

CITY OF MILFORD
COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEETING
Minutes of Meeting
April 23, 2009

A meeting was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers at City Hall at 201 S Walnut Street, Milford, DE on Thursday evening, April 23, 2009.

PRESIDING: City Manager David Baird, Code Enforcement Officer Don Williams, First Ward Council members Irv Ambrose & Michael Spillane, Third Ward Council members Doug Morrow & Owen Brooks

IN ATTENDANCE: Code Enforcement Officer CC Dennis

ALSO: Police Lieutenant Steve Rust, Recording Secretary Christine Crouch

The meeting began at 6:30 pm with Mr. Ambrose introducing the City's new Code Enforcement Officer, Mr. CC Dennis.

Mr. Williams noted wards 1 & 3 have had more violations closed out since the last meeting, which is a positive step. Grass season upon us and he and Mr. Dennis will be hitting the town harder now that there are two people available. Other than that, not much changed. As a reminder, bulk pick up is this week, so if anyone has anything, they can put it at curb this week and it will be hauled at no expense. Mr. Baird is looking into offering additional weeks of bulk pick up throughout the year as well.

Mr. Baird wanted to update everyone since last meeting. A city-wide sign replacement effort is underway. Also, concern was raised at the last meetings over the condition of streets/curbs. He is pleased to report the streets are scheduled to be paved this year and the project will be put out to bid shortly. The City will also look at what needs to be done under the streets prior to resurfacing.

Currently the City is coordinating with DelDOT for the SE Front Street streetscape project, which will involve sidewalk improvements as well as paving and drainage. The design work is underway and the City will contact each property owner the project will affect so they will know exactly what they can expect to see in front of their houses. The State funding remains in place for this project and Mr. Baird anticipates beginning in the late summer or fall.

There are two projects going on for the Riverwalk. One entails extending the Riverwalk and the other involves building a bridge. The extension project will leave a gap in the Riverwalk beginning at the Warnell property. Discussions are taking place with the properties the gap involves. Shortly City Council will be discussing an Educational Center type of project on Goat Island. Because Goat Island is unique in Delaware in regards to its plant life species, the City is looking to develop an ecology program to bring attention to the City. As a very long term goal, the Riverwalk has the ability to connect people from point A to point B via foot or bike and enhance the City's eco tourism.

The City has been discussing with Senator Carper's office the possibility of a 500k grant that would allow the City to offer a Revolving Loan Fund for property owners to use to improve the housing stock. So long as borrowers are repaying the loan, the funds continue to revolve to other property owners. Historically, programs like this take years to get off the ground to become successful, but Mr. Baird is confident the program will become successful if Council helps to keep it going.

Mr. Baird reported there is a bike path being proposed on Route 36 by the Milford Maritime Association. The project would be looking to tie into the Riverwalk as well. Mr. Baird pointed out that the more conversations people have, whether it be in large or small groups, the more people find out other people are thinking the same way as them and it's easier to see no idea is too small.

Currently the City is looking into partnering with the Milford Housing Development Corporation to focus on affordable housing for low to moderate income families. Revitalization of homes is also part of their business. They have many experts in the field of home improvements at their disposal and with their help in the community, changes for the better

will be seen in a shorter time. The City is looking to create an environment where people are comfortable making an investment in improving their property.

The odor from Seawatch was the majority of the topic at the last meeting. The group overall felt the odor has been controlled much better since then. It is not gone, but better.

When asked how tenants can become more involved in the improving of the area, and whether there is an incentive program or accountability measures in place at the City, Mr. Baird explained he prefers to focus on incentives rather than accountability. He agrees renters are an immediate issue though. A member of the group explained it is very easy to walk down the street and determine who is a renter and who is a property owner just by how the yard and house looks. Mr. Wiley felt the area trash has been accumulating more since once a week pick up started. The issue of overcrowding creating all of the trash was raised. When asked if the City enforces how many people live in a house, Mr. Baird explained it is an age old question. How can the City determine who is related and who is not. In his experience, if there is overcrowding, other issues are present as well and one way or another, through the other issues, the City works to address all of the issues. Ultimately the landlord should be addressing the overcrowding issue though.

Mr. Brooks suggested the City provide information to the wards regarding the once per week trash pick up and the recycling program. Mr. Morrow suggested training programs in the area.

Someone in the group thanked whomever is responsible for tearing down the black plastic and pnc sign at Fisherhawke. Mr. Williams explained the issue was brought to his attention by Mr. Lofland, so he spoke with the Conservation District and got it resolved. That's how open communication should work. He encouraged residents to keep calling, he needs to hear what they need.

Mr. Ambrose noted how nice it is to see the group growing in numbers. If we work together, we will see improvement. It takes time and can be frustrating, but we are moving forward.

Mr. Baird's office will continue to send out notices letting residents know of upcoming meetings. Everyone's homework is to bring a neighbor to the next meeting sometime in June.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine R. Crouch
Recording Secretary