

CITY OF MILFORD
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES
August 23, 2023

The City Council of the City of Milford convened in a Workshop Session on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, beginning at 6:08 p.m.

PRESIDING: Mayor Archie Campbell

IN ATTENDANCE: Councilpersons Dan Marabello, Mike Boyle, Andrew Fulton, Todd Culotta, Nirmala Samaroo, Brian Baer, Jason James Sr., and Katrina Wilson

STAFF: City Manager Mark Whitfield, Police Chief Cecilia Ashe, and City Clerk Terri Hudson

COUNSEL: Solicitor David Rutt, Esquire

ABSENT: Councilmember Nirmala Samaroo

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD PRIOR TO MEETING

Two people signed up to speak during the Public Comment Session.

Martha Gerry of 13 Mill Street, Milford, expressed her appreciation to Council for their continuing efforts in providing low-income housing to those otherwise unable to afford housing in Milford. She applauded their efforts in the work being done with Springboard Collaborative for a Pallet Village.

Lucius Webb of 20516 Sapp Road stated it is important to take care of our own first and is leery of the mass migration coming into this area from other countries. He encouraged Council to carefully consider the location and its impact on property values and the overall safety of our residents, both of which are key priorities in the City's Strategic Plan. HE agrees it should be planned in an area where transportation and services are available. He concluded by asking Council to consider the size of the village to prevent people from flooding here and changing the dynamics of this community.

There being no further additional people wishing to speak, the Public Comment Session was closed.

The Council Workshop then convened.

Springboard Collaborative/Pallet Village

Executive Director Judson Malone of Springboard Collaborative, 216 South Race Street, Georgetown, addressed Council about the project in Georgetown.

Mr. Malone explained how the cabins are shipped to the job site, noting there are forty cabins in a village setting. He emphasized that most importantly, they provide someone with a dignified place to stay had been living in tent cities and encampments. It is located on the property of First State Community Action Agency who is a primary partner and the landlord.

The cabins have heat, electricity, air conditioning, and a lockable door. They are in a village setting with a communal shower of three showers for a population of 40 people.

There is a temporary community kitchen and dining area but are preparing to start construction on a permanent facility.

Mr. Malone also talked about a recent event entitled 'Paint the Town' where 126 volunteers painted these cabinets various coastal colors over a two-day period.

He described the three-prong approach. First is attainable housing. These can be constructed in under a year compared to a low-income multi-year housing development that takes years to complete.

Second is comprehensive coordinated care. The springboard staff focuses on navigation and every homeless person that arrives is asked their plan and whether they want help with an addiction or want to get a job. They then choose from a set of goals and are then connected with the appropriate partners and programs.

They are provided with three meals a day. A community garden is also on site.

The community is self-organized, and residents are responsible for cleaning the shower, the bathroom and garbage responsibilities. Mr. Malone said they are very responsible and proud and protective of the village.

Trying to figure out how to take care of pets, there was consideration of a dog run, though there are no dogs. Several residents have cats because they can be very comforting. They work with the Brandywine SPCA who provides veterinary care.

Delaware Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAM) as well as Assertive Community Teams (ACT) work with those who need intensive support while the Georgetown Police Department imbedded clinicians also provide services in the village.

Mr. Malone then provided data that has been collected over the six-month period.

Of the 33 people who have exited from the Pallet Village in the first sixmonths:

- 11 (33%) have found permanent housing.
- 4 (13%) have entered substance abuse treatment.
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Of all 73 people who have stayed in the Pallet Village in the first sixmonths:

- 58 (79%) have not returned to unsheltered homelessness.
- 36 (52%) received Substance Use or Mental Health Services.
- 30 (41%) have found or maintained jobs.
- 22 (30%) opened Del-One bank accounts.
- 17 (23%) have been connected to new medical providers.
- 6 (8%) attended GED classes or training programs.
- 5 (7%) were entrusted to the care of their Assertive Community.

Mr. Malone provided additional details and emphasized the importance of knowing the community for the program to work.

The City Manager confirmed that Mr. Malone only needs some raw land to start the project. Mr. Malone confirmed that once that happens, they take over the development and operations. The newer product lines provides more flexibility, and with the fire safety upgrade, the homes can be closer, like a rowhouse concept.

Utilities would be required as laundry and showers are essential. They would be installed closest to the water and sewer connection. Electricity is needed for the cabins and approximately a dozen parking spots must be added, for use mainly by care providers.

While Mayor Campbell thought a medical unit was on site, Mr. Malone clarified that medical personnel make periodic visits, in addition to public health.

Chief Ashe questioned the location and why it did not work at the planned church location; Mr. Malone explained that there was some funding issues in addition to the requirement for a conditional use permit due to its location outside the town limits of Georgetown. Logistically and financially it simply did not work.

Mr. Malone said he will continue to work with the city and looks forward to moving ahead with the project once the City is ready to proceed.

Sonia Marichic-Goudy of Century Engineering of 56 West Main Street, Newark, Delaware introduced herself stating their firm was hired to manage this project and that her team has been working on it for the past several months.

She provided a synopsis of the study though the entire presentation is attached.

The project involves South Walnut Street between McCoy Street and South Maple Avenue. Goals are:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along South Walnut Street
 - New shared use path
 - Complete gaps in existing sidewalks
- Provide traffic calming measures and reduce traffic speeds
- Improve pedestrian crossing at Seabury Ave and WestClarke Avenue
- Improve South Walnut Street intersection with railroad

Crash data and speeds were evaluated during the study. Eighteen accidents occurred in the area over the past three years.

Community workshops were held with two speed calming options presented to the 26 attendees. Both options added a shared use path on the southbound side of South Walnut Street. The shared use paths are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan objectives.

The first option removed all existing street parking and the second had a reduced parking design. Attendees preferred that parking remain, so the second option was more favorable.

Overall feedback from residents included the addition of three stop signs at McCoy, Seabury, and Kings Highway. A stop sign warrant analysis was completed and none of the intersections met the crash analysis for a stop sign. In addition, the traffic volumes did not warrant stop signs at any of three intersections.

As a result, stop signs are not recommended at McCoy, Seabury, or Kings Highway. Century Engineering does recommend traffic calming measures such as narrowing lanes, introducing roadway curves (as presented), and additional speed enforcement by police.

Of the 27 attendees at the second community workshop, overall attendees favored option two. Additional details were provided.

Ms. Goudy confirmed the narrowed roadways will not inhibit large truck and/or school bus turns.

Council concerns were expressed about the removal of any parking on the street and the sidewalk reinstallation considering the mandated sidewalk repairs paid for by property owners at the City's direction.

It was agreed by Council that additional crosswalks and new stop signs should continue to be considered, particularly with the reopening of the Milford Middle School.

City Engineer James Puddicombe confirmed that a portion of the costs of this project were submitted for grant funding estimated at the time to be \$3.8 million which requires an 80/20 match. Because it is a state-maintained roadway, DeIDOT funding may also be available.

The Workshop Session concluded at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk

Attachment: South Walnut Street Traffic Calming Project