

**CITY OF DOVER PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 16, 2018**

The Regular Meeting of the City of Dover Planning Commission was held on Monday, April 16, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers with Chairman Mr. Tolbert presiding. Members present were Mr. Holden (arrived at 7:03PM), Mr. Roach, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Holt, Mr. Baldwin, Dr. Jones, Ms. Maucher and Mr. Tolbert. Mrs. Welsh was absent.

Staff members present were Mr. Dave Hugg, Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams, Mr. Eddie Diaz, Mr. Jason Lyon, Mr. Julian Swierczek and Mrs. Kristen Mullaney. Also present were Mr. David Edgell, Ms. Patti Miller and Mr. Bill Swiatek.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Holt moved to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Ms. Edwards and the motion was unanimously carried 7-0 with Mr. Holden and Mrs. Welsh absent.

APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2018

Mr. Baldwin moved to approve the Planning Commission Meeting minutes of March 19, 2018, seconded by Mr. Holt and the motion was unanimously carried 7-0 with Mr. Holden and Mrs. Welsh absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Mr. Hugg stated that the next Planning Commission regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 21, 2018 at 7:00pm in the City Council Chambers.

Mr. Hugg provided an update on the regular City Council and various Committee meetings held on March 26 & 27, 2018 and April 9 & 10, 2018.

OPENING REMARKS CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Mrs. Melson-Williams presented the audience information on policies and procedures for the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Requests for Extensions of Planning Commission Approval: None

- 2) MI-18-03 Text Amendments: Manufactured Housing and Land Lease Communities (Dover Code of Ordinances, Chapter 66 and Zoning Ordinance, Article 3, Section 8 and Article 12)
–The Planning Commission on March 19, 2018 tabled action on the Review of Proposed Ordinance #2018-01 of Text Amendments to the *Dover Code of Ordinances*, Chapter 66 - Manufactured Homes, Mobile Homes, and Land Lease Communities; to *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 3, Section 8- Manufactured Housing (MH) Zone; and to *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 12- Definitions. *A Report on the Planning Commission’s Public Hearing and action to table this application was forwarded to City Council for their meeting of April 9, 2018. Planning Staff is working on the information requested by the Planning Commission; continued review is anticipated at a future meeting.*

Representatives – None

Mr. Hugg stated that at the previous Planning Commission meeting, the Commission considered Ordinance #2018-01 which is a variety of amendments to the Manufactured Housing and Land Lease Communities portion of the City Code and *Zoning Ordinance*. This matter was tabled at that meeting as a result of a fair amount of input and materials that were presented by representatives of the manufactured housing community. At the Council meeting, Council tabled the second (final) reading of this Ordinance, deferring to the Planning Commission for a future recommendation. In the interim, he and Mr. Diaz have met and consulted with the Deputy City Solicitor as recently as today in terms of the various issues raised and we will be scheduling a meeting within the next few weeks with representatives of the manufactured housing organization to discuss their concerns. There may be areas where they can agree or agree to disagree and then bring a recommendation back to the Planning Commission that is a reflection of that discussion.

Mr. Tolbert stated that you may recall that at the last meeting he recused himself for this application. His recusal still stands for this meeting.

Ms. Maucher moved to defer action on MI-18-03 Text Amendments: Manufactured Housing and Land Lease Communities (Dover Code of Ordinances, Chapter 66 and Zoning Ordinance, Article 3, Section 8 and Article 12) until Staff has had sufficient time to collect the information that the Commission has requested until the June or July meeting.

Mr. Diaz stated that it would help Staff a lot if they knew specifically which month she would like to defer action to so that they have more of a target. Responding to Mr. Diaz, Ms. Maucher stated that she would like to defer action to the June meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Roach and the motion was carried 8-0 by roll call vote with Mrs. Welsh absent. Mr. Holden voting yes; due to the ongoing work that Mr. Hugg has relayed as ongoing and the Planning Commission would enjoy the benefit of that before they make a decision. Mr. Roach voting yes; for reasons previously stated. Ms. Edwards voting yes; for reasons previously stated. Mr. Holt voting yes; he thinks that we need all of the information that they can possibly gather to come up with a correct response. Mr. Baldwin voting yes; he would like to be fully informed before making a decision. Dr. Jones voting yes; for reasons previously stated. Ms. Maucher voting yes. Mr. Tolbert voting yes.

- 1) Update on Appointment of the Architectural Review Oversight Subcommittee of Planning Commission (in accordance with *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 §2.28)

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they still do not have confirmation of the two potential members outside the Commission to serve on that body, but they will work diligently to get that confirmed.

NEW APPLICATIONS: None

NEW BUSINESS

1) Presentation on Delaware PLAN4Health

a. Guidance for Incorporating Health into the City of Dover's Comprehensive Plan

Representatives: Ms. Patti Miller, Nemours Children Health System; Mr. Bill Swiatek, Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association

Ms. Miller stated that she and Mr. Swiatek were on the Leadership Team for PLAN4Health and they are also joined by another member team, Mr. David Edgell. They wanted to present on the outcomes of Delaware PLAN4Health and to also share some recommendations for the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

PLAN4Health was funded by the CDC. Kent County, Delaware was one of seventeen coalitions that was awarded at that time. The project engaged the State affiliates of the American Planning Association and the American Public Health Association and the intent was to get planning and public health professionals to work together. The focus of the funding was to address lack of physical activity and lack of access to healthy foods because these are determinants of chronic disease. They leveraged an already existing coalition known as the Delaware Coalition for Healthy Eating and Active Living so that they could get the different stakeholder groups and sectors to the table that were needed for this work.

They applied on behalf of Dover and Kent County because of compelling health data that showed that there were some local challenges. They were also aware that Dover's Comprehensive Plan and Kent County's Plan were both due to be updated in the near future. One of the aims of the funding was to change the way Comprehensive Plans are updated so that health and equity are considered on the front end during the planning process. The outcome of them wanting to change the process was that they developed some guidance documents to give to Dover and Kent County. A few of the data points that were highlighted in the application were shown so that they could make the case that there were health disparities and that there was a need for some planning assistance. Kent County is the county with the highest adult obesity rate in the State. They highlighted that the unemployment rate in Kent County exceeds that of the State and the nation and also that there are 13% of the population living below the federal poverty line which exceeds the statewide rate.

There were a lot of different moving parts. They conducted health equity mapping so that we could see areas of the County where there were concerns about healthy food access, availability of parks and open space and walking and biking. They used this to identify what they called "equity hotspots" that they could drill down on more closely. They also conducted a household survey of five hundred households in Kent County to gather data on health status, health behaviors and the built environment. Then because community engagement was really at the heart of this work, they had two three-day planning workshops: one in Downtown Dover and one in Kent County in the Magnolia and Woodside areas. The intent was to have a forum where residents could come to look at maps. They could give their ideas of what a healthy community looks like and they could vote on different strategies that they put forth for consideration. There are the guidance documents that she talked about. One they developed for the City of Dover and one they developed for Kent County. They also wanted to develop some tool kits on areas of

consideration that would advance healthy new physical activities so they developed a tool kit on shared use because they wanted to encourage the use of that in Delaware. There were five hundred households in the County that completed the surveys. They learned that most people have to drive at least three miles to get groceries. They heard that there are limited walkable and bikeable destinations. She doesn't think that it is so much a problem for the City of Dover but it was something that came across in the survey. They learned that people are biking as a mode of transport and not necessarily choosing that to recreate. They also heard that most people do not live close enough to walk or bike to parks.

These are the findings from the three day workshop. These were the things that we heard from the residents who dropped in and other stakeholders. We heard that a lot of people are shopping at convenience stores and as a result, we should bring healthier options to where people are already going. They heard that in places where there is a sidewalk network, there are gaps and barriers. They heard that a bike network would be really helpful to connect destinations of interest. They heard that there are not enough parks that people can walk or bike to and that new parks should be created and that they should be linked to where people live with sidewalks and bike routes.

Mr. Swiatek stated that the biggest thing that they want to talk about is really seven core principles that came out of this plan to incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan update. It's really for not only for Dover but for any Comprehensive Plan update that could occur. Those involve health equity; the mobility for all modes of transportation; recognizing the health value of the park system; community facilities that support health; food system planning; economic value of healthy communities; and then land use with the compact mixed-use place-based types of development. These are some of the highlights. There are twenty-three firm recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan for Dover that they kind of dug through and said here is exactly what language could be included to really put health at the forefront of that plan.

In terms of the population and demographics section, including relevant health and demographic data into that document would be great as well as the discussion of the trends and then the analysis of population just related to health. With natural resources, its considering health benefits that are there to access nature, to access open space and to access the natural areas that are around the city. Promoting access to the City's natural resources is really the biggest recommendation in that section. In terms of community services and facilities, restructuring the chapter to emphasize the community services that are there and their ability for health promotion. (*He shared the Concept Plan that they created during one of the charrettes held in Dover for Saulsbury Park.*) You can see the variety of uses that could be there for people of all different age groups with playground facilities, community gardens and courts. Easy access to that park is a big feature of this concept design. There are bike lanes on the street, easy access into the neighborhood and an easy trail for folks to recreate.

In terms of transportation, he thinks that most recommendations in this section focus on mobility, equity and health. It emphasizes the non-motorized system such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes because they promote healthy activity. Improving connectivity especially between schools, between parks, between housing, points of interest and healthy food retail. Often times we design a development that's not really accessible to reach so improving connectivity is a big

part of that and they think it should be in the Comprehensive Plan. This Map Exhibit is an example of what was created during the charrette that shows a proposed bike network in the City of Dover that would create that connectivity for active transportation.

In terms of economic development, it's emphasizing the potential for economic development driven by active recreation, driven by healthy food retail and also something important as well is pursuing an inclusive workforce development programs and strategies, especially for groups that are economically disadvantaged. The relationship to health is to have good economic ability to be able to afford healthy foods and education and so forth; it all is tied in there.

Perhaps what he thinks is the most important is land development. Promoting a compact mixed use development really underscores a lot of this. If we keep developing in ways that kind of spread out, we are going to be shooting ourselves in the foot to have that connectivity that we are looking for in all of these other measures.

This document is available electronically at www.DEPlan4Health.org.

Mr. Tolbert questioned if he understood correctly that Kent County has the highest obesity rate in Delaware? Responding to Mr. Tolbert, Ms. Miller stated that at the time that they applied for the grant they had the highest adult obesity rate. She doesn't know if that is still the case but when they made application it was.

Ms. Maucher questioned if they have gone through the City's ordinances? She is thinking that parking is one where there is a requirement for a minimum number of parking spaces which encourages additional vehicles. Are there specific recommendations? These seem to be broad and lack a certain what do we need to do to get this goal? Responding to Ms. Maucher, Mr. Swiatek stated that they just looked at the broad *Comprehensive Plan*; they didn't dig into the Code.

Mr. Hugg stated that as was indicated, their *Comprehensive Plan* has to be updated this year and recertified by early June 2019. Staff has been looking at the plan now for 2-3 months and accessing where it is, what parts may need some additional attention. But starting from the premise, the 2008 *Comprehensive Plan* is a pretty darn good plan and what they need to do is not necessarily take blank sheets of paper and start over but in fact look at that plan in terms of adding context and adding some dimensions to it particularly in a couple of areas. Health is clearly one of those areas that they have recognized not only in the comprehensive planning process but in the Restoring Central Dover planning process and a lot of things are going on Downtown. The recommendations and conclusions that were identified early on here are spot on. If you are a resident of the west end of Loockerman Street, your only real easy food choice is the Family Dollar which has an interesting array of foods. You could probably meet your basic requirements on a day to day basis, but he certainly wouldn't describe them as fresh vegetables and high-quality foods that we would encourage people to be eating. They primarily have processed foods and canned foods and things that are probably not as good for you as you might think. Related to that, they have also had discussions about how to reuse Brownfield sites in the urban area in the West Loockerman Street area. This is also a hot topic in EPA with their Urban Agriculture Program. He thinks there is a focus on health and that a being an issue that really

needs to be incorporated in our planning. As we go through the rest of the evening tonight, they are going to be talking to Commission about their strategy for revising the Dover Plan. He wants to thank and commend the Plan4Health group for bringing this to the Commission. Not only does it re-enforce the need to kind of think about some of these issues, but he likes the fact that they have been given recommendations that can be incorporated in the plan to make the plan a whole lot stronger; particularly by chapter. He thinks that there are probably a couple of areas like that where the plan does not have a strong emphasis on health and it does not have a strong emphasis on energy. There are some things that we as planners have learned over the last ten years that maybe it's time to take a look at our Plan and reshape it in terms of more policy documents and less prescriptive. This is very appropriate and timely that we would be addressing these kinds of issues, particularly if we try to revitalize older neighborhoods and first year suburbs.

Mr. Holt questioned the smoking problem that seems to be everywhere now and if there is a way to possibly eliminate childhood smoking in their teenage years and that would help eliminate it when they get older. Now would be a good time because tobacco companies have already admitted that they have been lacing their cigarettes with high grade nicotine to try to get people addicted to cigarettes. Prices of cigarettes are really up there so now would be a good time to try to do it. To do something like that would really be a major effort but he thinks that it would be well worth everybody's health especially young kids growing up today. You could do some type of monetary reward system or some kind of job reward to get kids not to smoke. If they don't smoke by the time that they are 17 or 18 then they probably aren't going to smoke. Responding to Mr. Holt, Ms. Miller stated that it was beyond the scope of what they are doing but she knows that they are groups in Delaware who are focused on that issue like American Cancer Society and American Heart Association.

Dr. Jones stated that she did read through the document and found it very interesting. The consideration of educational strategies is needed to make sure the plan works in the final analysis. All of the wonderful ideas that we have from the 500 households who participated in the survey didn't really give a lot of information about the demographics of that survey. We are going to be dealing with some individuals who need education in order to understand that it may not be quicker to run to the Family Dollar store but it's not healthier. For those of us who have worked with certain populations, we know very well that because we say something it doesn't mean anything; we have got to demonstrate. Was there an educational component? Responding to Dr. Jones, Ms. Miller stated that she would say they were able to educate the people who came to the planning workshops, but she doesn't know if the general public intuitively realized how land use can shape their opportunities. So, by virtue of them having an opening presentation, a closing presentation, putting some options out there and kind of talking to them about the pros and cons for that smaller subset of people, she would say that they were educated. Beyond Delaware Plan4Health there have been a lot of groups that have been working on the education piece like the Delaware Coalition for Healthy and Active Living. They have presented to boards such as you. They have worked with schools and different stakeholders. She thinks there have been a lot of those campaigns and the beauty of this is bringing the public health and planning professionals together because we have to shape the environments people are in. If we wag our fingers and tell people to eat better but there is nowhere near them to get it because the zoning isn't supported or the land use isn't supported, our education can only go so far. To her, it's the

beauty of bringing those different professions to the table and coming at it from a programmatic side, policy side and education side.

Mr. Swiatek stated that he would echo what Ms. Miller said and also there are just so many places that you have those barriers and really a lot of this is just about giving people choice. Choice to get that healthy food and choice to go to the park on a bicycle instead of riding in your car. He lives in Bear, DE and they have a great park called Glasgow Park. This weekend it was beautiful and the park was packed because everybody had to drive there because it's a suburban environment and because it was designed poorly in that section. This plan is about how we can assist Dover with their Comprehensive Plan update so that same thing doesn't happen here.

Mr. Roach stated that in looking at their research in regards to healthy eating, did you identify certain areas within Dover that seem to have more places that are more prevalent in regards to the options that they can have? Responding to Mr. Roach, Ms. Miller stated that with the mapping that she referred to, they mapped a retail food environment index that was a ratio of healthy to unhealthy or vice versa. They did do some mapping that showed how much of the population was within a one mile radius of grocery stores. We were able to map that and then they also from the survey they over sampled some zip codes and they could kind of see those zip codes depending on where the questions fell out in terms of higher obesity rates and less access to food.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the Planning Office does have the full document including the appendices if the Commission is interested they can make it available.

Mr. Holden stated that he wanted to thank them for the work and bringing the information to us tonight. It is helpful to hear you and understand it a little bit better.

Mr. Roach stated that he also wanted to echo that statement and say thank you as well. That was one of his platforms when he was speaking about community involvement and things to be able to provide people with other opportunities, not only just with health and recreation. When he opened this document and saw Saulsbury Park he thought that is right where he lives. He honestly does appreciate that and he would love to see that come to fruition especially in that neighborhood because they have nothing else to do.

Mr. Tolbert stated that he doesn't know if their department has any contact with the State health department that deals with the problems of women, infants and children. We have had a high rate of infant mortality in Delaware. Are you concerned about that and do you deal with the agency that deals with that problem? Responding to Mr. Tolbert, Ms. Miller stated that she has colleagues at Nemours that are part of the Delaware Healthy Infant and Mother Consortium and obviously that is one of the issues that they deal with. They didn't address it in this plan was it is obviously a negative health outcome that needs to be addressed. There are environmental components to that as well.

Mr. Hugg stated that one of their recommendations that he whole heartedly agrees with is the need for some kind of food hub or central location. Part of the problem is that we have surpluses of fresh fruits and vegetables in places and places that have no access to them because they are

not convenient. He knows that the County has looked at the food innovation notation. He wants to know if this group has any suggestions on how to get a food hub to come to fruition here in Dover or Kent County. Responding to Mr. Hugg, Mr. Edgell stated that he is with the Office of State Planning Coordination and also a leadership team member of the Plan4Health. Due to the work that they started with Plan4Health, they engaged a broad range of stakeholders throughout the agricultural community, food producers, and a bunch of different groups. Out of that, they were able to talk with the Department of Agriculture's new secretary, Secretary Scuse. There was a report done at the end of the Markell administration about this very issue and the new administration has picked that up and just held a food and farm policy forum about two or three weeks ago and that was the essential question. They have a lot of farm producers and they've got a lot of food production and planning systems that are complex in Delaware. It is really a global system and really looking at how we do something like a food hub here in Kent County and all throughout Delaware. It's a work in progress but he thinks that it is something to stay informed about. Hopefully, Kent County is a place where that can be successful.

Mr. Roach stated that in regard to healthy eating, the one thing that he has learned just by working at Child Protective Services now and also working as a family crisis therapist at Booker T. Washington Elementary School, a lot of times people that live in the income-based housing facilities most of the time don't have cars. He was always told that the issue is that our DART system and our public transportation system shuts down so early that it is impossible to be able to get to these places to get groceries and get them back home. A lot of the times that he speaks to his clients' family members and people in those income-based houses. They always say if there was public transportation that would run later when people get off of work they would have more opportunities to go to grocery stores to bring things home. A lot of times if you look at Capital Park, Capital Green and Simon Circle areas you will find a Royal Farms around the corner where you can get a box of chicken quicker than you can walk across the street to go to a Food Lion. It makes sense, whether you would send the kids around the corner to go pick something up as opposed to you getting on the bus and have access to transportation to be able to make that. There is a difference between walking somewhere to grab something and then having to walk back with the groceries. You end up with grocery carts in neighborhoods and then people walking around with them. It is a difficult fix but he does know that every single time he talks to people in regards to eating healthier they always say that if they had easier access or more available access and time to be able to do these things they would. Most of the time they don't have time because DART shuts down at 5 or 6 PM.

Ms. Maucher questioned if the City offers incentives to bring those types of businesses into the Downtown Development District? She knows that we offer incentives but are there targeted incentives? Are there best practices that cities who are faced with this problem have adopted and have worked well? Responding to Ms. Maucher, Mr. Swierczek stated that the Downtown Development District doesn't specifically target any kind of food type businesses; it's more business in general.

Mr. Edgell stated that it's not a bad idea to think about that sort of thing. He thinks that when you read the healthy food retail policy recommendations that's really the spirit. They heard exactly the same things that Mr. Roach was speaking about. The interesting thing about the food mapping that they did is that Dover is full of grocery stores. But within walking distance of

where people live, there really aren't any. The Food Lion in Gateway West is maybe close to Lincoln Park but it is tough for somebody who doesn't have public transportation or a vehicle to get there. He thinks that it is an excellent idea to look at Downtown and all neighborhoods and think about how to incentivize healthy food retail in those areas.

Mr. Holt stated that he used to take DART (Paratransit) to get places since he can't drive because of his eyesight but their fees have recently gone up. He doesn't know what the reason for that is but it's eliminated a lot of people from taking DART. The price used to start out at \$2.00 and now he thinks that it's close to \$5.00 per trip. It doesn't seem like a lot but if you are just going across the street to get groceries, that is expensive since it's the fee for one way. They are good about helping people get their groceries from the cart onto the bus and then when they get home, they would help the person get the groceries off of the bus. Recently, he has had to eliminate DART because it got to be a little too expensive. He doesn't know if DART was trying to eliminate passengers or what the reason was but he would like to see them reconsider their rates and get back to where people can actually afford to use them. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mr. Swiatek stated that he thinks that DART tries to do the best job that they can do but they are really being stretched thin by the land use issue. His day job is with the Wilmington Area Planning Council which is in New Castle County and they have done an analysis looking at the percentage of the population within walking distance to a bus stop and that has been falling for the last decade. Things are getting a little more spread out and they are having to spread out their system a little more and it's causing costs to go up. The ridership has been nose-diving in the last couple of years because of that.

Mr. Roach stated that as far as with the state assistance, sometimes they do give DART passes. It's difficult because in order to go to apply for these types of services and to get some of the assistance that we do have, you have to go way out to the State Services buildings that are usually so far from everywhere where people are located. Now you have to go behind the Blue Hen Mall which is where a lot of the programs are. It's just a difficult task when you are talking about healthy eating because sometimes for these populations, the main thing they are worried about is just eating. So to think about eating healthy as well, that's not on the forefront of their minds. Just to know that they will either have money to get a provided meal or get a DART bus. A lot of, it's just that switch so maybe if we allow opportunities to be a little bit more accessible in regard to those assistances. He knows people who will literally sell their food stamps to have money to be able to pay a bill and then be able to save a little bit of that money to get a bucket of chicken to eat for 2 or 3 days. They are not going to think about the benefits from being able to cook and be able to have that food last longer because at that point, it's an immediate need. You deal with the fact that you tell a parent with 3 or 4 kids that they have to sit in a State services assistance building all day. Have you ever gone down to receive any assistance? You are going to be there all day. When you look at things like that, there is more to infrastructure in regard to being helpful to these people that have to walk. Because like he said, he has a car and he will go to Food Lion 24/7 to shop for his family but the people who have a lot of different barriers that comes across as more than just a choice. Sometimes the choice isn't that they want to eat healthy or not healthy. Most of the time it's just that they want to eat. He thinks that it is maybe trying to tackle some of those outside barriers in regards to ways that are hindering people from allowing themselves to be able to make that choice to have a choice at all.

Mr. Tolbert stated that he would like to thank the presenters very much and he would like to ask them to keep the Commission informed as they further develop their plan. Responding to Mr. Tolbert, Mr. Swiatek stated that they look forward to Dover really being one of the first cities in the State that can implement this and really be an example for other towns across the State to incorporate health in their Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Tolbert stated that it is very important that they do become successful with the efforts.

PROJECT FOR DOVER'S 2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Update on Project Activities

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the Commission has gotten a slight taste of what is the next big project other than applications for the Planning Office and that is Dover's *2019 Comprehensive Plan*. The current plan that is certified for the City dates to 2008. Lot of the current Commissioners were not on the Commission at that time. Mr. Hugg has already mentioned that Staff has kind of started the behind the scenes efforts in what will be the process to develop the next plan. The Comprehensive Plan has a whole series of chapters on different topic areas and a whole series of maps that go along with it. The document is available on the City's website if you want to start reading the current plan.

In March, the Planning Staff submitted their current plan for what they call a Pre-Update Review by PLUS (Preliminary Land Use Services) review process that is typically utilized for applications of a certain size. They also offer the opportunity for you to send your current plan through and get initial comments from a variety of State agencies so that you have some data about where you need to make improvements to your plan and information about new State regulations that may have come into play since 2008. They did that presentation in late March and they are expecting comments back from that process at any time. That will all go into their process for creating the new plan. Planning Staff has been meeting to organize what their strategy is for research, the assignment of tasks of the various chapters of the Comprehensive Plan and to talk about what the outreach processes will be for that plan. It's something that is ongoing. They have a weekly meeting to discuss that so that it doesn't get away from them. They have actually already started some of the very specific agency outreaches. There are a number of State agencies and other entities that they will be directly working with. So far, they have met with people from DelDOT in their Regional Systems Planning section which is an office at DelDOT that is starting to look a little more holistically in long range planning about the transportation systems. They are going to be a data resource for us. We have already asked them some questions and they have tossed some information back, but they will see more information that way. They have also shared information with the Public Works Director and the Electric Department Superintendent about those chapters that focus on activities that other City departments are involved in and have a much greater knowledge than the Planning Office does as to what our water system, sanitary sewer system and electric system look like today and how they have been improved and what their plans for the future are. Mr. Hugg may want to speak directly about economic development. He has been working with that and has some significant ideas about how to approach considering economic development for the plan. Tonight, you heard about the Plan4Health items which give them an excellent starting point for ways to incorporate looking at health in all of the chapters. If you really look through that document, they really

setup a whole series of things that we can easily incorporate into our plan which just brings that issue of health to the forefront at this point.

Mr. Hugg stated that they are beginning to think through the process of how to get input from people who are subject matter experts and how do we get input from the general public who may be affected by some of these issues like transportation and access to food. And more than anything else, how do we set the proper context for what they are recommending in the plan given that in many of these areas, the world as we know it has changed a lot in ten years and it's probably going to change a lot more in the next ten years. No matter where you look, you start thinking what will be the effect of autonomous vehicles? What will be the effect of electric vehicles? We've seen retail go from mom and pop to small strip centers to huge malls to mega malls, back down to shopping centers and back down to neighborhood stores. You would not have imagined ten years ago that UPS and FedEx would be more prevalent in your neighborhood than the postal service but they are. There are all these things going on out there that they sometimes as planners tend to miss because we don't quite understand the market dynamics. In the economic development arena they are going to be doing two things that he thinks will prove to be very informative and also provide good guidance for our plan. One of the things that they recognized that the education community in Dover was not really involved in the planning process to the level that some of us thought they should be. We have five institutions of higher education in Dover so in essence, we are a college town but we don't see any evidence of the college involvement in the Downtown. We don't see those people being integrated into the community. The education institutions largely occupy their campuses and do their job but we have never really asked them what they think about the future economy of Dover. They are going to have a big heads talking conference where somebody from each of the universities is going to be asked to think about and talk about where they see the Dover regional economy changing over the next twenty years to kind of get a better sense of should they be recruiting certain kinds of industries or certain kinds of businesses. What is really driving some of what they are seeing that's happening? At the other end, they are going to be talking to the bricks and mortar people; the property owners and business owners to maybe look at some of these questions like how do you get a Green Grocer in Downtown Dover? That is a theme that they are applying across the board in each of the chapter assignments that they are working on. How would you set the context for the discussion so that you understand the thinking behind it and won't just start off by saying, we have five hundred miles of local streets and we have to do this, that and the other to improve transportation?

Evaluation of 2008 Goals and Recommendations

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that included in the packet is a chart titled Evaluation of 2008 Goals and Recommendations. This first chart looks at the goals of the Comprehensive Plan from 2008. Each of the main topic area chapters has a series of goals; typically anywhere from 3-5 goals and there is a statement that is associated with them. With this chart, Staff would like the Commission to evaluate the importance of each of those goals. They are asking the Commission to use a rating system from 1-5 with 1 being less important, 2 being somewhat important, 3 being important, 4 being more important and 5 being very important. They have also provided a location for the Commissioners to jot down any notes or comments in regard to that goal or if they think there is something missing. Certainly, any kind of notes helps Staff start to figure it out. The first set of items focuses on the chapters of Natural Resources and Environmental

Protection and Historic Preservation. There is a chapter that deals with Public Utilities and Community Infrastructure. The chapter on Community Services and Facilities is where you find City areas and some of the other City type services as well as some discussion of things that aren't owned by the City. The next chapter is Transportation followed by a chapter on Economic Development and lastly a chapter on Housing and Community Development. Staff would like the Commissioners to take a look at those goals, give them a rating of 1-5 and they are judging each goal in itself. You don't have to compare it and come up with the priority number one out of the entire list. Judge each one on its own merits and provide Staff comments.

What the Staff did not include in the packet is Chart 2. (Mr. Swierczek handed out)

Ms. Maucher questioned if these were the goals in the 2008 Plan? Responding to Ms. Maucher, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that these are the goals that are in the 2008 Plan. They are consolidated in Table 1-1 in the Plan which is the Introduction Chapter but then these goals are very specifically for Chapters 5-11. The Commissioners have everything that they need to do right on the chart. They don't have to go in search of the document itself.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the second chart that was just handed out takes the next step and that is looking at the series of recommendations for each of those chapters. Staff would like the Commission to do that evaluation of importance using the same rating scale of 1-5 and again providing some comments on each. If you look at the recommendations, they start to be a little more defined as to project activities that you might think of but somewhat still very broad. Each of these chapters has a series of goals and then under each goal is a series of recommendations. Staff has kind of split them out into two charts for the Commissioners to start evaluating. This is the Commissioners' homework assignment. The Planning Staff has its own homework assignment. They will also be getting a very similar chart which will also take a look at the action items that were in the Comprehensive Plan in support of these goals and recommendations. They will be working on a status of those action items. Are they done or complete? Did Staff not start them at all? Or are they ongoing?

Mr. Tolbert questioned when the homework assignment was due to be turned in? Responding to Mr. Tolbert, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that by the next meeting would be wonderful. If you want to be super anxious and want to get it to Staff by Friday of this week that would be fine as well. Staff would like to have them back at the next meeting because this is starting to inform our decision-making process about how this process for development of the new document will transpire.

Mr. Holden questioned if it would be possible to get the homework assignment in digital form to type responses in? Responding to Mr. Holden, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they can certainly do that as it is an Excel spreadsheet but you can still use pencil and paper. Staff will send it by email to all of the Commissioners.

Ms. Maucher questioned when Planning Staff expects to have their homework assignment done? She is very curious to see what the goals were in 2008 and have we met them or exceeded them. Responding to Ms. Maucher, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they can certainly see what Staff

has available for the Commission for the May meeting. Some of these are not quite as easy as you think to answer.

Mr. Hugg stated that Staff is on the same kind of timeframe that they are asking the Commission to be on. If you work backwards from next February, the draft plan needs to be to the State for review in the early fall. They really need to use April, May and June to come to a level of confidence and comfort with the goals, the recommendations and whatever the action items were because that will drive a lot of the rest of the discussion.

Dr. Jones stated that she agrees with Ms. Maucher because for her it would help to give some additional information so that she is responding a little bit more intelligently. Responding to Dr. Jones, Mr. Hugg stated that they will certainly share with the Commission all of the things that they are developing but he doesn't think that any of them on the Planning side want to tell the Commission what they want them to think. They really do want the Commission's input because they have a particular role in this process. They are the professional staff that is telling them how the plan should be organized and what some of the objectives are, but the Commissioners actually sit in judgment at most meetings of land use decisions and rezonings. They are more important than what Staff might think of a particular goal. Staff will share the goals with the Commission. They are not going to keep the Commission in the dark, but he doesn't want to influence anyone's thinking. The Commission is also invited to come to the Planning Office to chat with any Staff member about these topics. They certainly would appreciate the Commissioners coming in to do that and they are also welcome to come to the weekly Comprehensive Plan meetings as well. They are turning out to be held on Thursday mornings.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Summary of 2017 and 2018 Applications

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Summary of Applications was included in the packet. It includes the summary of application tallies for 2017 and 2018. This chart includes all of the applications for the Planning Commission, the Board of Adjustment, the Historic District Commission and a number of things that are reviewed administratively or otherwise given an application number for tracking processes. They finished 2017 with a total of 77 applications. That was slightly down from 83 in 2016 but it was still enough to keep them fairly busy. They were a number of large projects moving through the Site Plan review process; some of which have gone final. They have started the construction activity related to the new Residence Hall at Delaware State University. They have been through the first phase which dealt with utility relocation. They expect to issue the Building Permit for construction within the next few weeks. It is ready to go, just waiting on them to organize all of their financing with that project. She is not concerned that 77 is less than 83. You can see that for 2018 through four months of the year, we are sitting with 11 applications. Hopefully, those numbers will continue to grow and we will be extremely busy all year long.

Updates on Current Studies and Projects

- **Downtown Parking Study**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Mr. Hugg mentioned earlier the Downtown Parking Study. There was a final presentation on that that Mr. Hugg can enlighten us about.

Mr. Hugg stated that the MPO and their consultant presented their final report on Downtown parking. It's one of those situations where the science and the perception don't necessarily agree with each other. The report basically says that there is plenty of parking in Downtown Dover. Even in the busiest lot at the busiest hour we don't approach 80% utilization. The flip side of that is that the parking system that we have is convoluted, confusing and not very well organized. If you were to venture into the Bradford Street Lot you would find four different kinds of parking options depending on whether you wanted to feed a meter, wanted to try 2-hour free parking or had a parking permit. There are a lot of recommendations that deal with simply making the system itself more efficient and maybe eliminating some of the classes of parking and doing a much better job of signage. With that being said, there is also a lot of interest on the part of the City leadership where the science doesn't necessarily support the perception to do something serious about Downtown parking in the way of perhaps a parking garage or some kind of parking structure. They have initiated some discussions to get some better engineering and cost numbers to see if that really does make sense. The Parking Study essentially says, some day you may need a parking garage but probably not right now. The perception from 99 out of 100 people Downtown is that there is no place to park. The Parking Study did do what some of the people involved in the parking study process were hoping. It documented what the situation was and some of the low hanging fruit that they might be able to deal with so you will see some things happening in that area soon.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Parking Study document is available on the MPO website. Staff can make sure that the Commissioners have access to that.

- **Research Update on Potential Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she has a bullet point list of things that they are working on. There is an interest in developing a zoning classification that is specific to an airport or aeronautic related activities. Staff, along with some other interested stakeholders, have been looking at perhaps developing what would be an IPM-3 zone that would focus on those types of things given the location of the Dover Air Force Base and the Civil Air Terminal and potential options for air cargo opportunities in Dover. They have also been looking at the parking calculation yet again and looking at ways to adjust that maximum parking limitation that we have by looking at options for impervious surface coverage limitations instead of a number calculation. Then they have the laundry list of what they call the Phase 2 fixes to the Supplementary Regulations. That also includes a number of questions that have recently risen again regarding the Sign Regulations. Those are the big topic areas that Staff are doing various levels of research on and in the next six months the Commission may see more text amendments for consideration.

- **Certified Local Government (CLG) FFY2017 Grant Project and FFY2018 Grant Application**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that it was a grant that the City was a recipient of and it really focuses on working with the Historic District Commission, but it is a grant that they received in order to retain consultant services to look more carefully at the *Design Standards* for the Historic District and what it means for modern materials. They are not quite sure what is going to happen with that grant because they have not had the time to dedicate to it so that is a pending situation

at the moment. They also have information that has recently come to them about the next round of grant opportunities with the Certified Local Government Program. That application is due in mid-May. Again, it focuses on historic preservation activities, be it studies or research, not a bricks and mortar grant. Because the City of Dover is a Certified Local Government, they are eligible to apply for just under \$6,000; it is a matching grant. Staff will be working with the Historic District Commission to once again try to make application for those monies.

Updates on Program and Plan Activities

- **Downtown Development District Program**

Mr. Swierczek stated that in January 2015, Dover became one of the first municipalities in the State along with Seaford and Wilmington to have a designated Downtown Development District, specifically with the aim to incentivizing business and real estate investment. The area officially designated for the City of Dover extends as far as Cherry Street to the west, Mary Street to the north, just beyond State Street to the east and Water Street to the south. In total, it's about 225 acres which is the maximum that the State would allow for this program. The main program is managed by the Delaware State Housing Authority which grants rebates for both small and large project investments. With the City of Dover, particularly the Planning Office, they complement that by managing programs to waiver permit and impact fee waivers as well as business license fee waivers. The Planning Office evaluates applications for those particular incentives. Over the course of FY17, the City authorized \$12,945 in permit fee waivers for 24 properties in the Downtown Development District and this included 11 new homes. This includes the 6 new duplex houses which were completed at the corner of Kirkwood Street and Reed Street which is the largest residential project in the Downtown Development District. There are also new homes on West Street, Queen Street and North New Street. In FY17, the City also waived business license fees in the amount of \$1,254.50. As mentioned, the Delaware State Housing Authority receives from the State, a certain level of funding which the State decides for two types of rebates, for small and large investments. A small project investment is considered an investment below \$250,000 and a large project investment is anything that is over \$250,000. To date, the State Housing Authority has authorized over \$353,000 in small project rebates for Dover's Downtown Development District and over \$153,000 for large project investments. For 2018, there is an ongoing application process for the small project rebates; however, the large project rebates have an application deadline for May 21, 2018. For moving forward into 2018, the Planning Office has dedicated him to manage and coordinate the incentive program. One of the main issues that they have identified over the last 2 years that they are seeking to address moving forward is improving outreach to inform any potential investors of incentive opportunities. Obviously, if you can reach them before they actually decide to invest you might encourage them more.

Mr. Hugg stated that the Downtown Dover Partnership is aggressively in the process of trying to recruit a new Executive Director and they are hoping to have some interviews before the end of the month. They are also engaged in some strategic planning initiatives and looking for some additional incentives. They have rewritten their Façade Grant Program and are doing some work on their Architectural Design Incentive Program. In case you missed it in the newspaper last week, the announced in Dover the initiation of the *Unlock the Block Program* which is a statewide program for which the City is the pilot working with the Office of Small Business Development and Tourism (the old DEDO) to provide technical assistance and some marketing

assistance to both property owners and potential entrepreneurs in the Downtown. There are a number of things going on as well as the DDD Incentives that are part of that program.

Mr. Holt questioned how they are making out on the absentee ownership of some many of these properties Downtown? People have inherited these properties and don't live in the area anymore and that is one of the big problems. Have they been receptive to some of the incentives to get these properties revitalized a little bit? Responding to Mr. Holt, Mr. Hugg stated that it is a continuing problem. He will say that one of the absentee owners that the City has had a long effort of trying to work with did apply for the *Unlock the Block* Incentive which is kind of a competitive thing. He thought that it was very encouraging that that person came forward after ten years of a vacant building that pretty much sat there. The good news is that probably half of the vacant buildings that were in place on Loockerman Street a year ago have now been occupied. They are seeing the number of vacant properties is starting to shrink in the first and second blocks of Loockerman Street. People are starting to pick them up and use them for a variety of business purposes. The four properties that are involved in the *Unlock the Block Program* include The Loockerman Exchange, the Simon's complex, a property at the intersection of Governors Avenue and Loockerman Street and then one of the vacant units on the first floor of the Bayard Building. We are starting to see some very progressive things happening Downtown. The concern is to try to get properties that are in the first block north and south of Loockerman Street on Governors Avenue and State Street to get people vested and interested in them.

Mr. Holt questioned if they have been able to bring some of those property owners in on the committee? They might actually have suggestions on how to get other owners more interested.

- **Restoring Central Dover Community Plan**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is an ongoing initiative. There are a number of committees as part of that implementation that both Mr. Hugg and now Mr. Swierczek are involved in as well as Mrs. Harvey that focus on specific topic areas. They focus on issues like safety, housing, green infrastructure and community outreach items. As they mentioned earlier, the Open Streets Event is somewhat linked to that Restoring Central Dover Initiative where they are helping to support NCALL. Staff is helping support that initiative as well to really bring a number of different programs and incentives and implementation projects to the Downtown area here in Dover.

Open Discussion for Planning Commissioner Comments

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she does have another item that is not on the agenda and it's kind of a heads up. Some of the recent actions by City Council in the last few months have now mandated an Ethics Training component for Staff and for all members of the various boards and commissions. Today we got a preliminary announcement of what will be the Ethics Training dates. Some of them are during the day times and there are some early evening times but it will be something that the Commissioners will need to participate in. Staff will provide more detailed information as they get it. It's a couple hours course that the Commissioners would have to participate in. The preliminary dates that they received from the City Clerk's Office are May 23, 2018 at 5:00PM, May 24, 2018 at 9:30AM, June 5, 2018 at 9:30AM, June 6, 2018 at 5:00PM and June 7, 2018 at 9:00AM. They will work to get some more details so that the Commissioners

can select a time that is most appropriate for them. It is our understanding that they will be able to pick the specific date. Keep an eye out on your emails for that. The City of Dover as part of its *Dover Code of Ordinances* has a whole section on Ethics.

Mr. Tolbert stated that two small businesses recently left the Dover Mall but neither one of them came into Downtown Dover for their new locations. One was the Jeweler's Loupe and one was the shoe repair shop. He doesn't know why they left the Dover Mall but he can guess that maybe the rent is too high for the businesses but they didn't come to Downtown Dover. The shoemaker is now located in the shopping center near TGI Fridays and the Jeweler's Loupe went to the Dover Towne Center shopping center. He doesn't know if more businesses are going to leave the mall or not but is there something wrong with the Mall? Maybe we can get some of these businesses interested in coming to Downtown.

Mr. Holt stated that he heard that the hours of the Mall required that they be there were too restrictive.

Mr. Tolbert stated that he heard that as well. One of the merchants told him that they had to keep the place open seven days a week and he was getting tired of working. Also, the rent is high. His point is, is there something that we can do to attract them to come to Downtown Dover to help commercialize that area more? Responding to Mr. Tolbert, Mr. Hugg stated that he thinks that the good news is that they didn't leave Dover. He heard the same things about the number of hours that their business had to be open. On the flip side, Pandora and another merchant have signed leases for the Mall so that is kind of a normal turnover. In terms of Downtown, he thinks that they still have a ways to go to overcome some of the perceptions that people have. He thinks that either one of those businesses would have been an ideal Downtown candidate. We all remember the shoemaker that was on Governors Avenue for decades where Blu Vintage is located now. The good news is that they didn't leave Dover. For the record, the Dover Mall is going through a re-assessment of their competitiveness and what it's going to take to continue to make them a competitive facility. It's no secret that two of their anchors are in financial trouble and we may very well see one of them go out of business before the end of this year which would be a real shame for everybody. There is an economic study that was done probably within the last year identified potential tenants for a commercial complex in the Dover area. Interestingly, about half of them have already come to Dover. Five Below, Kirkland's and Home Goods were originally targeted for a mall setting. That is something that we are keeping an eye one. It's a concern across the country that traditional malls are suffering and in many cases closing. The loss of anchor or two at the Dover Mall could be very significant.

Mr. Holden stated that he was curious if there were any updates that are available relative to the work to get the individual access off of Route 1 to the Mall? Responding to Mr. Holden, Mr. Hugg stated that was kind of what he was referring to in terms of the economic study that was done a while ago. That project seems to have lost a little bit of its momentum; he thinks in part because some of the potential clients actually jumped the gun and came to Dover. There is still active work being done by private investors to figure out what level of tolls or other subsidies through business improvement district taxes or some other kind of thing might be needed to make that viable.

Dr. Jones questioned if anything was going on with the Schwartz Center that is positive? Responding to Dr. Jones, Mr. Hugg stated no.

Mr. Roach stated that he has heard rumors of the hospital buying Spence's Bazaar and supposedly building a parking garage. He doesn't know if it's true or just people talking. Responding to Mr. Roach, Mr. Hugg stated he was unsure.

Ms. Maucher questioned if the transfer of the old library to Wesley ever occurred and also if the land transfer to Delaware State for the convocation center ever occurred? Responding to Ms. Maucher, Mr. Hugg stated that the Wesley transaction has occurred. He does not know what is going on with the convocation center. As Mrs. Melson-Williams indicated, there is an active dormitory construction project going on at Delaware State right now. In the early competition for that project, one of the people submitting a proposal talked about a convocation center as part of a project that would have linked the Sheraton Hotel and the north end of campus. His best guess is that Delaware State University has its hands full with trying to build a 620 bed student facility and that the convocation center is probably down the road a ways.

Mr. Holt stated that he wanted to touch on the homeless situation in Dover. It doesn't seem to be getting any better and they seem to be around the library. He knows that they have been working on doing something to try finding a place for them to go to. Responding to Mr. Holt, Mr. Hugg stated that is one of those stay tuned topics. The task force is actually making pretty good progress given the complexities of that issue. The development working group has actually implemented a couple of actions that will at least help in the short term. One is through working with the Interfaith facility. They have acquired 50-60 lockers from the YMCA as part of their remodeling project. They are being put together and will be located around that facility under shelter so that people who are homeless will have the ability to actually have a place to lock up their possessions. It doesn't sound like it's too important but many of the homeless people actually have jobs, but their problem is that they have to take everything that they own with them because they can't leave it with fear that someone will take it. That project is well underway and we should have some things happening as soon as the weather improves a little bit. The other thing is that there is now a draft for a Central Delaware Housing Coalition. It's a new non-profit housing entity, part of whose job will be to particularly address the affordable housing issue. A lot of the homeless that they have talked to say they can't afford \$700-\$800 a month for housing. Their housing limitation is a few \$100. Perhaps they could get into facilities where they could share spaces and perhaps get the benefit of some services. He thinks that we are going to see an announcement on that fairly soon. There is a new services map but he is not sure if it has been put online yet. The idea is to identify and put on a map all of the services that are available to people who are homeless. It seems to be a missing piece so that is making progress as well. He thinks that they will be pleased with some of the initiatives. They are also working with the Police Department on some quality of life issues. In May or June you may see some initiatives to further improve the general quality of life in Downtown Dover particularly through a variety of mechanisms.

Mr. Holt stated that some of the homeless people that he has run into aren't actually from this area; they have been coming here from other states. Why are they targeting Dover? Responding to Mr. Holt, Mr. Hugg stated that it is a very tough group to get a handle on. There is a core

group of people who are truly homeless. There is a group of people who are in various kinds of accommodations whether that be a tent, those who are actually employed in the area and then there is a large group that tends to be very mobile and right now they are in Milford. He is being told that a lot of the groups that we saw here 6 months ago are now popping up in Milford. It really is a network of where are the best services and they actually migrate based on where there are quality services and people available to help them. It's a tough universe of people to get a handle on. The one thing that they do know is that there are about 200-250 people in the immediate Dover area who are in some level of homelessness which could be a lack of affordable housing who are otherwise employed and engaged. Their problem is not their behavior or what they are doing; it's the fact that they just don't have shelter.

Ms. Edwards stated that she is very sensitive to the situations of the homeless that we have in the Dover area but it's concerning to her at the gateway of the City when homeless people are standing at the intersections and collecting donations. She thinks particularly at the gateway of the City when they are trying to encourage people to come into the Dover area that there is some level of concern that that's what they are being greeted with. Is there anything that we can do as a City to try to negate that? Responding to Ms. Edwards, Mr. Hugg stated that he wishes that he had that answer. He knows that enforcement is one part of it and providing housing and services is a part of it. It's the condition of the physical environment itself. There are two or three gateway plans that have never really been implemented so the gateways are particularly attractive to begin with so it doesn't take much to make them look really unattractive. They are not populated by people on a regular basis who are shopping or whatever so it kind of becomes the dead zone. He knows that the task force has been working very hard on trying to figure out how to deal with a variety of those issues.

Ms. Edwards stated that it is a very challenging situation but it is concerning.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Sincerely,

**Kristen Mullaney
Secretary**