PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on April 11, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. with Chairwoman Russell presiding. Members present were Dr. McGlumphy, Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Horsey, and Mr. Lewis. Members of Council present were Mr. Leary and Council President Hogan (arrived at 6:34 p.m. and departed at 6:50 p.m.).

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Ruane moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Dr. McGlumphy and unanimously carried.

Proposal by Chyenne Arsenault - Community Service Requirement for Graduation

During the Open Forum Segment of the Regular Council Meeting of March 14, 2011, Ms. Chyenne Arsenault, 219 Beechwood Avenue, presented a proposal to introduce community service as a requirement for graduation from high school in Delaware.

Ms. Arsenault reminded members that she attends Polytech High School, is majoring in Environmental Science, and is required to perform 10 hours of community service each year in order to obtain her technical diploma. She quoted a statement by Margaret Meade: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." She stated that her community service has provided many benefits, including connections with people, a sense of responsibility about her place in the workforce, skills and knowledge related to community service activities, and job opportunities.

Ms. Arsenault felt that instituting such a graduation requirement in all Delaware schools would greatly benefit the youth of Dover, particularly those who do not have a sense of direction, and would motivate them to make a positive contribution. She noted that community service could equip students with work experience and letters of recommendation, both of which are helpful to young people when applying for employment. Ms. Arsenault reminded members that area organizations, such as the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Dover Downs, The Salvation Army, and Adopt-A-Highway (as well as in-school programs, such as the Future Farmers of America (FFA), have a need for volunteers which could be filled by students. She indicated that a community service requirement would also enhance the reputation of Delaware schools.

Ms. Arsenault encouraged members to support the institution of community service as a requirement for graduation from high school in Delaware.

In response to Dr. McGlumphy, Ms. Arsenault indicated that, to her knowledge, no schools in Delaware have a community service graduation requirement; however, many of the schools in Pennsylvania and New Jersey do have such a requirement. She stated that not all "Shops" at Polytech require community service as a graduation requirement.

Noting that this issue is not in the purview of the City of Dover, Dr. McGlumphy suggested that Ms. Arsenault pursue this proposal with the Department of Education and discuss her proposal with the Superintendent of Polytech High School. Dr. McGlumphy explained that each school district

develops their own criteria for graduation and that even schools within the same school district may have different requirements. He also explained that there is a process involved and procedures that must be followed by the State. Dr. McGlumphy suggested that Ms. Arsenault present her proposal to Polytech High School, explaining that it would then be presented to the local school board rather than City Council.

Concurring with Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Horsey commended Ms. Arsenault for her efforts and expressed her agreement with the proposal as presented. She encouraged Ms. Arsenault to pursue the proposal, through the process suggested by Dr. McGlumphy.

Mr. Ruane also encouraged Ms. Arsenault to pursue her proposal and suggested that, in addition to the action suggested by Dr. McGlumphy, she contact local legislators for their support. He concurred with Ms. Arsenault's view that community service can instill a sense of responsibility and relayed appreciation for her view that such service opportunities should be provided for all youth, not just those that may be required to perform community service by the courts.

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend acceptance of the report, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Presentation of Master Plan for the Boys and Girls Club at Schutte Park

Mr. Zachery Carter, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided and reviewed a Map of the Schutte Park Master Plan ***(Attachment #1)*** and a List of the Schutte Park Master Plan Improvements ***(Attachment #2)***. He advised members that the Master Plan will be utilized in the development of the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) during the next five (5) years. Mr. Carter noted that the map was not yet finalized and did not reflect the realignment of Wyoming Mill Road which is in progress. He also noted that the Facility Management and Construction Facilities were labeled incorrectly on the map.

Mr. Carter indicated the location of the proposed Boys and Girls Club (shown on the map at the intersection of (realigned) Wyoming Mill Road and Hazlettville Road), based on the information provided by the Boys and Girls Club regarding the proposed size of the facility and parking area. He reviewed the existing layout and future improvements proposed for Schutte Park. Mr. Carter advised members of staff's desire to expand the current John W. Pitts Center to accommodate all Parks and Recreation Department staff, including those at the Dover Park Recreation Center on White Oak Road, as well as an additional multi-purpose room. He explained that the list of future improvements will meet the City's needs for the next five (5) years and beyond.

Mr. Ruane relayed his support of the expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle paths; however, he encouraged the development of access to these pathways. He reminded members that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan developed several years ago had access to Schutte Park as a high priority and explained the dire need to provide access to the Park from all areas of the City. He reminded members that a study was conducted which indicated the need for a means for residents coming from the New Burton Road area to access Schutte Park, in spite of the significant cost involved. It was his hope that staff will include an access plan in the pedestrian/bicycle section of the Master Plan and that staff include a time frame and associated costs with their proposal.

Responding, Mr. Carter stated that some of the plans, including projected costs, have been included in the five (5) year CIP. In addition, he noted that the Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is currently in the process of developing a bike plan for Kent County. He stated that it is hoped that this plan will include access to Schutte Park. He assured members that the City will consider this project; however, he noted that there are other avenues that can be used to assist the City in this regard.

In response to Mrs. Russell, Mr. Carter stated that air conditioning for the gym at the Pitts Center was inadvertently omitted from the list of improvements and assured members that it will be included in the future.

Mr. Anthony DePrima, City Manager, thanked various staff members for their efforts in preparing the Master Plan, explaining that it would have cost the City between $30,000 and $50,000 to engage outside consultants for this purpose.

Mr. Ruane moved to recommend acceptance of the Conceptual Schutte Park Master Plan, seconded by Dr. McGlumphy and unanimously carried.

UPDATES

The following updates were provided to members:

Puncheon Run Watershed Action Team and Flood Plain Mapping

Mr. Scott Koenig, Public Services Manager/Director of Public Works, advised members that a Community Workshop was held on March 22, 2011 at City Hall to review improvements made to the Puncheon Run Watershed area by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the Kent Conservation District, discuss one resident's recent success in obtaining a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA), and identify other property owners who might be successful in pursuing a LOMA. He reminded members that an electronic notice regarding the Workshop was distributed and hand-delivered notices and mailings were distributed. There were 18 residents who attended the Workshop.

Mr. Koenig stated that the resident from Shadow Court who was recently successful in receiving a LOMA reviewed his application during the Workshop. Mr. Greg Williams, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), reviewed a portion of the application process, which he stated was available on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website.

Mr. Koenig noted that, since the Workshop, Mr. Ruane has worked diligently to secure assistance from a local surveyor who was successful with filing a previous application. He noted that this individual is providing information to area residents regarding the LOMA process.

Mr. Koenig stated his feeling that the Workshop was very successful and that positive feedback was received from residents in attendance.

Mr. Ruane commended staff for the Workshop and presentation to the residents. He stated that there are eight (8) residents who are moving forward in seeking a LOMA. He requested that staff continue to assist individual homeowners in this regard.

Dr. McGlumphy moved to recommend acceptance of the Puncheon Run Watershed Action Team and Flood Plain Mapping Update, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Planning and Funding for New Library

Ms. Margery Cyr, Library Director, advised members that a groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 5, 2011 for the New Library and thanked the City staff for their assistance with the event and all of the supporters that attended. She relayed special appreciation to the Friends of the Library for their contribution of food and refreshments.

Ms. Cyr displayed a collectible piece that Wilmington Trust Company commissioned for the Library. She noted that only 100 such pieces were issued and that some of them were presented to the Council President, City Manager, and others during the ceremony.

Ms. Cyr noted the receipt of a contribution by the Kent County Levy Court, in the amount of $1M, which was presented to the City during the ceremony.

Ms. Cyr stated that the City has received three (3) large pledges for the New Library Project, which will reduce the required construction loan amount to approximately $390,000. She assured members that fundraising efforts will continue for contributions toward the loan and other projects related to the Library and stated that she anticipated that these efforts will negate the need for a construction loan for the project.

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

CDBG Program

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, reported the Status of FY 2009-2010 CDBG Projects.

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend acceptance of the CDBG Program, seconded by Mr. Ruane and unanimously carried.

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

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, reviewed the Update on the Housing and Recovery Act of 2008 Funds (Neighborhood Stabilization Program).

Responding to Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Townshend stated that property records are maintained by the Tax Assessor's Office, including any information regarding transfers; although the Code Enforcement Program tracks banks and management companies to ensure that vacant buildings are registered.

Mr. Ruane requested that vacant homes be placed on a future agenda for further discussion.

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend acceptance of the Housing and Recovery Act of 2008 Fund (Neighborhood Stabilization Fund) Update, seconded by Mr. Ruane and unanimously carried.

Dover Youth Advisory Committee

Mrs. Russell reported that nine (9) new members of the Dover Youth Advisory Committee will be sworn into office on April 12, 2011 at City Hall.

Dr. McGlumphy moved to recommend acceptance of the Update on the Dover Youth Advisory Committee, seconded by Mr. Ruane and unanimously carried.

Dover SunPark

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, reviewed a Presentation - The Dover Sun Park, a Community Solar Project ***(Attachment #3)***. He advised members that the project is progressing ahead of schedule and that construction plans are anticipated to be completed by the end of July. Tours of the site are being scheduled and will begin April 20, 2011. He noted that this has been a great economic development project and relayed appreciation for the City taking the leadership role for this project.

Responding to Dr. McGlumphy, Mr. Neaton stated that, although this facility will not result in a lower utility bills for residents, the project demonstrates the City's commitment to supporting green energy. In terms of savings, Mr. Anthony DePrima, City Manager, stated that the solar project will assist the City in complying with Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) legislation requirements and that the pricing that the City receives for hosting the site is much less than the cost of purchasing solar power on the market. In addition, he stated that he anticipates that the cost of solar energy should remain stable as fuel prices escalate in the future, resulting in projected savings.

Mr. Ruane moved to recommend acceptance of the Update on the Dover SunPark, seconded by Dr. McGlumphy and unanimously carried.

Dr. McGlumphy moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia R. Russell
Chairwoman

SRR/DD/jg/js/ac/tm
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Attachments
Attachment #1 - Map of the Schutte Park Master Plan
Attachment #2 - List of the Schutte Park Master Plan Improvements
Attachment #3 - Presentation - The Dover Sun Park, a Community Solar Project