

CITY OF MILFORD
COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEETING
Minutes of Meeting
February 5, 2009

A meeting was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers at City Hall at 201 S Walnut Street, Milford, DE on Wednesday evening, February 5, 2009.

IN ATTENDANCE: City Manager David Baird, Code Enforcement Officer Donald Williams, Councilmen Michael Spillane, Irv Ambrose, Owen Brooks, Doug Morrow, Lt Steve Rust
Also: Recording Secretary Christine Crouch

Mr. Ambrose started the meeting at 6:30 pm by welcoming everyone in attendance, albeit a smaller turn out than the last meeting. Mr. Ambrose then recognized Mr. Morrow.

Mr. Morrow brought Mr. Kenny Carroll, the VP of Operations at Seawatch. Mr. Kenny introduced Mr. Andy Nowak of Condor Technologies Inc. He is the engineer Seawatch has hired to work on the odor concerns of the plant.

Mr. Nowak explained he has worked with odor issues at other locations besides Seawatch, but was involved in the Seawatch plant years back. He has been able to locate the source and minimize it. The most efficient way to handle the odor is to use an all natural chemical that drops the odor out of the solution, like fabreeze. He passed around a sample for people to smell. By taking the roots from sassafras and getting the essential oils from it, the chemical is made. The chemical is then made airborne. Mr. Nowak explained he will work with the property owners in the area to get feedback on the odors.

Mr. Brooks pointed out odor control was performed 10 years ago and smell is back and asked why. Mr. Nowak felt due to modifications done to the facility, the scrubbers that were installed 10 years ago were not performing to engineer's satisfaction. Mr. Brooks is concerned the problem will be fixed but will come back. Should that happen, what should residents do? Mr. Nowak said he would be fine with handing out his business card and if someone has a problem, they can call him. Linda Rhodes has been very active with staying on top of notifying people the smell is intolerable.

Mr. Ambrose asked what has been done in the recent past and what is the plan of action? Mr. Nowak explained the plan has improved the waste stream in the last six weeks, installed a local unit where sludge is covered up, in entire space a large system for this neutralizer has been installed. While scrubbers can be backwashed to be cleaned, have to be careful not to make the smell worse when doing so. These things that have been done is like pre-treating before the odor gets out of the building. All of these improvements have been up and running for two days now. The systems that Mr. Nowak has installed have worked in other locations with odor issues. Seawatch is unique, but the fundamentals can be applied.

Mr. Wiley asked who controls the air emissions and why aren't they keeping odors under control. Mr. Nowak was unsure but will check into the air emissions requirements. Mr. Wiley wants a regulation number and who is supposed to monitor. Questioned whether the City's lift station or transmission lines of the City's could be creating odor issues. Mr. Nowak didn't feel that was the problem, neither did Mr. Baird. Mr. Carroll stated Seawatch is assuming responsibility for the smell and treating the issue as though it is completely coming from their plant.

Mr. Baird questioned how long before a baseline could be established to measure against? Mr. Nowak thought 3-5 weeks. Mr. Carroll at Seawatch has directed him to take care of this issue.

Mr. Williams then gave a progress report since the last meeting on Code Enforcement issues in the target area. 55 cases closed, which is true progress for the property owners. There are larger projects that needed more time which are still open.

Mr. Williams explained the rental licenses for 2009, due to the changes this year, have been very time consuming, but felt steady progress has been made. Even more rentals in this area have been found and he is working to get a handle on them. The streets department has been addressing the faded or missing signs as they are identified.

Mr. Ambrose questioned if there was a way to track the rental units not licensed. Mr. Williams explained Code Enforcement has worked closely with the billing department in identifying properties that are not owner occupied. Once a unit is identified, a letter is sent to the owner informing them of the need to be licensed. Mr. Ambrose confirmed there is a fine that will be imposed if a landlord is not getting licensed. Mr. Williams further explained the billing department will verify an active rental license on all units when tenants come in to set up services. If there is no license, the tenant will be unable to set up services in their name. Second notices to those landlords that have not complied will be mailed soon.

Due to the limited parking around the Salvation Army, a no fee parking permit has been created. There are only 10 permits and will be issued on a first come, first serve basis. Please come to the City Offices on Vickers Drive to obtain a permit.

Mr. Williams reported he is still looking into adding additional city wide clean up days to the calendar.

Truitt Ave has had two houses that were deemed unsafe demolished.

Mr. Baird stated numbers regarding the rental licenses will be made available at Monday night's council meeting. Mr. Wiley stated he would like a copy of the all of the licensed landlords in the city. He may obtain this information via a Freedom of Information Act request form at the City Offices on Vickers Drive.

Mr. Lofland commented the marina property grass has been cut and questioned who did that. Mr. Williams stated he has been working with the owner, which is who cut the grass, but also to have the windows boarded if they are broken. Mr. Williams has encouraged the owner to keep up the work on the property when spring and summer comes.

Mr. Lofland asked who to contact about the pilings in the river that are coming up due to the ice. Mr. Williams will look into it and get back to him but felt the Army Corps of Engineers would be the ones to speak to.

Mr. Wiley questioned who will maintain undeveloped developments? Mr. Williams explained the property owners will be responsible for property maintenance. Grass cutting takes up a great deal of time in the spring for not only the Code Enforcement Department but also Parks and Rec. Once a letter has gone out to property owner advising them to cut the grass no further notices are required and Mr. Williams can send the crews out to cut. A bill then goes to the property owner. If it is not paid, it is added to their taxes. If their taxes go unpaid, a lien is placed against the property.

Mr. Baird provided a status report on the revitalization project involving the street repairs and sidewalk installation on SE Front Street. He is working with DeIDOT to finalize the project and is aiming for Summer 09 to begin the work, contingent upon state funding, which as everyone knows is an issue right now.

When questioned when the bus service on Marshall Street could be moved, Mr. Baird stated it will certainly remain in place through the end of this school year and he is unsure about next year. The City will be investigating the infrastructure under the road in that area as well, prior to resurfacing.

There have been internal discussions regarding incentives for property owners in the target area, and Mr. Baird felt a subcommittee would be the best way to get property owner's input. If anyone would like to join this committee, please complete the information on the clipboard at the front of the room. The group will report back and conversations can proceed from there.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25 at 6:30 pm at City Hall. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine R. Crouch
Recording Secretary