CITY OF DOVER PLANNING COMMISSION
QUARTERLY WORKSHOP
August 19, 2014

The Regular Quarterly Workshop Meeting of the City of Dover Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at 12:00 noon with Chairman Colonel Welsh presiding. Members present were Mr. Cregar, Mr. Tolbert, Mr. Holt, Dr. Jones, Ms. Still and Colonel Welsh. Mr. Holden, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Ambruso were absent.

Staff members present were Mrs. Townshend, Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mrs. Harvey, Mr. Cook, Mrs. Mullaney and Intern Faith Spady.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Colonel Welsh stated that the meeting held last night went very well. A couple of good projects that he thinks will benefit the City of Dover. He still is uncomfortable when he asks for final comments or a motion from the floor and everyone just kind of looks at each other like they are waiting for someone else to make the motion. He has sat in that seat and he knows what the Commissioners are going through but there is no such thing as an incorrect motion. If anything is wrong with the motion, Mrs. Townshend will be quick to correct and she will steer the Commission is the right direction. Please speak up; it's awkward for him as the Chairman to not get any response.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Summary of 2013 Applications and 2014 Applications

Mrs. Townshend in the packet there is a chart showing the application volume for 2013 and prior years as well as where they stand in 2014. The chart shows that there has been a little bit of a drop off this year. It does look like a lot in the second quarter, kind of slow in the first quarter and they are 2/3 of the way through the third quarter. The application volume is a little slower this year than in past years. It does seem like a lot of the applications that the Commission reviewed last year and previously are starting to get moving. They have a number of things under construction right now.

The Dover High School is now open under a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy with a lot of conditions on that. There is still a lot that needs to be done on the site. A lot of landscaping needs to be done; the baseball and softball fields need to be finished. Really, the site has come together quite well.

The Garrison Energy Center is under construction. If you drive out White Oak Road, you can see the towers going up. They are also making a lot of progress on this project. Also, the Uzin Utz manufacturing plant is under construction in this area. All of these projects are positive.

Bayhealth is completing the last phase that they can do under their current Master Plan. Any other expansion to the building, they will have to come back to the Planning Commission. They are adding a fourth floor on the building.

There are a number of school projects going on. The Kent County Community School has renovations in existing buildings. There are auto dealerships being constructed as well.

There is a fair amount of activity, it's certainly not where it was at the height of the construction boom but we are starting to see a little more housing construction than we have had. That activity isn't seen by the Planning Commission because it's subdivisions that were approved years ago. We are starting to see more permits for new homes.

Cannon Mills was sitting in limbo for a long time. Tony Ashburn has purchased a bunch of lots in this subdivision. Henry Mast bought a bunch of lots and the bank still owns some but has a buyer. The good news is that Tony Ashburn was able to get the common space turned over to the HOA and get the HOA a little more activated. They had a meeting on July 28, 2014 at the Library; she attended and one of the Code Enforcement Inspectors attended. It actually, for as much as she was expecting to be run out of town at that meeting, it was a very positive meeting. Their infrastructure is still incomplete but the City has bids due this week. Once the bids are in and approved and they get all of the funding worked out, the infrastructure will be completed. They are hoping that they will not have to worry about who's going to plow their snow anymore.

Leander Lakes located next to the new High School is getting ready to start construction. They have their silt fence up; all of their Building Permits for ten buildings are in. What she told them is they would not be issued all at the same time. She wants them to work on one to two buildings at a time; we are not just going to issue ten permits. They will also be working on the Tribbitt Street connection. The Capital School District actually did the sidewalk piece of the Tribbitt Street connection. We had Code Enforcement Inspectors hire a contractor to go out and clear the Cannon Mills side of Tribbitt Street because their HOA being kind of new and unfunded at the moment wouldn't be able to take that on. Right now, Department of Public Works is going to take the street sweeper and get some of the stuff that's been dumped out there. By tomorrow, that area should be an attractive way to go from Cannon Mills to the high school. The City of Dover wanted to make sure that if we are asking kids to walk that there be a place that we would allow our kids to walk.

Things have been pretty busy. Since Bill Cook started in February, he was a quick study and came up to speed pretty quickly. He has been reviewing a lot of permits. We have a lot of permits coming in whether it is sheds, fences, swimming pools, building additions or new homes. It's a good thing but it's keeping Staff busy.

Mr. Holt stated that it's good sign for the economy. It's starting to pick-up a little bit.

Mrs. Townshend stated that the problem is that the office downsized to meet the economic recession and now the likelihood of getting additional staff is slim to none. We have to make do with what we've got.

Other Project and Research Activities

- **Update on Research for Ordinance Amendments**

Mrs. Townshend stated that pretty shortly staff will be bringing forward the industrial piece of the commercial overhaul that they did. The Realtors actually used one of their consultants to evaluate our IPM (Industrial Park Manufacturing Zone) and in particular, the prohibited uses in comparison to what the *Comprehensive Plan* says we want. What our *Comprehensive Plan* says when you look at the things that are prohibited, are things that we can't do. They are going to change up the prohibited uses. What staff will be bringing forward is to make it the things that you know you don't want. With the environmental regulations the way they are, she doesn't

think that fear is probably as bad as it was when the prohibitions were initially put in. For example, the Realtors said "The *Comprehensive Plan* says this but under the zoning you couldn't do this because this says this." It seems pretty straight forward. She thinks we know what we don't want; we don't want dirty industry. With the performance standards, they need to start utilizing that more heavily. She thinks that they will be able to meet those bounds.

Faith has been working on some stuff with the Downtown that would create in-fill guidelines that would have for instance, at least a minimum amount of landscaping on new home construction in the Downtown area. It would be within the RG-1 (General Residence Zone). Also, what staff would do with that is to create a Conditional Use option to do townhouses or duplexes in the RG-1 (General Residence Zone). They used to be allowed; they are not anymore. From the Restoring Central Dover Study, one of the recommendations is to work on zoning amendments that allow more flexibility and allow more density in that Downtown core area. She thinks the balance with that is writing it tightly enough so that they don't end up with all of Queen Street becoming a massive row of townhouses. She thinks there needs to be some spacing and distancing requirements. We had said three or four attached and Staff is still playing with that number. It might be no more than one pack of townhouses on a block; something so that they don't think that you are doing something good and then look back and see that you are doing something bad. Faith's background is in architecture and design; she has helped to do some research that gets us started.

Colonel Welsh questioned if Mrs. Townshend was talking about standardized type landscaping? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated no, right now someone can build a house and not put one shrub, one plant or one tree on the lot. Unfortunately, we have quite a bit of that.

Colonel Welsh stated that he is curious on what the guidelines would be and how would it be enforced. Unless it a requirement that's going to be standardized, for each building, townhouse or complex who determines what the landscaping is going to be? Will that be the Planning Office? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that it would need to be turned in on the Building Permit.

Colonel Welsh questioned if the Planning Office would ensure that the applicant complied with the minimum requirements? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated yes.

Dr. Jones questioned if the Restoring Central Delaware study had been completed? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated no, there are four or five work groups and each group has been given a chapter out of the Draft. The Draft has not been released. For instance, she and Mrs. Harvey are on the "Positive Development" work group; they had a meeting last week that was about two hours and they had a meeting yesterday that was about two hours long. They need to get all of their proposed changes back to NCALL by tomorrow because they are compiling all of the recommended changes from the working group and sending it back to the consultant and then they will have a draft. It makes her a little nervous because of the timing with the Downtown Development District program too but they are just going to have to make something work.

Dr. Jones stated that if it's appropriate when that has been completed, could they share a copy with her? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated yes, what she would like is once it's completed she would like for someone, whether it's the consultant or NCALL, to come do a presentation to the Planning Commission and to City Council. She thinks it's important that we

embrace it and that it be ours because if the City's not going to use it, to a degree it will be a wasted effort. A lot of the actions are things that the City needs to do.

- **Review of *2008 Comprehensive Plan***

Mrs. Townshend stated that they did the amendments a few months ago. We finally got them into the State. That was technically our review of the *2008 Comprehensive Plan*. Once they get some of these other Planning projects under their belt, they will do a more complete update of the *Comprehensive Plan.* It seems like every time they turn around there's another planning effort going on. They have the Transportation Improvement Districts, the Citywide Recreational Needs Assessment, Restoring Central Dover and now they've got the Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans that are being developed by the Dover/Kent County MPO. Her concern is that if they start doing a *Comprehensive Plan* amendment now, it's almost a moving target. She anticipates that the Planning Office will do a more complete update hopefully next year.

- **Transportation Improvement Districts**

Mrs. Townshend stated that they still do not have the signed MOU from DelDOT. It went through our process, got it through the MPO process quickly and that all happened in April and it sat with DelDOT for four months. Mr. Pepper just called her two weeks ago about it; he had forgotten that he had reviewed documents for it. Hopefully they will get that squared away. She and Mr. Cook have a meeting next week to go over where they are on the status of the project. One thing that she and Mr. Cook have not had time to get completed is they are supposed to take the Transportation Improvement District boundary and assign future land uses. It's going to be an update from what they have in the *Comprehensive Plan* because in some cases, things have changed. They want to be able to reflect that. In some cases, they are looking at a finer category than just their larger land use categories. They do know that there is a critical piece that they need to provide that they haven't. That's another project that was supposed to be done by the end of the year that likely will not get completed by then.

CITYWIDE RECREATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Mrs. Townshend stated that it's been in the *Comprehensive Plan* since at least 1996 to do a citywide Parks and Open Space Plan and it never really went anywhere until the issue of demolishing the Recreation Center on White Oak Road came up. There has been a lot of discussion about if they need to build a new Recreation Center there and why they are making all of their investments at Schutte Park. Which as a resident, she's questioned that one for a long time. But it was the decisions that were made. They have met with DNREC; they've worked on some mapping with them. The mapping side of it is in their hands so she needs to follow up with them to see where that stands. They have developed a survey; each Commission member has a copy in their packet. Feel free to share it with your neighborhood group, your church group or anybody. It is also available online. The link is on the survey in red. They are planning to have this survey available until the end of September. Right now they have over 100 surveys that have been completed. She hasn't looked to see if they are from Dover residents. They want to get a sense of where are people answering from. They have listed all of the City's neighborhoods. On the online version, it's a pull down menu. If you live in Independence Village, that's a required field on the survey so that they will know the number of people from the west side of town versus the number of people from the east side of town versus the number of people from Newark. She thinks that's important because they don't want to discredit people who are not City residents but when you are weighing the input, there should be a little more weight for those people who live in the City and support the tax base.

Dr. Jones questioned if they had put a number on what's ideal in terms of returns of surveys? Typically the response is low. Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated that they haven't but she knows when the State through their statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan which was completed in 2013, they over-sampled Dover and they had over two hundred and some returned in Dover. They said that, that was a reliable sample. Now again, they did phone interviews. Part of the problem with doing a survey this way is that its self-selection; you can't say that it's a random distribution but the reality is with the resources available, this is the best that we can do and in the end it's still going to be a good poll. If someone takes the time to fill it out, they obviously have somewhat of an interest.

Dr. Jones further questioned if the consultants for the Restoring Central Dover have any involvement or any input? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated no, they are trying to get it out to as many people as we can.

Dr. Jones stated that she thinks they should go to the churches. Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated that typically if something goes out through church it's seems to get pretty good participation.

Mrs. Townshend stated that the plan now is to get back with DNREC and figure out where the mapping stands. She was hoping to start having workshops in August but it's clearly going to be in September. They will be doing workshops at various locations throughout the City to try to get good feedback. DNREC had a consultant develop a mapping application where they can take Schutte Park for instance and say "How many residents live within one mile walk to Schutte Park?" It then uses the Census data to give that information. She first started talking to DNREC about that tool when they were talking about finding a location for the splash pad. The interesting thing there is that the bulk of the City's investment has been at Schutte Park and that is the place that has the least number of people who can get there by foot. That doesn't mean that they shouldn't have made the investment, she thinks that it is a great park. The Recreation Center there is great and will be even better once they have air conditioning. But there was a decision somewhere along the way to make their recreation something that you drive to. There is a real push on Council that they want to get back to a more community based recreation. She thinks when they start getting those maps together they will start seeing the concerns being brought forward by Council are legitimate. Whether that means they need a building elsewhere in the City is another discussion but clearly most of their program is at Schutte Park because that's where they have the place to do it. One of the next steps will be how do they expand geographically their programming even if they don't build another facility. She personally has concerns about building another facility because they can barely manage the current location. They can look for the capitol funds or everybody at Calpine can pay for it, but the reality is these things cost money to operate in terms of staffing to maintain. She thinks the City has a history of not thinking about that when they build a facility.

Mr. Cregar stated that this was a general concern that he has though about when looking at all of the parks that they have in the City of Dover and the maintenance on those parks, the time it takes. One of his concerns is the City creating pocket parks and the maintenance on them is poor. No one is taking care of the plants, neighbors rack up the leaves at the parks themselves. He worries about that because the City creates these things and they look great for a while. It's the same with the parking lots in the City of Dover. They have grown up, there are weeds shooting

up through the where the stormwater drains run and that's a concern to him. All of these things cost money. Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated yes, they all cost money. They have fewer staff than they used to and they are adding more to the maintenance inventory. They had these discussions in the context of the budget, to put money into capital reserves to do things. Some of that, obviously streets and infrastructure, a lot of that is really maintaining. When they talk about things parks, the flower beds and things like that, they've cut the staff and there was a tax increase on the table that was not supported by Council and then they just increased the transfer from the Electric Fund. At some point that's just not sustainable.

Mr. Holt stated that for some parks, the State has dedicated certain groups to help maintain them. Could the City get certain groups around town to maintain parks? Responding to Mr. Holt, Mrs. Townshend stated that they have tried but that takes management in itself.

Mr. Holt stated that there are a lot of club in town like Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs and Elks Lodges. They could be assigned a park to maintain if they were willing to keep it up. It wouldn't cost the City any money that way.

Mr. Tolbert stated that it would be similar to an Adopt-A-Park program, like what is done for Adopt-A-Street programs.

Mr. Holt stated that it would be something like that but these would be City parks and the group would get some recognition for taking care of it. They may even add some of the stuff to it. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mrs. Townshend stated that she was not sure that they could provide a level of maintenance that's necessary.

Mr. Holt stated that they would have to explore that option and see if the clubs would be willing to help. The City may even offer some help as far as tools. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mrs. Townshend stated that in her experience, they have had a lot of volunteer days at Silver Lake Park but typically when those days happen, the City ends up having to pay overtime to staff to be there to supervise the activities.

Mr. Cregar stated that his experience with those programs is that there is a core group at an initial point in time that are very interested but then what happens is, overtime as those folks can't do it anymore or they move, then the interest is no longer there and the parks aren't getting the care that is needed. This is really the City's responsibility and they need to step up to it and take care of it. They can keep putting off the tax increase for a long time but at some point in time they are going to have to bite the bullet. The City doesn't look as good as it used to. He has lived here all of this life and he knows that when he has called to get street lights replaced, it takes forever. It didn't used to take that long. Street light is important because then you are talking about areas that don't get street light which causes crime and all kind of other problems. Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated that they had a long period of time without an Electric Department Director. She thinks that contributed to delays in that area. The City now has an Electric Department Director; he's really come on quickly and seems to be learning the system very quickly. He is working to fill some of the vacancies in that Department so hopefully that turns around. In the Grounds Department, they've got a number of vacancies but the City has also reduced the number of staff. Some of the mowing gets contracted out now. Once we get to where the staff is where they need to be, she thinks they will have to decide if that has solved the problem.

Dr. Jones stated that maybe an evaluation of how staff may spend time in neighborhoods. In her neighborhood, there is no problem. She has seen the street sweeper two days in a row and there nothing on the street after the first day. She is not complaining because it is wonderful but then you go someplace else in the City where nothing has been down. She understands all of the political ramification and who lives in certain areas.

Mrs. Townshend stated that in the Grounds Department, one of the key positions that is vacant is the Supervisor position. They have has someone in an acting capacity, who she thinks has done a good job but it's not somebody who is on a long term basis responsible.

Colonel Welsh stated that Mr. Tony DePrima used to take a great deal of pride in the plantings that were along the streets and in developments in the City of Dover. After Mr. DePrima left, he thinks that the emphasis perhaps changed or was not as strong in that area. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that she thinks it had to do with the budget. When the budget started to get really tight, there started to be discussions about if all the flower beds needed to be planted. There were some areas of the City where the flower beds were cut out and they focused more on the core. A lot of this comes down to willingness to pay. There seems to be a sense of part of Council that property owners do not want a tax increase under any circumstances and she is not sure that's the case.

Mr. Cregar stated that he doesn't think anybody wants a tax increase. Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated she doesn't think that people want to quality of the City to deteriorate because we don't have a tax increase. But the question is, are people willing to except it in order to provide the level of service that they enjoy? If the Commission members have filled the survey out and want to turn it into Planning Staff, they can. She would also say feel free to distribute the survey. If anyone wants paper copies, staff can get them copies.

Colonel Welsh questioned if they would rather have the survey done online? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that it doesn't matter because if it's done on paper, Parks and Rec staff is in-putting it into the database online. The idea is getting people to respond in their most comfortable way.

Mr. Cregar stated that they are completing the bike path and connecting it to the trail. Whose responsibility is that to maintain? Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated that it depends on which piece.

Mr. Cregar stated the piece behind the Archives Building. Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated that will be State Facilities Management's responsibility. When it gets onto Park Drive, which will be the City's responsibility. It came down to whose property it was on. In the case of Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard and Route 13, that technically is DelDOT's responsibility and they understand that but we will see how that goes. Park Drive is a City street so that will be a City responsibility and then behind Archives, State Facilities Management agreed to take that portion.

DRAFT BICYCLE PLAN AND DRAFT PEDESTRIAN PLAN FOR DOVER

The City of Dover did a Bicycle Pedestrian Plan in 1997. The City has changed a lot since 1997. Boundaries have grown; the location of where development is happening has changed. The

Dover/Kent County MPO is taking lead on this plan and they are doing a separate one for bicycles and a separate one for pedestrians. If you go through plan they have identified some critical sidewalk gaps that the City needs to address as well as street crossings. On the pedestrian side of it, there are some maps. On the bicycle side of it, there is the issue of off-road trails. Other possible off-road linkages other than what the City has now. Mallard Pond Park right now has a concept to put a path that would start at the sidewalk off of Caroline Place and come over to end up on Marsh Creek Lane. There is also some talk of getting over onto Pebble Valley Drive.

Dr. Jones stated that people use it as a walkway anyway. Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated that they expect that there would be some neighbor opposition to doing that but nobody showed up when they have held meetings to talk about it. She is not quite sure if that piece will go but she does think that the City would like to try to get the piece that would connect Caroline Place to Marsh Creek Lane into place. This would allow one more option to get to the high school without getting hit by a car. Right now, everybody in Mallard Pond comes out onto Kenton Road where they have no sidewalks. They really don't have a safe way to get to the schools.

Dr. Jones questioned if there was a Mallard Pond Park now? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated yes, it's just entirely undeveloped. It's between Heatherfield East, Brandywine Court Condominiums and Mallard Pond development. If you go through the plan and have input, please let her know and she can pass it along to Mr. Rich Vetter. The hope is to wrap this plan up by the end of this year. Once they have these planning documents in place, they can start to try to get them into the Capitol Transportation Plan with DelDOT. If it's not a DelDOT project, maybe they can look for a Community Transportation Fund or First State Trails money to get them implemented.

Colonel Welsh questioned if Dover/Kent County MPO had the lead on the bicycle path and the markings for bicycles? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that DelDOT had the lead for the markings because it all relates to the Manual of Uniform Transportation Control Devices.

Colonel Welsh stated that there is not a whole lot of common sense that has gone into it. Coming out of State College Road onto Route 13, there used to be an acceleration lane there. That has now been cut off so that a bicycle lane can run there now. It used to be difficult enough to get out onto Route 13 without having that acceleration lane taken away. He just ignores it and he accelerates in the bicycle lane. Other people are doing the same thing and at what point is that bicyclist going to think he is protected? To him it's kind of foolish that there is a bicycle lane that is off-set by a lane of traffic. It's kind of isolated. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that this is how the standard is. She has to assume that there is a great deal of research into the safety and how to do it because otherwise she wouldn't think that they would do it that way. If you look at other places, our bike lanes are very similar. It's a national standard.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the Certified Local Government Program is actually related to Historic Preservation. It is a program that is established in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It is a voluntary program; you have to make application to become so designated. In order to become a Certified Local Government, one of the requirements is that you have an

ordinance that gives the ability for designation and protection of historic properties and that there is a qualified Historic Preservation Commission. There are some more details in the program guidelines that have been developed specifically for Delaware. It's an application that the City must complete and it has to be endorsed by the legislative body. It goes to the State Historic Preservation Office first and then to the National Park Service for approval. Once you are designated as a Certified Local Government, there are benefits to that. Each year there are Historic Preservation Fund monies that come to the State of Delaware and a certain percentage of that must go to Certified Local Governments within the State. There are a number of jurisdictions that are Certified Local Governments already and some of which have been that way for years. New Castle County is a Certified Local Governments. Some of the younger ones are in Delaware City and Lewes. The grants aren't a lot of money. It does bring with it a greater level of technical assistant, not that they wouldn't help you if you weren't a CLG but they do focus a little bit more about trying to get training opportunities in that area of Historic Preservation. It has actually come down now as a Council directive as of August 2013, to have us complete the application. It was identified in the City's *Comprehensive Plan* in the Preservation chapter that becoming a Certified Local Government would be a logic step for the City of Dover because of the Commission being in place and the preservation aspects of the *Zoning Ordinance* and the Design Guidelines that are already in place. It's a logical next step that may bring in a little bit of grant money and a little bit more technical assistance. It is voluntary so at a certain point there is a way to get out of the program in the future. Like with any programs, there are certain rules that they would have to agree to. There's a yearly reporting aspect to the program once you are identified as a Certified Local Government. This is one of the things that has been on their radar screen for a number of years but for various reasons it has had its fits and starts, some of which related to not a full complement of people on the Commission as well as Staff time in the Planning Office to devote to getting it together. But they will be moving forward.

RESTORING CENTRAL DOVER COMMUNITY PLAN

Mrs. Townshend stated that on July 9, 2014 there was a workshop held where the consultant brought forward their research to date and some of their preliminary recommendations it now started working through. The committee has divided into four groups. The work groups are going through the pieces of the plan and then getting the feedback through NCALL back to the consultant. She is hoping that there is a draft for review in September. She is not holding her breath because she knows how these things go. It's not that people aren't working hard; it's just that they tend to take longer than we would like them to. One of the challenges is how do they fit this into our Downtown Development District application because it will not be complete. We will have to have our application nearly complete before this is a complete product. She wants to see if she can get some working drafts from them to be able to incorporate some of the material.

One of the shocking things to her is that in the study area that they have identified, 75% percent of the dwelling units are renter occupied. We have a very low homeownership rate in the Downtown and we really need to try to find a way to improve that with the ordinance that she mentioned, Faith has been helping them do the background research and start to put it together. She thinks that a piece of it is finding ways to develop. If someone could put together a larger tract of land maybe they could do some nice looking townhouses or duplexes. By it being a Conditional Use, the Planning Commission would see it. They could talk about the design; they could say "That doesn't look good. How about x, y or z?"

Mr. Holt stated that a lot of the properties are owned by people who have passed on and will that

property to someone who doesn't live in the Dover area anymore. But they have inherited the property and still want to get income from that property so they will find a local realtor to rent the property. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mrs. Townshend stated that there is a piece to that. Some of it is that when we have people in the homeownership program, they don't want to live Downtown. They're concerned about the issue of crime that really has left Downtown unmarketable. So the safety piece is one of the pieces to the Restoring Central Dover Community Program and she thinks that it is an all hands on deck approach. They need to make homeownership affordable. There are a lot of vacant lots; they say twenty-five football fields worth of vacant lots. Through what gets filled back, they could make a big change. That's why she thinks that they need to have some type of design standard so that it's not something that detracts from what made it a nice place in the first place.

Mr. Holt stated that maybe they could have some type of tax break for people who purchased these properties. This could be an incentive for people to purchase in the Downtown. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mrs. Townshend stated that they have talked about a number of things. We do have a tax break for people who purchase in the Downtown area. First time home buyers don't have to pay the real estate transfer tax. We have talked about what additional incentives could be added onto that. She thinks there are a number of things that could be done but getting homeowners, improving the quality of the stock and addressing safety are all things that in some ways are chicken and egg situations. It's hard to get homeowners in the Downtown area if they are concerned about crime but it's hard to clean up the crime when you have a place where a vast majority of the residents don't have that stake that homeowners have.

Dr. Jones questioned if Mrs. Townshend was talking about Queen Street and that central area? She questioned if Loockerman was included in this area? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated yes.

Dr. Jones stated that a lot of the homeowners don't live there and they are renting. Unless some of them are fortunate enough to have Section 8, you wonder about the standards. Its vicious circle, people who own those places are going to do minimum up-keep if that. We have some owners who we know aren't doing the minimum for a number of reasons.

Mr. Holt stated that there was a good article in Sunday's newspaper in the Paradee Magazine on restoring the central part of the Downtown area in cities. It hit on a lot of the same things that they are discussing now.

DELAWARE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROGRAM

Mrs. Townshend stated that this program has a November 1st deadline. The application needs to have the endorsement through resolution of the local governing body. They have the *Restoring Central Dover Community Plan* and *Transit Center Neighborhood Plan*. They are using both as the plans for the area but again with the *Restoring Central Dover Community Plan* not being a totally done deal, they are going to have to creatively work on how they are going to do that. Her thought is by putting together some type of narrative that brings together these two plans and the *Comprehensive Plan*, they almost have a mini-plan that goes in with the application and they will get if before City Council. Depending on timing, if they can share it with the Planning Commission before it goes to Council that would be great but again it's going to be a lot of work to get everything together. If you don't know about the program, this was passed by the General Assembly; it was one of the Governor's priorities in this last year. There is $7 million in funding

right now. There will be three Downtown Development Districts designated in the State; one for each county. The application deadline is November 1st. There is a lot of information that they need to put together. One, there is a two hundred twenty-five (225) acre limit. If you look at what the City has as its Downtown Redevelopment Area, defined by Appendix D of the Code that's four hundred plus acres. It obviously cannot be the whole area. They looked at the Restoring Central Dover area and that was three hundred plus acres. What they have worked on is an area that goes from Mary Street, south and come down the alley behind Governors Avenue, notch out a portion of State Street. Wesley College doesn't need it as much as some of the distressed properties around the College. It would come down on State Street; it wouldn't go all the way to the river like the District in Code because the State complex doesn't necessarily need it. It would come down State Street, go to Water Street, take in the Transit Center and then go to the railroad tracks. It would cut across the tracks to get the more distressed side of Lincoln Park, the eastern side where they have had vacant land and a number of dangerous buildings and places where the neighborhood has suffered. She is going to be taking what she just verbally outlined to the Parks and Recreation Community Enhancement Committee next week. Hopefully they will endorse it. She was planning to take it to the Downtown Dover Partnership Board of Directors but they cancelled their August meeting and it can't wait. She will send it on to Mr. Gregg Moore and let him know that if the Partnership has any feedback, they can get it to her. They have to nail it down geographically because a lot of the demographic information that they ask for in here, they need to provide based on that boundary. The area that they have is about two hundred twenty (220) acres so there is not a whole lot of room to move unless they pull it in somewhere else. The idea is if they get the designation and she feels like they will because she thinks they are going to put together a good application and she thinks that they've got good programs in the City. She thinks they have good incentives that are already offered and she thinks they have done quite a bit of planning and if they can through a find document, pull all of those things together they can really make a strong case. One of the big things is, is there a need. She doesn't think there is any doubt that if you go around central Dover that there is a need. Provided they get a designation, developers, builders or people within the district would be eligible for a rebate from the State of 20% of the cost of their improvements after they've past the $25,000 threshold. The first $25,000 spent is out of pocket but if they spend $150,000 on $125,000 of that, they would get a 20% rebate from the State. If you combine that incentive with the City's impact fee waivers and Building Permit waivers, you are talking actual money.

Mr. Cregar questioned if there was a cap on this program? Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated that she couldn't remember. They advocated against the cap. She thinks in the legislation there is not a cap, she doesn't know if they put one in the program documents. They were concerned if you put a cap; where would you put it? The reality is that there is only $7 million anyway. It's a lot of money and when you look at it, it leverages that much more.

Colonel Welsh questioned if this was something that would be a one-time thing? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated no, the designations will be good for ten years but they will designate new communities every year. In the first year, there will only be three designated. If the City of Dover gets in the first round, there will only be two other places in the State that will have eligibility. The money is there until it's gone. It depends on how quick the developers are.

Colonel Welsh questioned what would happen once the money is gone? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that the idea is that there an appropriation the subsequent year.

Colonel Welsh stated that it's going to go up to fifteen areas that are designated. Are they thinking the funding will increase? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that she didn't think so.

Colonel Welsh questioned if that $7 million just gets diluted each year? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that she thinks Governor Markell would propose the same or more for next year but a lot of it depends on the health of the State budget and the success of the program. The good thing about this program is that it's not just throwing tax dollars at a problem; it's leveraging the private investment through using the tax dollars. The idea is to spur the private investment. She thinks if it's successful then overall financial picture improves. Hopefully, there will be additional funds but it's hard to tell from one year to the next with the State budget.

Colonel Welsh stated that it seems unimaginable that the capitol of the first state wouldn't be one of the communities who benefited from this program. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that she couldn't imagine that they wouldn't, she knows that Governor Markell had a particular interest in Wilmington and Dover; however, there are no preconceived notions of who is going to get it. It really is on the City to provide a quality application. They have put a lot of effort into helping the Governor get this passed now they just have to follow up by making sure that they have a solid application. The Bill passed both houses unanimously. Even those people who she wouldn't have expected to support the funding supported it.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITES

Mrs. Townshend stated that the Regional Planning Conference will be in Newark, Delaware this fall. They will make sure that for the next Commission meeting the information will be in the packet. It cost $100 for a Planning Commission member to attend. If there are members who want to attend and it's overwhelming that everybody wants to go, they will probably have to figure out how they do it. They certainly want to make it available. The focus is on healthy communities. Nemours is one of the partners so there will be a lot on health, sustainability, sea-level rise and revitalization. They can email the link to the Conference website to the Commission members.

Mr. Cregar questioned if it was going to be held at the Conference Center? Responding to Mr. Cregar, Mrs. Townshend stated no, it is at the Embassy Suites across from the stadium.

Mrs. Townshend stated that she and Mrs. Melson-Williams attending Floodplain Training last week. There is a lot that they need to be doing at the City that they are going to need to improve. They haven't done anything egregious that she is aware of because they don't have that much floodplain. It's almost because they don't have much, it's that much more important that they be vigilant because it's the little things that they need to make sure they aren't messing up. It was very good training but it was four very long days.

Dr. Jones questioned where the training was held? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated that it was held at the St. Jones Reserve in Kitts Hummock.

Colonel Welsh questioned if there was a National Conference? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that the National Conference is in Seattle (April 2015).

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they don't have money budgeted to send any Planning Commissioner to the National Conference. They barely got enough money to send Mrs. Townshend.

Colonel Welsh stated that it's been a long time since they have sent a Planning Commissioner to a National Conference. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that it's been a long time since they have sent Staff.

Colonel Welsh stated that at some point he thinks they need to start including Commissioners. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that the last time Staff attended a National Conference was the last time that he attended in Las Vegas. They are just now starting to put the training money back in the budget. They have gone to almost nothing in the budget for training.

Colonel Welsh stated that for him it was a really valuable experience. You learn so much about what people are doing in other communities and you interface with other Commission members. It's not all professional City Planners there. He has been, he doesn't need to go again but he certainly think the Commission members who have not been would benefit by attending. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that there is a National Conference held on the East Coast maybe not next year but the year after. She is thinking maybe there was one in New York coming up. Travel expenses get really high. She thinks it's almost $3,000 to get to Seattle and back. The conference itself is around $600-$700.

Colonel Welsh stated that he knows that it's important for professionals have to be able to fill professional development squares but he thinks that they don't want to exclude participation from the Commission members. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that the only reason that she was able to get it in the budget for her to attend next year is because she is going to be a President of the Chapter and she has to go. So it's either she gets the money budgeted or she has to beg APA for money.

Colonel Welsh questioned why she wouldn't beg APA for money? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that they might give $100. It was either that or pay to attend the Conference out of her pocket.

Colonel Welsh stated that he thinks it's important when times get better and there is more money that the Commission members start being inclusive of the Planning Commission members. As he said, to him it was invaluable. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that she agrees. In terms of the budget, they have been able to start adding the training and travel back in but they are also have to have a zero growth so by adding the money in, they are looking to off-set it other places. Even getting the training in has been difficult. Hopefully the financial picture improves and they are able to do it the future. It might not be bad to have something in writing from the Commission requesting that it be added to the budget. That is one place that when it gets to the Council floor, they ask how much they are spending on training and travel. There is some sense that all of it is a waste. She can put anything in the budget but it has several levels to go before it even gets to Council. If they had something in writing from the Commission requesting that they budget to send a Commissioner to the National Conference, they would add that into the budget for next year. When she gets questioned, she would have that letter as documentation.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that when motions are made, make sure that reference is made specifically the DAC comments. Last night she thinks the motion said Staff comments which she thinks they can stretch. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Colonel Welsh stated that as they both came to the podium before it went to the floor, he asked the applicant if they agreed with all DAC comments.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that it is that much stronger if it's in the motion.

Colonel Welsh thanked all of the Commission members for their participation in the Planning Commission and for the time they give and input they provide. He also thanked Planning Staff; he thinks they all do a great job. He knows it's not getting any easier and once the economy picks up and the applications start coming in hot and heavy like they were in 2007, they are going to have their work cut out for them It just seems to him like they have fingers in every pot and they are stirring a little bit in each one. He doesn't know how they keep it all balanced but they are doing a great job.

Dr. Jones questioned if there was a general sense of what kinds of applications each Staff member handles? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Townshend stated that they all do a little of everything. Mrs. Harvey has lately become their Conditional Use expert. She gets all of the tricky Conditional Use applications. Mrs. Harvey and Mr. Cook both do permits, actually everyone does permits. Mrs. Harvey and Mr. Cook do the bulk of the permits; fences, sheds, etc. Mrs. Melson-Williams does the larger Site Plans; the hospital, the high school, Delaware State University, etc.

Dr. Jones stated that all of the presentations are good and very helpful and a lot of times it's terminology that she might not understand, but they do a good job of explaining things.

Colonel Welsh stated that years ago they started transitioning to the rear view screen, the projection screen. Whoever was doing the presentation was speaking to that, the audience could see it. They have regressed and gone back to the little easel chart in the back where unless they are sitting close, they probably can't see it. He thinks with technology what it is today, they should be able to go back to a projection system or put it on the TV's. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated if it's on the projector, it's on the TV. What you can't necessarily see on that it what is proposed. You can see the current conditions on an aerial view but you wouldn't be able to see the proposed unless the applicant provides it to us. In some cases they've provided it.

Mrs. Townshend questioned if they always receive the plans in pdf format? Responding to Mrs. Townshend, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated yes, for the most part. Some of the smaller projects, not necessarily and they are not going to be colorized. It would just be the black and white lined work.

Colonel Welsh questioned why it wouldn't be colorized? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated because staff hand colors the plans. They have standard colors for certain things. For example, the sidewalk is always orange, the parking lot pavement is yellow and the building is in red. Some of the plans that they have seen on the projection screen, the formal Power Point presentations in full color is what the applicant had their design professional

do and it's typically large scale projects. It's not the little projects that Mrs. Harvey deals with.

Colonel Welsh stated even it's a small document that is received from an applicant, it can be digitized. If it can be digitized, it can be projected. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they would scan the document.

Mrs. Townshend stated that what they wouldn't have is any color on the document; it would just be black and white.

Colonel Welsh questioned what the limitation was based on? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mr. Cook stated that the plans are usually just Site Plans that don't have color on them.

Mrs. Harvey stated that a lot of times, the applicants hand draw the plans themselves. They don't put the detail in them like Mrs. Melson-Williams does.

Colonel Welsh stated that Mrs. Melson-Williams could color the plan and then take a digital photo of it. Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated that they could scan it in color.

Colonel Welsh stated that it was just food for thought because we are in the 21st Century now and that technology exists. To him, it seems like they should be using it. It's sitting up there and they don't use it.

Dr. Jones questioned how much more time that would add to the presentation? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that it was all in the preparation for the meeting. She doesn't think it would change how they present; it's just a bigger picture on multiple walls.

Colonel Welsh questioned if they could try transitioning with a couple of applications to see if that works out? Responding to Colonel Welsh, Mrs. Townshend stated yes.

Meeting adjourned at 1:43 PM

Sincerely,

Kristen Mullaney
Secretary