staff members were eager for the opportunity to demonstrate that activities and better uses could be brought to the City's facilities.

Mr. Lewis noted that there were grant opportunities through the National Recreation and Park Association and it was just a matter of applying. Mr. Hugg indicated that there are numerous grants, including a Lowe's grant for park development, and the City must commit to submitting applications.

Mr. Neil stated the need for publicity and suggested using electric bills to spread the word about events, as well as issuing news releases and talking to the newspaper about developing features. He advised that information about activities could also be distributed through the school system. Mr. Neil stated the importance of publicity, explaining that people are not participating because they do not know that events exist.

Mr. Lewis concurred with Mr. Neil, noting that the Police Athletic League (PAL) and the Green Beret Program at the former Boys and Girls Club were good programs that were not being publicized. He explained that the Green Beret Program is a camp for kids that offers rigorous training through the coordination of law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Dover Police Department, and Delaware Department of Corrections. Mr. Lewis stated that PAL is an up and coming program that would be happy to accept donations because they do not have a facility and are using Central Middle School for basketball.

Mrs. Sharon Duca, Public Work Director, reviewed a memorandum dated June 13, 2017, entitled "Dover Park Update from the Department of Public Works (DPW) to the Parks, Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee," noting that 13 items had been identified. She advised that some of the items had been on staff's agenda, explaining that members of the mowing crew and a litter staff member go through the park on a regular basis. Mrs. Duca noted that staff had started repairs and staining work on the pavilion, and they hoped to complete both pavilions within the next few weeks. She indicated that, for the most part, staff was able to repair picnic tables in-house, and they were working on that. Mrs. Duca noted that staff was also redoing the checkerboard tables, with one (1) remaining to be completed. She stated that the seating around these tables must be modified since even a small child would have difficulty sitting at them. Mrs. Duca advised that the shuffleboard and hopscotch area had been cleaned, and staff was awaiting direction regarding a replacement selection for that location.

Mrs. Duca noted that the fence along the eastern property was of particular concern and had been assessed by the Grounds Crew, and work on the fence began earlier in the week. She explained that many of the trees that had fallen along this property line were from the Manchester Square side, so staff worked with that group in order to do the work. Mrs. Duca indicated that the desired end result for the park would determine whether some vegetation should remain on the property line. She advised that pulling down all the vines would cause an issue with the fencing, and there would be a need to look at that expense further.

Mrs. Duca noted that the Grounds Crew and Streets Division would be repainting the gate at the entrance to the main drive, and had received offers from volunteer groups to assist in that area. Referring to the Storm Drain System Investigation, she advised members that the Streets Division had been aware of some of the storm drains; however, they were not properly located in Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) documentation. Mrs. Duca indicated that this investigation

would help the City with its permit obligations and noted the probable need to video the lines and put appropriate controls in place to keep the City out of violation.

In response to Mr. Sudler, Mrs. Duca explained that a checkerboard table had been redone by Mr. Jeff Kucek, Building Maintenance Craftsperson II, Public Works Department. She stated that she had initially hoped that staff could clean and work on the tables; however, Mr. Kucek refinished the table and reapplied the checkerboard. She indicated that this did not take an excessive amount of time because of Mr. Kucek's skill set, and it was something he wanted to do to make the area presentable. Mrs. Duca provided a photograph of the refinished checkerboard table at Dover Park ***(Attachment #1)***.

Mr. Lindell advised that he took his daughter to Silver Lake Park last week and observed graffiti on one (1) of the signs listing playground rules. Responding, Mrs. Duca stated that staff would look into this matter.

Mr. Sudler thanked Mrs. Duca for staff's hard work. He advised members that, as the City moves forward with repairing and upgrading all of the parks, there would likely be a need for additional staff, explaining that the Director must have the proper staff in order to be successful. He noted that this may require a tax increase, which had been discussed in a meeting this week and would also be included in a survey.

Mr. Caldwell expressed his hope that the ideas presented during the meeting would be accomplished, noting that the older children in his neighborhood play basketball at William Henry Middle School, but the younger children play in the streets because they have nowhere else to go and do not have their own activities. He informed members that there had been shootings in his neighborhood, it is dangerous, and the problems in Manchester Square and around Dover Park exist all over the City, not just in one (1) community. Mr. Caldwell asked members to move forward with the good ideas that had been presented, including advertisement and publication to let people know about the activities that are available. He stated that schools would be closing for the summer, it would be hot, and there would be energy for undesirable activities in the community. Mr. Caldwell asked that something be done beyond the discussion in the Council Chambers. In response to Mr. Sudler, Mr. Caldwell advised that he lives in the Westwood area, which is connected to Lincoln Park. He reiterated that his community had the same activities and problems that others were going through, such as shootings, crime, drinking, and motorcycle activity.

Mr. Anderson suggested developing volunteer opportunities, investigating AmeriCorps, and taking advantage of programs such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Mr. Anderson moved to recommend acceptance of the recommendations of the community meeting of May 25, 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Update - Bicentennial Village - Continental Park

During the Regular City Council Meeting of April 10, 2017, members approved the Council Committee of the Whole/Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee's recommendation to refer the matter regarding Request for Benches - Continental Park to the Parks and Recreation Department to look at creating a playground.

Mr. David Hugg, Acting Director of Planning and Community Development, informed members that a number of discussions had been held with residents of the Bicentennial Village area, in part regarding a request for benches along Independence Boulevard. He explained that Continental Park is a triangular-shaped park approximately halfway through the development that is mostly wooded with some grassy fields, and an additional location had been identified to the east in the center of Bicentennial Village that may offer an opportunity for active playground areas. Mr. Hugg stated that there had been discussions with people who had expressed interest in the park, and a community workshop on this topic would be held on June 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the park site or in the Dover Public Library in the event of rain. He explained that a key question would be whether the grassy area should be used as a passive play area for children with parental supervision or have more active kinds of facilities.

Mr. Hugg indicated that the grassy area was very well maintained by the Public Works Department and is very attractive. He stated that the woodland area had a lot of invasive species and undergrowth and was not being managed well as a woodland, although it did provide a great deal of wooded cover for the part of the development backing up to it.

Mr. Neil stated his recollection that there had been young mothers who were excited about a possible playground for younger children at Continental Park, and he wanted to make sure that this message was not bypassed. Mr. Hugg advised that this had been stated during the community meeting related to Dover Park on May 25, 2017. He stated that there was a question regarding whether Continental Park was a safe location for a playground or if there was a more contained location owned by the City with less traffic that may lend itself to a more active park use. Mr. Hugg advised that Continental Park is a nice, placid area with the potential for the addition of benches or a table or two (2), so that individuals could sit and read or watch their children play on the grass. He expressed his hope that the community would come out to discuss their needs and the focus would not be on a particular proposal or transportation solution.

Mr. Sudler reviewed the "City of Dover's Park and Recreational Enhancement Committee Chair's Assessment & Recommendations for Continental Park," dated June 8, 2017. He stated that Continental Park was very well maintained and impressive. He indicated that, as the Committee Chair, he plans to go to all the parks and take pictures so that he has a better understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each park as the City moves forward to upgrade them.

Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Sudler for doing the walk-through and evaluating City parks, stating that it is important that the public is protected from safety issues. He noted that broken bottles had been found, and it would be a travesty if a child was hurt.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee met with Council President Slavin presiding in the absence of Chairman Hare.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

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

Clarification - Request for Incentives - Nail Spa by TR

Mr. Slavin stated that this item had been brought forward a number of times. He stated that Chairman Hare was particularly interested in this matter and, since he was not present, suggested that it be deferred.

Mr. Neil moved to defer this item, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Discussion - Fiscal Year 2017 Audit Program

Ms. Lori Peddicord, Assistant Controller/Treasurer, reviewed a presentation entitled "Auditor's Responsibility for Communicating with Audit Committee." She noted that the auditors, CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP would be doing preliminary testing in the field during the entire week of June 26, 2017. She advised that between this date and September 2017, when the auditors do their final field work, the Finance Department would be closing the books, reconciling accounts, and completing various reporting requirements.

Mr. Anderson moved to recommend acceptance of the audit program, as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neil and unanimously carried.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neil and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Council Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neil and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Timothy A. Slavin
Council President

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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Photograph of refinished checkerboard table at Dover Park, provided by Mrs. Sharon Duca

