

COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Council Committee of the Whole met on March 24, 2026, at 6:05 p.m. with Council President Neil presiding. Members of Council present were Mr. Anderson (arrived at 6:08 p.m.), Ms. Arndt, Mr. Boggerty, Ms. Hall (arrived at 6:11 p.m.), Dr. Pillsbury, and Dr. Sudler. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Rocha were absent. Mayor Christiansen was also absent. Civilian members present for their Committee meetings were Dr. Jackson, Ms. Smack (via WebEx) (*Safety, Advisory, and Transportation*), Mr. Shevock (via WebEx), and Mr. Garfinkel (*Legislative, Finance, and Administration*).

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ms. Arndt moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

SAFETY, ADVISORY, AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Safety, Advisory, and Transportation Committee met with Chairman Boggerty presiding.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Arndt moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

East Loockerman Street Update (Jason Lyon, Director of Water & Wastewater)

Mr. Jason Lyon, Director of Water & Wastewater, reviewed the background and analysis regarding the East Loockerman Street update.

This item was informational; committee action was not required.

Mr. Neil stated that there are these types of issues throughout the city, and he thinks that speed cameras should be revisited in the high-speed areas. He further stated that bringing back an Alderman's Court will help get these issues under control much faster.

Mrs. Arndt stated that she agreed with Mr. Lyon that the entire neighborhood should be notified of any closure, not just the residents on East Loockerman Street. Mrs. Arndt agreed with Mr. Neil that closing a road due to speeding sets a dangerous precedent that would be unsustainable throughout the city, and council would need to be prepared for all the additional requests. Mrs. Arndt then suggested potential signage indicating that through traffic is not welcome and speed-limit reminders. She reminded council that the numbers from the study done were not indicative of needing aggressive measures and stated she supports doing this on a temporary basis, but reminded council to be prepared to receive complaints from residents.

Responding to Dr. Sudler's question regarding speed cushions, Mr. Lyon explained that speed cushions are permitted on private property but are prohibited on city streets. Mr. Lyon further stated that the ordinance regarding speed humps was adopted in 2016.

Responding to Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Lyon explained that school buses would have to take an alternative route and would experience similar delays to emergency vehicles.

Mr. Boggerty echoed the concerns of Mrs. Arndt regarding opening Pandora's box once council grants a request to close a road due to speeding, it will lead to many more requests being made throughout the city. He further stated that a delay of a few minutes could turn into greater delays overall.

Responding to the inquiries about speed cameras, Mr. Lyon explained that a speed camera is rented at a certain price, and then a cost-benefit analysis would need to be done to see if the city is going to generate enough revenue to offset the cost. He further explained that the speed cameras are under contract with the State of Delaware, and DelDOT would have to approve a study, and due to the numbers on this particular street, it would not be approved. Mr. Lyon stated that there was not enough speeding on East Loockerman Street to justify the state approving the speeding over 11 miles an hour in the 85th percentile.

Mr. Lyon explained he understands the safety aspect of this initiative and that it could be done, but the numbers would need to be really scrutinized because if not, the city would be losing money, and that wouldn't be financially prudent. Mr. Lyon then offered to reach out to the City of Newark to discuss how it is going there financially and report back to council.

Mr. Lyon stated that the reason this item is back before the committee is due to the motion made in December to close a portion of East Loockerman temporarily to do studies. He further explained that it does not mean it is being closed forever. He explained that during the closure, it will be studied to see if alternative traffic calming ideas may be of benefit to the area and come up with potential solutions. They received an estimate of \$20,000 to have an engineer do some evaluations on the road, both geometrically and with signage. The funding is not in the current budget, so he suggested reaching out to legislators for potential CTF funding or a potential DelDOT grant.

Responding to Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Lyon stated he was not sure of the specific costs of placing a 25-mile-an-hour speed limit sign and a child at play sign. He suggested the cost would probably be in the \$200 range, but he would also need to poll the residents in the area.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that the analysis is called a Traffic Calming Analysis, and it utilizes the DelDOT Traffic Calming Manual as well as a federal manual that would be utilized by the firm. Mr. Lyon further explained that it considers crash data and speed count data that they have collected from the police department. The information has already been provided to them to process, so the analysis would be about what sort of geometric features could be done on a very narrow road of 21 feet, curb to curb. Mr. Lyon stated that due to this information, it would be very difficult to place a chicane or a roundabout; however, the firm would look at different striping or signage that could be done.

Mr. Lyon stated that staff recommends striping the road with a double yellow line and a white shoulder to give a visual to keep in the lane, as there really should not be parking on this road, as it is not wide enough. He explained that the horizontal white lines are used as a visual deterrent

to keep drivers from speeding. He further explained that these are all things the firm is going to evaluate and provide the city with feedback and recommendations.

Mr. Lyon responded to the suggestion of speed signs that have blinking lights. He explained that those signs are radar signs that are solar powered, and the cost is approximately \$10,000-\$12,000 each.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that the city has utilized a temporary speed sign mobile unit in the proposed area, but it does not capture data to know how effective it is in calming traffic. Mr. Lyon further explained that there are more expensive devices that require an internet data connection.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that he was unsure of the definite date of the previously captured data from this area, and he would get that information to council.

Dr. Pillsbury moved to recommend placing a speed limit sign at the entrance of the development and Caution Children at Play, as soon as possible. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

Mr. Anderson moved to amend the motion to include a Strictly Enforced sign. Dr. Pillsbury accepted the amendment.

Mr. William Faust, 136 Orchard Avenue, Dover, had two suggestions for combating speeding. He suggested placing a patrol car with tinted windows and a dummy in the seat in the area of the speeding. His second suggestion was to have police officers on motorcycles with radar guns in the areas affected by speeding. He also suggested using license plate readers to capture the speeders.

Bonnie Pennington, 200 North Kirkwood Street, Dover, stated that she has been trying to get assistance for the speeding on Kirkwood Street since 2005. She explained that they have no signs, and it is not just the public that speeds. Ms. Pennington stated that it is police officers, buses, and other vehicles. She watches vehicles run stop signs, and she worries about the children in the area. She further stated that the speeding issues are not just in one development. She stated she had begged for a police officer to come and sit at the corner and catch the speeders, but never received a response. She further complained that she sees officers sitting in their vehicles, eating lunch or talking to other officers

Speeding Concerns Update – Lincoln Park (Jason Lyon, Director of Water & Wastewater)

Mr. Jason Lyon, Director of Water and Wastewater, presented the committee with an update on the speeding concerns surrounding Lincoln Park.

This item was informational; committee action was not required.

Responding to Mrs. Arndt, Mr. Lyon stated that the firm being used is RK & K, and the cost is \$48,000. He explained that he would get back to council with the timeline.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that the study being done in Lincoln Park is the same type of study as just discussed for East Loockerman, a traffic calming analysis. He further explained that ADA improvements to sidewalks and curbing are done in conjunction with paving, and that is why some streets in Lincoln Park have not been completed.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lyon explained that one of the areas to look at traffic calming issues is Slaughter Street and that he would like to take a holistic approach to the process, making sure it is not paved if they are going to place a chicane at some point. He further explained that these items will be provided to the firm as part of the analysis.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that there are no sidewalks on either side of Slaughter Street and that putting a sidewalk on a street without original sidewalks will need design work that will need to be figured out throughout the process.

Dr. Sudler suggested, while speaking about the area of Lincoln Park, that there is continued dumping in that area, and he wanted to request a camera to be placed in that location.

Mr. Boggerty moved for adjournment of the Safety Advisory and Transportation Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee met with Chairman Anderson presiding.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Shevock moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

Evaluation of Bids – Water Street Flooding Improvements (Jason Lyon, Director of Water & Wastewater)

Mr. Jason Lyon, Director of Water & Wastewater, reviewed the background and analysis regarding the Evaluation of Proposal for the Water Street flooding improvements.

Staff recommended awarding the contract to A-Del Construction for the Water Street Flooding Improvements project, Bid #26-0013WW, for the amount of \$531,916.

Responding to Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Lyon explained that the project was bid in accordance with the city procurement policy, reaching out to contractors that are recognized in the Supplier Office of Diversity through the state of Delaware. A non-mandatory pre-bid meeting was held to review the project details, and all bids have been evaluated based on minority ownership. There is also a preference for local vendors. Mr. Lyon further explained that all the information is included in the committee action form.

Responding to Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Lyon confirmed that individuals showed up to the nonmandatory pre-bid meeting, it was announced, and individuals could have attended, and smaller contractors could have contacted A-Del Construction during the process.

Responding to Mrs. Arndt, Mr. Lyon explained that they are in negotiations with the state currently to discuss who is going to be financially responsible for finishing the paving project after the road infrastructure improvements are completed. Mr. Lyon agreed that he believes the state should be responsible, as they have already scheduled to complete road improvements.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Lyon explained that he is not aware of the county participating in cost-sharing as it relates to infrastructure or road improvements. He further explained that there have been coordinated efforts regarding wastewater projects because the county accepts and treats the city's sewage. Mr. Lyon agreed to look into the county as a potential funding source.

Dr. Sudler moved to recommend accepting the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shevock and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (Lewis, Rocha absent).

Proposed Ordinance #2026-03 – Amending Chapter 22 – Buildings and Building Regulations, Article XI – Dangerous Buildings (Eddie Kopp, Chief Code Enforcement Office)

Mr. Eddie Kopp, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, reviewed the background and analysis regarding Proposed Ordinance #2026-03.

Staff recommended forwarding the Proposed Ordinance #2026-03 to council for approval.

Ms. Arndt moved to recommend accepting the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Sudler and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance #2026-04 – Amending Chapter 22 – Buildings and Building Regulations, Article XII – Vacant Buildings (Eddie Kopp, Chief Code Enforcement Office)

Mr. Eddie Kopp, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, reviewed the background and analysis regarding Proposed Ordinance #2026-04.

Staff recommended forwarding the Proposed Ordinance #2026-04 to council for approval.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Mr. Kopp explained that a lot of properties, particularly those located downtown, have apartments above vacant storefronts, and although it is one building, this situation has two separate issues. Mr. Kopp gave the example of Loockerman Street, where there are buildings with broken windows, trash, and debris all around the first floor of the building; however, the apartments on the higher floors are rented. Mr. Kopp further explained that the public views that building as vacant due to the unsightliness of the first floor, and wonders why they are being cited but not the residential buildings downtown. Mr. Kopp explained there are a number of businesses on Loockerman Street that are sitting empty, and while he understands that it's a difficult situation, he feels it's an injustice to allow it to continue and believes holding the same standards throughout is about being fair.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Mr. Kopp stated that he is willing to modify the language of the ordinance so that it does not cause legal issues when the upper part of the building is occupied, but the storefront or street level portion of the building is unoccupied. He stated that he could edit the

language and use words such as unit or space to have a clear distinction within the definition, and this would help clarify this concern.

After further discussion regarding the potential legal issues with the amendments, Mr. Neil requested that the item be postponed for legal review and asked that it be returned to council as quickly as possible.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kopp explained that what is being discussed would be clarifying the exemption, so it would be an exemption from the vacant building registration fee.

Mrs. Arndt stated that she wanted to express support for the ordinance, and she also responded to Mr. Neil's concern, explaining that other municipalities are passing similar ordinances and gave the example of the Town of Smyrna. She further suggested that the specific language that Smyrna has included in its ordinance would possibly be more impactful than what is in the proposed amendments.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kopp stated that he has not received any feedback from the Downtown Dover Partnership or any downtown merchants.

Mr. Anderson suggested that while amending the ordinance, possibly addressing the difference between vacant buildings and temporarily unoccupied buildings. He further explained that some residents still maintain their properties while being away for a few months of the year, and this is a matter that has been raised during Code Board of Appeals meetings.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kopp stated that he agreed. Mr. Kopp further stated that it would be best if it were placed under exemptions and could be a permanent exemption. He explained that it would be good to document and track the buildings that may be unoccupied for six months; however, not notifying the public, but for city records in the event of any type of emergency. Mr. Kopp stated that it would be an easy amendment in the same section.

Responding to Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Kopp explained that a brownfield is an exemption in the vacant building ordinance.

Responding to Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Kopp stated that all ordinances and amendments receive legal review.

Mr. Neil moved to recommend having the proposed ordinance brought back at the next committee meeting with the two amendments requested. The motion was seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

Bonnie Pennington, Dover, spoke, explaining that she lives on Kirkwood Street and Cecil Street is on the side of her home. She expressed concern regarding crime in her area and requested that a camera be placed on a telephone pole on Cecil Street. She explained that there is already a camera that exists on Kirkwood Street.

Mr. Anderson responded to Ms. Pennington that the camera network is at capacity, and they will need to put additional funding into the budget to install more cameras throughout the remaining areas of the city.

Dr. Sudler suggested possibly relocating an existing camera from an area with low criminal activity to the address where the criminal activity is, as Ms. Pennington suggested.

William Faust, Dover, explained a situation where someone robbed a store and was released on unsecured bail, and commended the Dover Police Department.

Mr. Garfinkel moved to request that Dover Police conduct an evaluation of the efficacy of the camera system and report their findings back to the Safety, Advisory, and Transportation Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neil and unanimously carried.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Neil moved for adjournment of the Council Committee of the Whole meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Fred A. Neil
Council President