

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY OF SEAFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL

June 14, 2011

7:00 PM

Mayor Edward H. Butler, Jr., called the Regular Meeting to order with the following present: Councilwoman Grace S. Peterson, Councilwoman Pat A. Jones, Councilwoman Leann Phillips-Lowe and Councilman William G. Bennett. Dolores J. Slatcher, City Manager, Charles Anderson, Assistant City Manager, Trisha Newcomer, ED/IT Director, and Sharon Drugash, PR/RE Manager, were also present.

Councilwoman Jones offered the opening prayer and Mayor Butler led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Butler solicited changes to the agenda. City Manager Slatcher stated that New Business # 4 was to be removed from the agenda. She also said that the Sussex County Prayer Breakfast was to be removed from the Reminder of Meetings, as it had already occurred. Mayor Butler called for a motion to approve the changes to the agenda. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve the changes to the agenda. Councilman Bennett seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Butler called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 24, 2011. Councilwoman Jones made the motion to approve the minutes of May 24, 2011. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Butler asked if there was any correspondence. City Manager Slatcher stated that there was none.

With Dave Hickey not yet present, City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 2, present information for Seaford to participate in the DEDO Downtown Delaware Commercial District Affiliate Program. Trisha Newcomer came forward to present the request. She explained that the program is a scaled down version of the Main Street program, designed for downtown districts that provide retail and professional services. The program would provide training for members of a revitalization committee. Mrs. Newcomer said that Karen Owens, Joe Owens and John Blevins were present on behalf of the Seaford Enhancement Team, who wishes to pursue this affiliation. She said that this opportunity would be a stepping stone, so the members of SET could decide if they want to obtain a 501(c)(3) and pursue an affiliation with the Main Street program.

Mayor Butler asked how many members the Seaford Enhancement Team has. Mrs. Newcomer said that 35 people signed up in November, but that the monthly meetings average 10-15 people in attendance. She said that the group's first event was the Heritage Festival at the Ross Mansion.

Mayor Butler called for a motion. Councilman Bennett made the motion to approve the resolution to participate in the DEDO Downtown Delaware Commercial District Affiliate Program as

presented, with a copy attached to these minutes. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Dave Hickey, DEL/VAL PTA, came forward to present New Business # 1, recommendations for real estate tax appeals presented on May 24, 2011.

In the matter of Betty Johnson, 313 N. Porter St., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. The property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed value of Betty Johnson, 313 N. Porter St., PID 1219. Councilwoman Jones seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Jeffrey K. Taylor Jr., 109 Belle Ayre Dr., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. The property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Peterson made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed value of Jeffrey K. Taylor Jr., 109 Belle Ayre Dr., PID 6765. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Brenda Ann Briggs, 803 Hurley Park Dr., Mr. Hickey recommended that the improvement value be changed from \$111,100 to \$108,600, as a deck has been removed from the residence. He recommended that no additional changes be made, as the property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties. He noted that the property has a larger lot than others in the area, which is reflected in a higher land value.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilman Bennett made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to change the improvement value from \$111,100 to \$108,600 in the assessed value of Brenda Ann Briggs, 803 Hurley Park Dr., PID 3234. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Timothy P. Ramia, 802 Hurley Park Dr., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. The property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed value of Timothy P. Ramia, 802 Hurley Park Dr., PID 3242. Councilman Bennett seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Bryant L. and Carol Richardson, 215 Elm Dr., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. The property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties. He added that according to GIS maps, the dwelling is located on its own lot and the adjoining lot is saleable. He said that a complete survey of the properties would need to be conducted in order to prove otherwise.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Peterson made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed values of Bryant L. and Carol Richardson, 215 Elm Dr., PID 2525, and adjoining lot, Elm Dr., PID 6129. Councilman Bennett seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Joseph P. and Vicki Reinsfelder, 502 Linden Ave., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. The property value was found to be in line with comparable sales, as well as surrounding properties.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilman Bennett made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed value of Joseph P. and Vicki Reinsfelder, 502 Linden Ave., PID 2709. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of George H. Farnell, 500 Stein Hwy., Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. He stated that the structure is a former church which was converted into an office, having 2,016 square feet of office space on the first floor, 1,296 square feet of office space on the second floor, and 720 square feet of unheated storage space on the second floor. He said that an income capitalization analysis was used as the basis for assessment, and that the analysis supports the current assessment.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no changes in the assessed value of George H. Farnell, 500 Stein Hwy., PID 516. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Teton Sales, Inc., 107 Park Ave., PID 6167, Mr. Hickey stated that the appellant submitted an appraisal of the property, which led to the discovery of a clerical error that was made in the assessment of the property by DEL/VAL, Inc. The structure has 2,632 square feet of office

space, which should be valued at \$100 per square foot, and 37,368 square feet of manufacturing/warehouse space, which should be valued at \$35 per square foot. These values were reversed in the original assessment, resulting in an incorrect value of \$3,928,600. Mr. Hickey also stated that the quality rating of the structure had been overstated in comparison to similar structures in the area. The corrected values of \$85 per square foot of office space and \$30 per square foot of manufacturing/warehouse space were used to come up with a reduced value of \$1,518,900.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. Councilwoman Jones asked how long the property has been billed at the incorrect value. Mr. Hickey said that the value has been incorrect since the January 2008 assessment. Councilwoman Jones asked if Teton Sales, Inc. would be reimbursed for the taxes they had paid. City Manager Slatcher said that the assessed value has only been corrected back to the date of appeal; therefore they would not be eligible for a retroactive reimbursement.

Mayor Butler called for a motion. Councilman Bennett made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to correct the error made in the 2008 assessed value to \$1,518,900 down from the 2008 assessed value of \$3,928,600 because of the error in coding the valuations incorrectly on their two buildings. Councilwoman Jones seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

In the matter of Teton Sales, Inc., 107 Park Ave., PID 6168, Mr. Hickey recommended no change be made. He stated that this is a vacant lot adjacent to the Teton Sales facility, consisting of 2.518 acres. He said that the property was valued at \$50,000 per acre, which is consistent with other industrial sites.

Mayor Butler asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve the recommendation of DEL/VAL, Inc. to make no change in the assessed value of Teton Sales, Inc., 107 Park Ave., PID 6168. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 3, present Smoke Free signs to be placed in parks as information. She had one of the completed signs, which were obtained through a grant, to show Mayor and Council. She said that the signs would be going up soon, as the baseball and softball seasons are already in progress, and that publicity will be scheduled for a later date.

New Business # 4 – Removed from agenda.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 5, present for discussion a proposed funding for City-wide Residential Water Meter Installation through the Delaware Water State Revolving Fund. She explained that the City is eligible for a loan in the amount of \$1,903,812 through the DWSRF, with a 1% interest rate, 35% principal forgiveness, and 1% origination fee waived. She said that Seaford is one of the few communities in the state that has not already installed City-wide water

meters, and that without doing so in the future, the City would probably not be eligible for state revolving funds. Councilman Bennett said that installing water meters City-wide is something that needs to be done. Councilwoman Peterson agreed. City Manager Slatcher said that the DWSRF loan is a good offer and that the City should take advantage of it.

Mayor Butler called for a motion. Councilman Bennett made the motion to proceed with the application process for proposed funding for City-wide Residential Water Meter Installation through the Delaware Water State Revolving Fund. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Butler stated that the Sussex County Prayer Breakfast, which was attended that morning, was very nice. He commended the Delaware Teen Challenge on their program and the work they do in the community.

### Reminder of Meetings

- Chamber of Commerce Rise & Shine Breakfast – June 17, 2011

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Peterson reported that the Wastewater Treatment Facility received a letter from DNREC commending them for having no deficiencies in a recent inspection. She said that the Public Works Department has been busy with road work and the Code Department has been busy with routine work and inspections. She reported that the Recreation Department will be hosting a Movie Night in Kiwanis Park on June 18<sup>th</sup>. The movie being shown is Despicable Me, and will begin at dusk. She reminded everyone that Riverfest is coming up and urged them to volunteer. She said that visors, t-shirts and Duck Dash tickets are for sale at City Hall. She said that the Blades Bridge will be closing for a period of time over the summer for renovations. She said that the Seaford Enhancement Team will be organizing a Community Yard Sale to be held the last Saturday of each month in City Hall parking lot, with spots available for \$10 each. She added that the High Street paving is finished and looks great.

Councilwoman Jones reported that the Seaford Community Swim Center is open and has 343 members to date. She said that Hooper's Landing has been doing well, and that the bathrooms are almost done. She added that work is progressing on the Nanticoke Senior Center.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe reported that the Budget for fiscal year 2012 will be presented at the Council Meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Bennett reported that the Electric Department removed a tree beside the Stein Highway Bridge that has been problematic for years. He said that the Fire Department has

responded to a number of field fires in the area due to farmers plowing their fields in the dry conditions. He also said that they have responded to 4 water rescues.

City Manager Slatcher thanked the Electric, Parks and Public Works Departments for their hard work at Hooper's Landing, Seaford Community Swim Center and Nanticoke Senior Center, in preparing these venues for their openings.

With no further comments, Mayor Butler called for a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting of Mayor and Council. Councilwoman Jones so moved. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion and the motion so carried with all present voting in favor. Mayor Butler closed the Regular Meeting at 7:41 p.m.

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Dolores Slatcher, City Manager

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attachment