

"A Historic Past"



"A Bright Future"

CITY OF DELAWARE CITY

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**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF DELAWARE CITY
Monday, August 5, 2019 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chamber
407 Clinton Street**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Snow called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners Snow, Smith, Renoll, Wilkinson, Starrett, Dilliplane, and Saunders were present. Also attending was Acting City Manager Baylor.

ACTION UPON THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion to accept the minutes of the July 1, 2019 meeting was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and seconded by Commissioner Dilliplane. All members were in favor and the minutes were accepted as written.

100 & 108 N. REEDY POINT ROAD - FT. DUPONT REDEVELOPMENT & PRESERVATION CORP/ BLUEWATER HOSPITALITY-REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW OF APPROX. 135 ACRES INTO THE FORT DUPONT CAMPGROUND

The Bluewater Group gave their presentation on the R.V Resort. They gave an overview of Bluewater and what their company does. Bluewater is a 20 year old family run company that has Hotels, Campgrounds and Amusements that run from Maine to North Carolina.

They gave the Commission some statistics on camping, 79 million households go camping and 51% of campers are millennials. Delaware City is roughly 3 1/2 hours from 1/3 of the U.S population.

All of the Bluewater Properties have some type of water feature and they take that very seriously. They take the surrounding nature very seriously and try to use it in the development of their properties.

They have 24/7 security though out the camp ground. Check in during their busiest hours and on holidays is planned out and done in a manner that it doesn't cause any traffic hold ups or issues for areas surrounding the campground.

They have 419 spaces proposed on their plan, 343 are R.V sites, 52 are pull through sites and 24 are pure park model sites, which is an R.V that is built to look like a cabin.

The amenities will include Pools, Splash Pad, Kayak/Canoe Launch, Convenience Store and Marketplace, Horseshoes, Volleyball Courts, Pavilion and Picnic area.

The economic impact they are expecting will include 9-15 Full Time jobs with 50-75 Full/Part time Seasonal jobs. Campgrounds run April 1 to October for a total of 180 days. Projected Annual Salary is projected to be between \$800,000.00 and \$1,500,000. The projected Annual Tax Revenue is \$34,570.00 with a 3% Occupancy Tax which would add another \$150,000.00 at stabilization; stabilization will happen between 3 to 4 years.

They will be hiring from the community and partnering with the community, the Bluewater way is to become a community partner.

They went through a slide show of images showing the bright and cheery colors that take over the Welcome Center, Tent Sites, Camp Sites, Safari Tents and Bath Houses that are high end with a happy meter that is connected to the company owners cell phone and notifies them with the push of a button and ended with images of the pools and splash pads from existing camp grounds.

It is truly a fun and happy family atmosphere where people can create memories. Bluewater Company is geared towards giving very special and unique opportunities for family's to spend time together.

Tim H. the Engineer went over the plans and diagrams for the Campground, showing the Commission the layout of the area with the Campground in place. He stated any areas in the Flood Zone will be elevated to bring them out of the Flood Zone. He also said they are going to try to minimize the tree impact areas; they want to keep as many of the trees as possible. They went to a PLUS meeting and said there were not many issues at that meeting. Next they have to meet with DelDot and New Castle County for the sanitary sewage, Artesian Water, Delaware City Fire Company and the State Fire Marshall. They are looking to move forward with this plan tonight so they can move forward with engineering and going to these other agencies.

- Commissioner Snow asked if the area of the Campground that runs along the Canal will be fenced in and the Engineer said absolutely.
- Commissioner Starrett asked if they have ever built in an area that is infested with Mosquitos and how do they manage that. They said they build along water ways all the time, so once they evaluate the situation they will use the most environmentally sensitive insect control but they have to see the true impact first.
- Commissioner Saunders asked when they build in areas that are primarily undeveloped, how do you handle the existing wildlife that might migrate to other areas in the town. He feels we have issues with wildlife coming into Residential areas already. They said they don't have a wildlife control plan but there is a migration away when they are in the area but when they are not there in the winter the animals tend to migrate back.
- Commissioner Wilkinson asked what the policy for an open camp fire is. They have fire pits that are controlled burns, all fires must stay within the fire pit and they have 24/7 security watching for daily safety, emergency, and maintenance and management. They are also meeting with the Fire Marshall about the fire pits as well.
- Commissioner Wilkinson asked if they have Propane filling stations, he said they will probably have some sold in store but they won't have filling stations.
- Commissioner Wilkinson asked if they think they will have many seasonal rentals. They said generally they have 35% seasonal rentals. He thinks we will have a lot here; people will want to escape from Philadelphia and Wilmington here.
- Commissioner Saunders asked if they think it will be more of passing through on long trip stays or people coming from a certain radius for a weekend getaway. He said the majority of people will stay seasonally or will camp within 90 miles from their home for the weekend.
- Commissioner Snow asked what the total budget for the development of the property is. They said 28 million dollars at this point.
- Commissioner Smith asked in terms of security, will they use their own security or do they hire out. They said they have their own security that will work inside the Campground. Commissioner Smith asked will they work in conjunction with the Delaware City Police and they said that Delaware City Police will have security outside the Campground but they will handle security within the Campground. Police Chief Baylor said that he does not agree with that and that is something that will need to be discussed.
- Commissioner Saunders asked if they anticipate the need to improve the road coming into town. They said they are working with Ft. DuPont Developers about that. He asked if the traffic circle is designed to work with large vehicles. Jeff Randol said yes, this circle is designed by DelDot to accommodate 68 foot long rigs.
- Commissioner Saunders asked if they anticipate any days to be busier. They said yes Friday to Sunday is usually busiest but they have plans in place for peak check in times. There are 4 to 5 weekends a year that the traffic could pose an issue at any of their Communities but the staff is trained to handle those busy times and get the campers into the sites and handle check in at the sites. He also pointed out that there are a lot of sites that won't have RV's pulling in and out due to seasonal, rentals and tent sites, a small portion of the 400 sites will actually be pulling in and out.
- Commissioner Smith asked if this will be completed in stages or all at one time. They said they would like to open everything by next year.

- Commissioner Snow asked if the other Campgrounds are usually full. They said Delaware has great activity and the demand is certainly there.
- Commissioner Saunders asked if the amenities are solely for the Campers. They said it typically is but in other Campgrounds they offer day passes and they would be willing to create something like that.
- Commissioner Saunders asked what the process is for hurricanes. They said it's just like a ship; they evacuate the site and tie everything down, like any outside facility. They have multiple Campgrounds on the East Coast and are familiar with hurricane prep.
- Chief Baylor asked if there has been a study for financial impact to the City. They said Stabilization for the Occupancy Tax should happen within 3 to 4 years and that should project \$150,000.00 a year. Jeff Randol pointed out the purchasing power this will bring to the City. The Campground usually has onsite Bars and Restaurants that they did not include in this Campground as they are partnering with the City and Ft. DuPont for those amenities but their onsite Restaurants and Bars usually bring in 2 million a year, so that should reflect in the local businesses.
- Commissioner Smith asked where the sewage will be placed, they will put sanitary pipes at each unit and they will connect to a pump station.
- Commissioner Saunders asked if the water is coming from the Wells at Ft. DuPont or the Delaware City Wells, They said it will be coming from the Ft. DuPont Wells.
- Kathy Clifton asked our City Solicitor Max Walton if he had any idea when we would be getting the PLUS Review. He said it will be exactly 20 days from the meeting on the 24th, so around the 20th of August the PLUS Review will be back for the Planning Commission.
- Vice Mayor Malinowski asked if the day passes for the amenities is a standard policy or an on demand thing. They said they work with the community; sometimes it's made a part of the approval process.
- Kathy Clifton asked who the final decision maker for this process is; Bluewater said whatever process will be the quickest will be what is best for them.
- Acting City Manager Baylor said once this pre approval process is done, everything will come back to the Planning Commission.
- City Solicitor Walton said this is a very weird situation in our Code. There was a meeting on how to deal with this, it was understood that they would come in tonight for a preliminary approval, and the Planning Commission would give the final approval, with the City Manager and Planning Commission making sure everything meets the Code. Doing it this way we will have made 2 public forums where the public can speak out. This would also be the quickest process, not having to take all of this to another entity that's not already familiar.
- Mayor Johnson said he would like the preliminary approval to happen tonight and have them come back for the final and then wrap it up! Commissioner Renoll added that he agrees with the Mayor and would like the vote to happen tonight.
- Vice Mayor Malinowski asked if this is a Subdivision. City Solicitor Walton said the Code is unclear if it's a Subdivision or a Site Plan. There was another meeting where this was discussed to be called a Site Plan. This will require the City Managers approval and the Planning Commission's approval.
- David Athey from AECOM clarified, we are approving a concept not an actual number.

The Bluewater Company again expressed they are looking for approval tonight from the Planning Commission to move forward with this plan to take steps as a company to get the engineering down so they can go present to other various agencies. This is the first step in the approval process. They also pointed out that they are not removing 24 acres of trees; they are clearing a lot of underbrush, although they cannot give exact numbers until they get out there but they plan to keep as many trees as possible but more importantly trees that are going to live.

Commissioner Dilliplane made a motion on behalf of the Planning Commission and the City of Delaware City to provide a provisional conditional recommendation for the concept application for up to a 419 unit RV Park at Ft. DuPont submitted by Blue Water Development (“Application”), subject to the following:

- Application shall be required to make a complete submission with all required items to the City which shall be subject to further review by the Planning Commission at a future meeting. At the future meeting, the Planning Commission will take its final vote and provide its official/ final recommendation.
- Applicant shall demonstrate capacity for water and sewer service and must show the location and details of the required laterals
- Applicant shall demonstrate compliance with all legally mandated comments in the preliminary Land Use Services (“PLUS”) review letter.
- Applicant shall demonstrate compliance with all applicable Federal, State and City Code requirements for its application.
- Applicant shall pay all fees required by the Delaware City Code for the application.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Starrett, all were in favor, and the motion was passed.

REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

Each Commissioner had a copy of the Comprehensive Plan Survey results. Commissioner Saunders explained that everyone has a copy of a note he gave to the City Manager back in early June. He had looked at the survey over the winter trying to get a better understanding of how the questions were answered.

Commissioner Dilliplane said that half of the people that participated have lived in Delaware City 10 years or more, that there was a broad spectrum of ages and the gender ratio was 50/50. He also pointed out that 90% of visitors have an above neutral opinion of the town.

Commissioner Saunders said this was a survey that was put online last summer and ran through November. It was on the Town website and advertised in the News Letter. He said 111 people took this survey.

Discussion followed.

Acting City Manager Baylor asked the Commission what is the next step this body needs to take with finalizing the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Dilliplane said we have to finish getting it together for a Final Revision and then it goes to Mayor and Council. Commissioner Snow

asked City Solicitor Walton if the revised Boarder and Zoning Map are in the Charter. He said it is not in the Charter but 6 to 7 years ago the Charter was changed and at the bottom they added wording to read "this includes any properties that are annexed into the City of Delaware City", so even though they are not in the Charter, it is okay.

Commissioner Dilliplane stated the Planning Commission recently made changes to the Maps and the University of Delaware is revising the Maps and will return to the Commission.

Commissioner Saunders mentioned there was a note from our pervious City Manager Carol Houck with things that needed to be done to the Comprehensive Plan that they need to make sure was done along with the Goals and Objectives.

Acting City Manager Baylor said he would contact the University to find out when we will be receiving the new Maps.

There was discussion between the Commissioners over whether or not the Comprehensive Plan is on the F- Drive at Town Hall. Acting City Manager Baylor said he would look into it.

City Solicitor Walton added that through Two City Managers the plan was that the Planning Commission would get the Plan together and then he would make comments at the end. He would like to have the opportunity to do this.

REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHAPTER 2-10 ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Commission decided they will revisit this item at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Dilliplane and seconded by Commissioner Smith. All were in favor. The Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Britney Loveland

City Secretary