PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on January 13, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. with Chairman Dixon presiding. Members present were Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Perza (arrived at 3:42 p.m.), and Mr. Caldwell. Mrs. Horsey was absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Hutchison moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Semi-Annual Review - Statistics Regarding Jobs and Businesses Gained and Lost in the City of Dover Since July 2013

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, reviewed the semi-annual report of employment statistics for the 15 largest employers in the Dover area and reminded members that this information is updated and presented to members on a semi-annual basis. The report provided statistics regarding jobs and businesses gained and lost in the City of Dover since July 2013. Mr. Neaton stated that the numbers had been fairly stable for the past six (6) months.

Mr. Neaton advised members that Bayhealth was in the process of performing engineering and architectural studies for the addition of a floor on the previous Kent General renovation. He advised members that Kent General Hospital created a "fit out" plan for the shell space on their new building to increase the number of available beds.

Mr. Neaton stated that the number of full-time and part-time employees at Delaware State University (DSU) had grown. He advised members that DSU was preparing to construct an optic center and indicated that it would be one of the finest centers in the world. Mr. Neaton noted that a Convocation Center is also planned for the future. He advised members that it will be an academic facility which will also house the sports complex for basketball and other large events and activities. Mr. Neaton stated that it is an economic development initiative which will bring conventions, car shows, and boat shows to Delaware. He advised members that DSU was previously awarded $250,000 in grant money to perform a feasibility study regarding the Center and that he and the Mayor are serving on the Committee conducting the study. It was hoped that final recommendations would be available by the end of January 2014.

Referring to the decline in Comcast Cable's employment numbers, Mr. Neaton stated that Comcast had merged some of their offices and reduced the number of staff. He was advised by Mr. Tom Worley, Director of Government Relations, Comcast Cable, that these changes were complete and it was planned to maintain current staffing levels.

Mr. Neaton stated that although Proctor & Gamble's employment levels had not changed significantly to date, the organization planned to become the sole provider of wipes, consolidate related facilities and contractors, and expand their facility. Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Neaton indicated that the expansion would allow for more efficient functionality so that more product could be produced without impacting staffing levels.

Mr. Neaton advised members that he and Mayor Carey would be hosting a Large Employer Breakfast on February 12, 2014 for a second year, noting that last year's event was very well attended. Mr. Neaton stated that the breakfast provides a venue for interaction between the plant managers and large employers in Dover. In addition, a County-wide plant managers meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2014 at noon to provide local plant managers an opportunity to communicate and collaborate on ideas for the City of Dover.

Mr. Neaton noted that the current unemployment rate in the City of Dover was the lowest it had been since December 2008.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison regarding meetings with the leadership at Dover Downs, Mr. Neaton stated that staff had not met with Dover Downs management in over a year. Mr. Neaton stated his intent to schedule such a meeting, along with the Mayor, and offered to share the results of this meeting with the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Caldwell stated that he was pleased that the economic outlook for Dover appeared to be improving. Responding, Mr. Neaton indicated that the Uzin Utz manufacturing facility will hold a groundbreaking on March 13, 2014, which he stated would also be excellent for the City.

No further action was taken by the Committee.

Update - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Members were provided an Update of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, including the status of FY 2013 CDBG Projects - December 2013.

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, advised members that all CDBG programs were currently underway, with the exception of the Milford Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) projects. Mrs. Harvey stated that staff was requesting that MHDC not be funded for the FY14 grant cycle because $139,000 in grant funds not been drawn down for the FY12 and FY13 fiscal years, which was jeopardizing the timeliness standards for the City for expenditure of the funds. Additionally, she indicated that procurement issues had been identified in recent audits of MHDC conducted by the City that needed to be addressed.

Responding to Councilman Dixon regarding the scheduling of NCALL activities, Mrs. Harvey advised members that NCALL was planning to hold an open house in April 2014.

No further action was taken by the Committee.

Recreational Needs Assessment

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, advised members that the City of Dover's 1996, 2003 and 2008 Comprehensive Plans each included a recommendation to develop a City-wide Recreation and Parks Plan which to date had not been developed. She stated that in the past 20 years there had been many changes in the City and, in order to invest limited funds wisely, a City-wide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Plan was necessary. Mrs. Townshend indicated that the assessment should be City-wide and not focused solely on Dover Park or the recreation building at Dover Park.

Mrs. Townshend recommended the following:

- In-house staff from the Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department will lead the development of the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Plan, with assistance from the State Division of Parks and Recreation.
- A variety of means will be used to engage the public and assess the recreation needs identified by the public, including workshops and a survey. In the outreach efforts, information will be gathered to assess the needs based on location.
- An inventory of parks will be included and information will be gathered about the desired capital improvements for the parks, focusing on the three "anchor" parks (Dover Park, Schutte Park, and Silver Lake Park).
- Specific recommendations for investments in the parks will be included based on the needs of the public, as well as for potential partnerships for meeting the needs of the City's residents.

Mrs. Townshend stated that, since in-house staff members who have numerous other obligations with the City would be utilized, the expectation is that the development of the Needs Assessment and Plan would take approximately twelve months to complete. It was hoped that the results would be provided to the Committee in January 2015.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Mrs. Townshend explained that it was planned to consult the State and Kent County when conducting the assessment, and to include non-public agencies such as the YMCA, who recently purchased 20 acres on the west side of Dover for recreational activities. She noted that discussions regarding the potential for partnerships in this regard had taken place.

In response to Mr. Caldwell's inquiry regarding reaching a conclusion with respect to the Dover Park Recreation Building, Mrs. Townshend stated that the building continued to deteriorate and, in her opinion, was functionally obsolete. She did not believe it was a question of whether the building would be kept but rather to determine if another structure should be put in its place that would meet the needs of citizens. She noted that the demands seemed to relate to the need for gym space and the existing building could not meet that need.

Responding to Councilman Perza, Mrs. Townshend advised the Committee that a new Planner would be joining the City of Dover Planning staff. The intention was to dedicate this employee to taking the lead on this project, with the assistance of Mr. Wayne Voshell, City of Dover Recreation Coordinator; therefore, the Department should have the staff necessary to move forward in early February 2014. Responding to Mr. Perza, she reassured members that the assessment would include all parks within the City of Dover, not just the Dover Park, and the assessment would be conducted solely by in-house staff and not be outsourced.

In response to Mr. Perza, Mrs. Townshend reminded the Committee that the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) included a number of projects, such as a skate park and a spray pad that were originally planned for Schutte Park. She stated that this assessment would provide an opportunity to reconsider locations for those projects, decentralizing the former concept of all activities being at Schutte Park.

Mr. Perza suggested that residents be given an opportunity to present their views, noting that a decision must be made regarding the renovation of the existing building at Dover Park versus construction of a new one. He stated that action must be taken and not put off for another six (6) months.

Mr. Hutchison questioned Mayor Carey as to whether or not the proposed assessment would satisfy his concerns regarding the demolition of the recreation building at Dover Park.

Mayor Carey concurred that the assessment was long overdue and felt that waiting another year was too long, noting that the building had been out of service for a year. He advised members that in September 2013 a function was held at the facility that included 125 children, and other activities had taken place in the building. He felt that the facility was still serving a purpose for the community. He noted that the assessment addresses one (1) factor in the equation; however, the portion involving the building at Dover Park needed to move faster.

Mr. Hutchison stated that, with proper funding, the project could move more swiftly; however, he noted that everyone was in agreement that the assessment should remain in-house. Mayor Carey concurred.

Mayor Carey stated that it was necessary to determine the needs of the area before a decision can be made on the status of the building, since if it is determined the building does not meet these needs, it should be torn down; however, it should be replaced with something that does serve the purpose.

Mr. Hutchison expressed his desire to bring closure to this longstanding issue, stating his feeling that the building was a liability and a great deal of time had been invested in coming to a conclusion regarding what was best for the Park, the City and the residents, which was to demolish the building.

Mr. Perza reminded members of the Committee that the topic of discussion was recommending approval of performing a Recreational Needs Assessment, not the recreational building at Dover Park specifically.

Mr. James Fogell, 360 Nimitz Road, expressed his appreciation for Dover Park and shared his opinion that additional restroom facilities needed to be placed by the playground, as existing facilities are near the tennis courts. Mr. Fogell stated that the Park is used very heavily for outdoor activities by the local youth. He did not believe the recreational building should be demolished. If it were demolished, he felt that another facility should be erected in its place so that the activities at the park overall would not cease. Mr. Fogell stated his understanding that funding would be required, but expressed his observation that the City spends money on a great many projects that are not necessary and/or do not serve the needs of the general population but cater to much smaller groups. He also expressed his opinion that some of the projects the City was involved in, such as paving or adding curbs to residents' driveways, should not fall on the shoulders of the City but should be the responsibility of the homeowner. Additionally, Mr. Fogell cited areas where grooming or landscaping was being maintained for aesthetic purposes but did not provide a purpose for the community. He reminded members that the activities at Schutte Park were all structured and typically cost money to participate in and felt that the youth and community needed a place they could go "shoot hoops," play baseball or soccer, or participate in other open format activities rather than being required to schedule in advance, pay a fee, etc.

Mr. Roy Sudler, Jr., 353 Rita Wilma Drive, provided members of the Committee with a flyer regarding a meeting scheduled by the Social Action Commission (SAC) Community Task Force of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church on January 22, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. ***(Attachment #1)*** and invited members, as well as the public, to attend. He stated that the SAC had developed a survey, entitled "Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church's Social Action Commission's Community Survey of Dover's Recreational Park Programs and Facility Assessment" ***(Attachment #2)*** and distributed it to the community. Over 300 responses to the survey had been received and would be discussed during the upcoming SAC meeting. He offered to share this information at the Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting as well. *(City Clerk's Office Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Mr. Sudler provided the results of the survey to the City Clerk's Office* ***(Attachment #3))***. Mr. Sudler indicated that the SAC plans to partner with the Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) and Dr. Phyllis Edamatsu, Assessment Chair of the DHRC and Professor at Delaware State University, in tallying the results of the survey. Mr. Sudler expressed his hope that the SAC, as an interfaith-based agency, would be considered when staff is developing partnerships to address the recreational needs of the City. He concurred with the Mayor's position regarding the building at Dover Park, stating that if the building were demolished, another facility should be put in its place immediately. Mr. Sudler advised the Committee that his company, Sudler & Mishoe Construction, would donate 500 cinder blocks toward the construction of a new facility at Dover Park.

Former Councilman Reuban Salters, 109 Bertrand Drive, stated the importance of taking care of the community's youth and their families and providing recreational facilities. Mr. Salters expressed his opinion that the City does a spectacular job in some areas, citing the work of Mr. Zachery Carter, former Director of Parks and Recreation; however, he felt that other areas were extremely neglected, including youth programs and activities. Mr. Salters stated his dedication to the State and City's youth, adding that times are changing and there is greater need to communicate with children, find what their needs are, and provide facilities where they can participate. He indicated that children should know they are valued and respected as they are our future. He concurred with the need for gym space and felt that space was also needed for children to be creative with arts, crafts, music and other activities that would encourage youth to explore their abilities and interests. Mr. Salters felt that the rear portion of the building at Dover Park should come down; however, he stated that the front area of the building was very strong and suggested it remain as the core part of a new facility, stating that adding a pole building could require only a $50,000 - $60,000 investment to make the facility functional and fitting to the needs of the community. Mr. Salters suggested, if the building at Dover Park was a danger and needed to be torn down, that any motion made to take action to should include the Committee's commitment to put something up in its place.

Mr. Salters shared with those present that the Inner City Cultural League holds art classes for children at the Dover Housing Authority facility on Tuesday nights where children share their artwork. He invited those who were interested to join them and view the children's artwork from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Hutchison stated that the original motion that was made to demolish the recreation building at Dover Park included a commitment of $80,000 to be put aside to invest in the future needs of the Park once determined. He expressed his belief that recreational needs should be addressed equally for all areas of the City.

Responding, Mr. Salters stated that, while addressing the recreational needs of the City as a whole, special attention should be directed to the east side of town because residents there have no other options.

Mr. Salters also expressed his confidence in the City and its dedication to serving the needs of the community and his belief that funding could be obtained.

Councilman Dixon conveyed the importance of determining what the children want so that opportunities can be provided for activities that they will participate in.

Mr. Perza moved to recommend authorizing the City's Planning Department, beginning February 1, 2014, to perform a recreational needs assessment for the City of Dover, utilizing City staff to conduct workshops and other similar outreach efforts across the City to inventory park infrastructure and develop the needs of all of the City parks for future use. The objective will be to gather the necessary information from the public, study it, and make a needs assessment report back to the Committee by December 1, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

For clarification, Mr. Perza stated that this motion was unrelated to the Dover Park building and that the purpose of the assessment would be to gather information from the public to determine where resources relating to the future use of all City parks should be invested. He indicated that he planned to draft a separate motion and place this matter on the Committee's February agenda in an attempt to resolve this matter.

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

Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Wallace R. Dixon
Chairman

WRD/MK/jg/dd/tm
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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Flyer - Mt. Zion AME Social Action Commission Community Task Force Meeting
Attachment #2 - Community Survey - Mt. Zion AME Social Action Commission Community Task Force
Attachment #3 - Community Survey Results - Mt. Zion AME Social Action Commission Community Task Force

SAC

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The **Social Action Commission's Community Task Force** of **MT. Zion A.M.E. Church** located at **101 N. Queen Street of Dover Delaware** will host a **Community Action Forum** on **January 22, 2014, @ 5:30 p.m.**

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Topic: Dover's Community Action Plan for Dover Park & Recreational Facility

Focus of Community Action Forum will highlight:

1. **Review of Petition-Survey Criteria**
2. **Agree or Disagree with Mayor or City Council's Decision to Demolish Facility**
3. **New Modernized Facility Desired [Yes or No?]**
4. **Programs Desired**
5. **Activities Desired**
6. **Total Petitioned Survey Votes Casts as of January 22, 2014**

- **For further information, please contact Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church @ [302] 678.9478 Attention to: Roy Sudler, Jr. Chair of Social Action Committee**

MT. ZION A.M.E. CHURCH'S SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION'S COMMUNITY SURVEY OF DOVER'S RECREATIONAL PARK PROGRAMS AND FACILITY ASSESSMENT

Name:_____ **Date:**_____.

Address_____ **District**_____.

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1). Do you agree that the Dover Park and Recreational Facility should be demolished?

Yes or No

2). Should the City of Dover replace the current recreational facility with a new modern facility?

Yes or No

3). Do you know which council person represents your district in the City Voting Process?

Yes or No

4). Circle the *programs and activities* that you are interested in being implemented at Dover's Recreational Park and Facility? [More than one can be selected**]**

PROGRAMS

1). Family Counseling; 2). Alcohol and Drug Prevention 3). Job Seeking Tips

4). Gang Prevention 5). Restorative Support 6). Teen Homelessness

7). Domestic Violence 8). Mentors for At-Risk Youth 9). Go to School Go to College

10). Race Relations Study Circles 11). Pregnant Teen Awareness

Other_____.

ACTIVITIES:

1). Teen Nights 2). Summer Camp 3). Day Trips 4). Vocal Instruction

5). Dance Classes, 6). Visual Art 7). Multimedia Classes 5).Theatre

6). Fitness\ Zumba 7). Kayaking 8). Gymnasium 9). Learn to Swim

10). Martial Arts 11). Racquet Ball

Other_____.

Survey Administered By: _____ **Date:**_____.

SAC

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The Social Action Commission's Task Force of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church **Located at 101 North Queen St. Dover, Delaware 19904** has administered a *Community Petition-Survey Assessment* in the **3rd** and **4th Council District Areas** such as **Manchester Square, Baytree Apartments, Mapleton Apartments, Town Point Apartments, Capital Green, New Street, Simon Circle, Lincoln St. Calvary Baptist Church and Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church** as of **January 17, 2014.**

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The **Purpose of this Research** is to articulate the needs of the **East-Side of Dover, Delaware** in an effort to provide their community with an opportunity to be included and heard in the **City's Action Plan Process** for Dover Park and Recreational Facility, also known as White Oak Park.

The **Results of the Survey's Total Votes Cast** aims to help resolve the dilemma between the **Mayor** and **City Council, In addition, to monitor the spiritual and social impact of the City's Process of Action for Implementing Programs and Activities on the East-Side of Dover, Delaware.**

In Fact, 50% of the **Mayor's eight (8) key points of interest** regarding the ***City of Dover's Comprehensive Plan of Action*** for Dover Park is addressed and identified for the Mayor's Consideration.

SAC

PETITION SURVEY QUESTIONS & ANSWERES

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➢ **The Results of the Survey's-Casts Votes**

➢ 1 - 300 **are as follows:**

1. Do you agree that the City of Dover Park and Recreational Facility should be demolished?

   [YES or NO?] **Yes=54** (or) **No=246**

2. Should the City of Dover replace the current recreational facility with a new modern facility?

   [Yes or NO?] **Yes=234** (or) **No=66**

3. Do you know which Council Person represents your district in the City Voting Process?

   [YES or NO?] **Yes=132** (or) **No=168**

SAC

PROGRAMS DESIRED:	VOTES	PRIORITY
1). Family Counseling	**69**	{8}
2). Alcohol & Drug Prevention	81	{4}
3). Job Seeking Tips	**103**	{1}
4). Gang Prevention	73	{6}
5). Restorative Support	**37**	{10}
6). Teen Homelessness	76	{5}
7). Domestic Violence	**70**	{7}
8). Mentors For At-Risk Youth	86	{2}
9). Go to School Go to College	**82**	{3}
10).Race Relations Study Circle	37	{10}
11).Pregnant Teen Awareness	**62**	{9}

Note:

1. Number **(5).** Restorative Support and number **10**). Race Relations Study Circle had the same priority rating = 10
2. Survey-Votes Cast for All Programs Listed was assessed @ = 134 out of 300

SAC

ACTIVITIES:	VOTES	PRIORITY
1). Teen Night	**115**	{2}
2). Summer Camp	120	{1}
3). Day Trips	**106**	{3}
4). Vocal Instructions	51	{10}
5). Dance Classes	**69**	{8}
6). Visual Arts	48	{11}
7). Multimedia Classes	**46**	{12}
8). Theatre	64	{9}
9). Fitness/ Zumba	**92**	{4}
10). Kayaking	8	{14}
11). Gymnasium	**87**	{5}
12). Learn To Swim	86	{6}
13). Martial Arts	**82**	{7}
14). Racquetball	20	{13}

Note:

1. Survey-Votes Cast for All Activities Listed was assessed @ = **111** out of **300**

SAC

OTHER PROGRAMS LISTED BY SURVEY'S APPLICANTS

1. Mental Health
2. Marriage Counseling
3. Computer Programs
4. Helping Addict Teens to Clean-Up
5. Tutoring
6. Educational, Financial, Cultural, Budgeting, Marketing and Credit Investment Programs
7. Community Center for School Age Youth
8. Educational Opportunities for Young Children
9. Parenting Skills and Wide Topics throughout the Year
10. Free Meeting Facility
11. Police Gang Prevention
12. Understanding Our Political Process
13. Career and Goal Planning

SAC

OTHER ACTIVITIES LISTED BY SURVEY'S APPLICANTS

1. Introductory vocational training (masonry, carpentry, cooking, or electrical)
2. Youth Sports Team for Boys and Girls
3. Volleyball
4. Yoga
5. Pool Table
6. Boxing
7. Rehabilitate Tennis Courts
8. Racial and Cultural Activities
9. Horseback Ridding
10. A Place to live for Homeless Children
11. Mini-Gulf Course
12. Building Skills
13. Nutrition and Food Preparation
14. Teaching Team Building Skills
15. Food Aid
16. Room Rental At Fair-Cost For Social and Birthday Events
17. Go Back To Recess
18. Teen Night with Strict Safety Guidelines Well Planned and Implemented

SAC

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All Survey Materials from the Tallying Process to the Actual Copies of the Original Petition-Surveys will be submitted to the Dover Human Relations Commission's Assessment Chair Dr. Phyllis Edamatsu, Parks Recreation and Enhancement Committee, City Council and the Mayor of Dover [**Mr. Carlton Cary**]

- By **January 31, 2014.**
- ✓ For **Additional Information** Please Contact **Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church** Located at 101 North Queen St. Dover, Delaware 19904[**4th Council District**]

Attention to: Roy Sudler, Jr. **Social Action Commission Chairman**

(302) 736.9880 and or;

Pastor Ellis B. Louden – **Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church**

(302) 678.9478