PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on August 13, 2012, at 12:00 noon, with Councilman Bonar presiding in the absence of Chairwoman Russell. Members present were Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Horsey, and Mr. Lewis.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

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

Presentation - Affordable Housing

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reviewed a presentation entitled "Affordable Housing in the City of Dover" ***(Attachment #1)***. In regard to fair housing, Mrs. Townshend advised members that the Delaware Human Relations Commission would be providing training regarding fair housing to the Planning Commission at the next quarterly workshop scheduled for August 21, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

Responding to Mr. Bonar, Mrs. Harvey explained that the average time spent on the waiting list to obtain Section 8 vouchers varies depending upon the applicant; however, she estimated a wait time of approximately two (2) to three (3) years. She stated that Section 8 housing is offered through the private market and that the Delaware State Housing Authority has a list of landlords who provide this type of housing. Mrs. Harvey advised members that the State is developing a website to be launched in September that will provide an easier way for individuals/families to determine if they would qualify for Section 8 housing and access a list of participating landlords and houses for consideration. Mrs. Townshend suggested that the library staff be made aware of the website to assist City residents. Mr. Bonar requested that staff ensure that a link to this website is placed on the City's website.

Referring to the Housing Balance issue, Mr. Anderson expressed his concerns regarding zoning designations in the City. He stated that when the Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) designation was developed 10 years ago, he was concerned that it would not be used beyond the Eden Hill development since there was a flaw in its design related to economic viability. He noted that other developments have a 25% threshold for open space; however, the TND has a 35% threshold, and he felt that this threshold was the reason that several projects have not come to fruition. Mr. Anderson also felt that there were too many sub-zones. He suggested that staff review the TND zoning and other policies included in the Comprehensive Plan for possible amendment.

Mrs. Townshend advised members that staff has made it a priority to meet with the business and real estate communities to review the commercial, office, and industrial zones. She noted the need for a review of the residential zones as well.

In response to Mr. Bonar, Mrs. Townshend stated that the next Comprehensive Plan will be completed by 2013. She noted that shelters are permitted in the Institutional Zone; however, this is not explicitly stated. Mrs. Townshend explained that transitional housing is absent from the Zoning Ordinance and this has created a problem in determining the difference between transitional homes

and boarding houses. Staff has had to put non-profit transitional homes through the conditional use process. Mrs. Townshend advised members that she has been working with the Deputy City Solicitor on developing definitions and provisions to address the continuum of housing and hoped to present recommendations to the Committee by October 2012.

When developing rules for transitional housing, Mr. Anderson cautioned staff not to allow them to get in the way of natural transitional housing and suggested that staff ensure that a level of fairness is maintained.

Responding to Mr. Bonar, Mrs. Harvey stated that according to the 2000 Census, the vacancy rate for rental housing was 6½%. Since there continues to be a demand for rental housing, she felt confident that the 2010 Census would reflect a similar percentage. She assured members that she would obtain this information and forward it to them.

Mr. Anderson requested that staff provide members with a breakdown of the average rent versus the average wage to obtain affordable housing parameters for the target area.

In response to Mr. Lewis regarding substandard homes, Mrs. Townshend stated that when staff conducts rental inspections, a list of repairs that are necessary to meet Code requirements is developed. Typically, homeowners are provided 30 days to make any necessary repairs; however, she stated that if there are critical issues, such as no running water or working smoke detectors, a much shorter response time is granted. If repairs are not made within 30 days and no progress is being made, the rental permit is suspended and tenants are given 30 days to relocate. The homeowner would then be charged $100 to reinstate the rental permit.

No further action was taken by the Committee regarding this matter.

Operational Procedures for Altering the Water Level at Silver Lake

As requested during the Open Forum Segment of the Regular Council Meeting on July 23, 2012, Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, provided an update regarding the lowering of the water level at Silver Lake. He advised members that during previous years, the operation of the valve in the Silver Lake Dam has been a cooperative effort between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Grounds Division of the Public Works Department. The City does not have a prescriptive written procedure regarding the operation of the valve.

Mr. Koenig reminded members that relatively high temperatures and low rainfall had been experienced since June. He stated that Grounds Division staff visits the park and spillway area daily for trash removal and weekly for landscaping or grass mowing and noticed a significant decline in the amount of water coming over the spillway due to the drought. In years past, Grounds Division staff would work with the Parks and Recreation Department to address such concerns. He advised members that Grounds Division staff visited the lake on Friday, July 6, 2012 and found only a small amount of water coming over the fish ladder and the timber area associated with the spillway. As a result, staff removed one of the boards that are in place to adjust the flow of water to allow water to come over the spillway to oxygenate an area of water below the spillway for the fish. On Monday,

July 9th, staff noticed that there were numerous gizzard shad coming to the top of the water below the spillway. Staff felt that there was not enough water flowing to support fish life just below the spillway; therefore, they opened the valve slightly. By Wednesday, July 11th, staff observed mature carp coming to the top of the water, which they felt was an indication that there was an oxygen problem below the spillway. Mr. Koenig stated that by Monday, July 16th, the valve remained halfway open and the level of the lake had dropped significantly over that time period. Staff reduced the valve to approximately five (5) inches open and then closed it upon direction from the City Manager's Office and Public Works Department on Tuesday, July 17th. He advised members that on July 18th there was a large fish kill; therefore, it was believed that the efforts to oxygenate the fish area below the dam had delayed the fish kill in the area. The City contacted Environmental Compliance to assist in the removal of approximately 3.2 tons of fish, which were taken to the landfill. According to a press release issued by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), 1,300 to 1,900 fish were killed. On Friday, July 20th, there was a smaller fish kill (200-300 fish), after which the oxygen level appeared to stabilize; however, the level of the lake had been reduced.

Mr. Koenig stated that, since these occurrences, it has been made clear that the City engineers and City Manager's Office need to be involved with the opening/closing of the valve on Silver Lake and that this should be a coordinated effort with DNREC.

Mr. Koenig indicated that the level of Silver Lake dropped approximately three (3) feet; however, it appeared that the lake was rebounding. Water was coming over the board section of the spillway and fish were no longer at the top of the water. He stated that the Silver Lake Commission suggested providing low-cost aeration just below the spillway over the long term so that the valve would not have to be opened. He noted that other recommendations made by various biologists with the State of Delaware included the possibility of an on/off working of the valve.

Mr. Koenig stated that he had been in contact with several adjacent property owners who expressed concern regarding the lack of notification about the lowering of the lake. He assured members that these procedures would be refined.

Mr. Bonar reminded members that Silver Lake was manmade and that sediment has washed into the lake for over a century, it has never been cleaned, and is in horrible need of expensive remediation, at an estimated cost of approximately $8M. He suggested that staff attempt to find funding from foundations and environmental protection organizations to assist the City. Mr. Bonar also noted that there was an aerator at the City Warehouse that has not been used in over two (2) years and felt that it would be beneficial to put it to use, although he noted that, in the past, sediment quickly filled the trap in the aerator, causing it to stop running. He suggested that the City explore a means of remediating not only the St. Jones Watershed but Silver Lake itself. He felt that the citizens deserve a pristine body of water that could be utilized to its fullest extent.

Mr. Koenig advised members that DNREC and the City have worked cooperatively on several projects in the spillway area and downstream and would soon be working on a project involving

Mirror Lake. He confirmed that the problems with Silver Lake extend to areas beyond the City's control, including farmland outside City limits.

No further action was taken by the Committee regarding this matter.

Benchmarks Established for the Economic Development Office

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, reviewed the benchmarks and results that were established for the Economic Development Office, which included the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP). With regard to events for which the DDP served as the lead organizer or partner, he noted that the benchmark was for 10 events to be held and 21 events were held. He stated that the DDP continues to work toward their fundraising goal of $25,000 and is becoming proactive and progressive with fundraising activities. Mr. Neaton stated that the DDP continues to monitor downtown merchant satisfaction and felt that this continuously improves. He advised members that the City of Dover Police Department has done an excellent job providing walking security in the downtown area, which has resulted in an increase in merchant satisfaction.

At the request of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Neaton indicated that he would provide members with a copy of the merchant survey and results.

Mr. Neaton stated that the DDP has been working on developing a recruitment strategy to attract new businesses in the downtown area. He stated that staff maintains a list of vacant and available properties for those looking for a place to do business. He stated that a meeting was held recently with ING Direct, who considered the downtown area and assisted the City in identifying areas that are considered highly distressed properties and can use new market tax credits. The DDP met with two (2) developers to discuss properties that are owned by the DDP and have the potential to use new market tax credits to enhance these properties.

Mr. Neaton advised members that EDiS previously had a contract on one (1) of the DDP's properties and requested an extension while conducting due diligence. Although EDiS remained interested in the property, based on the short-term extension offered by the DDP, they elected not to continue with the contract. However, he stated that another developer was interested in the property.

In response to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Neaton indicated that EDiS would still be interested in pursuing the property if the DDP had granted the 180-day extension they requested. The DDP Board offered a 60-day extension.

Responding to comments of Mr. Bonar, Mr. Neaton advised members that several downtown projects will be coming to fruition by the end of the year and, by that time, the downtown area will be a completely different area. These projects include the new Library, Bayard Plaza, North Street Parking, renovation of North Street for burying communication cables, the Loockerman Way Plaza, the Wesley College Connector and Walkable Campus, etc.

Mr. Neaton noted that one (1) of the benchmarks for City-wide economic development includes the Garrison Tract and that work on this project was continuing. He advised members that the City has

attracted a second tenant and recently completed negotiating the ground lease with Calpine. He relayed appreciation to members of City Council for their approval of the infrastructure at the Garrison Tract. Mr. Neaton advised members that a partnership has been established with Delaware State University for the development of a marketing plan for the Garrison Tract. However, he relayed the importance of completing the infrastructure in order to move forward with attracting new businesses to the site.

No further action was taken by the Committee.

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

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, reviewed the semi-annual report of employment statistics for the 14 largest employers in the Dover area and reminded members that this information was updated and presented to the committee on a semi-annual basis. He advised members that he and the Mayor have been meeting with several of the larger businesses. He indicated his impression that the economic climate is changing and that the individuals he has been meeting with now relay a sense of confidence.

Mr. Neaton explained that he and Mayor Carey understood the importance of small and mid-size businesses; therefore, they will begin visiting with these smaller businesses in September and information regarding this will be provided to members in the future.

By unanimous consent, the Committee recommended acceptance of the Semi-Annual Review of Statistics Regarding Jobs and Businesses Gained and Lost in the City of Dover.

UPDATES

The following updates were provided to members:

Planning and Funding for New Library

Ms. Margery Cyr, Library Director, reminded members that the library received a $100,000 donation with a matching challenge pledge and that this challenge pledge had been met, resulting in a total of $200,000. She reiterated that the family who donated the $100,000 requested to remain anonymous at this time.

Ms. Cyr stated that the capital campaign has been successful and that their fundraising goals have been met. She stated that the Dover Library Foundation will remain in existence and, once all bills have been paid for the new library, an endowment fund will be created to provide operational support for the library in the future.

Responding to Mr. Bonar, Ms. Cyr stated that the public meeting room will perform various functions, explaining that as a single room, it can seat 150 people. A divider wall will provide for two (2) separate rooms that will occupy one-third and two-thirds of the total room. The City Manager had recording equipment installed in the room which will allow for City Council to hold meetings that can accommodate more attendees. With regard to video conferencing, Ms. Cyr stated

that the State Library received a $3M federal stimulus grant three (3) years ago, and part of that funding was to provide video conferencing for the five (5) anchor libraries in the State; therefore, the library will become a video conferencing center for central Delaware.

Ms. Cyr stated that the library located at 45 South State Street will close to the public on Friday, August 24, 2012. During the period between the closing of the current library and opening of the new library, the Kent County Bookmobile will be parked at either the current or new location on Fridays to allow individuals the opportunity to return materials and/or check them out.

Ms. Cyr stated that the new Library will be opening on Thursday, September 20, 2012, and that the ribbon cutting for the event is scheduled for 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, advised members that expanded library hours would be offered on Friday nights from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and that Ms. Cyr was working on programming. Elaborating, Ms. Cyr stated that the additional hours would be referred to as "Fabulous Fridays." She explained that this concept began a few years ago when the "In Harmony" Concert Series was held on the first Friday evenings in an effort to support the work of the Downtown Dover Partnership with their "First Friday" program to encourage people to stay in the downtown area after 7:00 p.m. when the "First Friday" program ended. She stated that an event or activity would be planned for every Friday night at the Library year round.

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

CDBG Program

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reviewed the Status of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects for FY 2011/2012 and monthly statistics for August 2012.

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

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

Dover Youth Advisory Committee

There was no update provided for the Dover Youth Advisory Committee.

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

David L. Bonar
Acting Chairman

DLB/JS/jg/dd/tm
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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Presentation - Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing in the City of Dover

Planning & Inspections Department

Dover, Delaware

August 13, 2012

ATTACHMENT #1
PR&CE Committee Meeting of 08/13/2012

2008 Comprehensive Plan
Housing & Community Development

Goal 1: Encourage Balanced Housing Opportunities for All Income Levels and Phases in Life

Goal 2: Preserve Existing Housing Stock

Goal 3: Provide Safe Livable Neighborhoods

Goal 4: Provide Homeownership Opportunities for Low/Moderate Income

What is Affordable Housing?

HUD defines affordable housing as:

Housing that costs no more than 30% of a household's monthly income

Low/Moderate Income Households

FY 2012 HUD Income Limits Summary

Dover, DE MSA										
FY 2012 Income Limit Area	Median Income [Click Here]	FY 2012 Income Limit Category	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
Dover, DE MSA	$63,200	Very Low (50%) Income Limits [Click Here]	$22,150	$25,300	$28,450	$31,600	$34,150	$36,700	$39,200	$41,750
		Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits [Click Here]	$13,300	$15,200	$17,100	$18,950	$20,500	$22,000	$23,500	$25,050
		Low (80%) Income Limits [Click Here]	**$35,400**	**$40,450**	**$45,500**	**$50,550**	**$54,600**	**$58,650**	**$62,700**	**$66,750**

Fair Housing

- The City has a legal and moral obligation to affirmatively further fair housing
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice approved September 12, 2011

Housing Programs - Rental

- Section 8 Vouchers – Vouchers that are provided by the federal government to PHA's to administer to low income families to rent affordable housing in the private market.
- Tax Credit – Federal Funding provided by the federal government to fund the development cost of low income housing by allowing an investor to take a federal tax

Housing Programs - Rental

- (tax credit continued) credit equal to a percentage of the cost incurred for development of the low income units in a rental housing project.
- Public Housing – Rental housing for eligible low income families and individuals where eligibility is based on individual gross income and managed by Housing Authorities.

Rental Programs – City of Dover

- Section 8 Vouchers
  - DHA 220 active, and 405 on the waiting list
  - DSHA 905 statewide
- Public Housing
  - Units - 391
  - Sites - 8
- Tax Credit
  - Units - 221
  - Sites - 3

Housing Programs - Ownership

- Dover First Start – Down Payment Assistance – Through CDBG Funds, up to $10,000 in assistance to qualifying first time home buyers.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Dover Community Partnership
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- Diamond State CLT
- Live Near Your Work - DSHA

Housing Balance

- Impaction and concentration – high area of minority and/or low income concentration – Primarily affects downtown area
- Continuum of housing
  - Emergency Shelters
  - Transitional Housing
  - Permanent Housing
- Goal is to provide permanent affordable housing for City residents

Challenges to Affordable Housing

- Low income households have difficulty qualifying for mortgages
- Low vacancy rate of rental housing
- Substandard housing is **not** acceptable affordable housing
- NIMBYism
- Funding constraints/reduction in federal funding