



CIVIC LEAGUE
For New Castle County

Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth
P.O. Box 11523 - Wilmington, DE 19850

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2007

COUNTY COMMENTS

CIVIC LEAGUE FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY
Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth

Tuesday, November 27, 2007
MEETING

7:00 PM at the Paul Sweeney Public Safety Building
3601 N. duPont Hwy
(Rte 13 South of DMV, North of Gracelawn Cemetery)

AGENDA

Nicole Katsikides, BRAC Regional Coordinator
BRAC's Ripple effect on New Castle County

STATEMENT
OF
PRINCIPLE

- ◆ Monitor and selectively evaluate government actions including laws, regulations and policy.
- ◆ Provide appropriate forums for informing as well as soliciting input from the public.
- ◆ Establish positions based on responsible studies and consistent with the aims and purpose of the organization.
- ◆ Advocate these positions.

Founded in 1962, the Civic League is non-profit volunteer organization, which studies and illuminates County and State government actions concerning comprehensive developments and the quality of life and is a vocal advocate of relevant positions.

County Comments is the official publication of the Civic League for New Castle County.

Dan Bockover,
President

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BRAC and 16,000 New Jobs Impact New Castle County

Details will be discussed at the next Civic League meeting, Tuesday, November 27, in a special presentation by Nicole J. Katsikides, BRAC Regional Coordinator.

In accordance with the federal Base Re-alignment and Closure Act (BRAC), base closures in New Jersey are resulting in a large consolidation movement of current employees plus creation of 18,000 new jobs at the nearby Aberdeen Proving Grounds (APG) in Cecil County, Maryland. Considerable impact on New Castle County is anticipated since the newly expanded operations will be located only 25 miles from Wilmington.

The current 12,500 person workforce at Aberdeen must be expanded to support the gain in missions with communications and electronics, chemical and biological warfare, Army test and evaluation command and others. This does not include technical spin off and tertiary jobs. Because of the type of missions coming, the APG expects the region to become the hub of homeland security and defense science for the region.

In order to plan for BRAC, the jurisdictions around APG, including Wilmapco and New Castle County, have combined efforts to form the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC) which is a planning and policy function to help prepare for the growth to the region. Planning is underway in land use, education, transportation, public services and information technology. The goal is to work regionally to transition missions to Aberdeen and a regional workforce is needed to support the missions.

Since New Castle County is one of the eight participating jurisdictions of the CSSC, we expect that a sizeable number of people relocating for BRAC will choose Delaware. One reason cited has been no tax on military pensions, along with proximity to New Jersey, from which many will be moving. Other reasons include no sales tax, lower cost of living, and an excellent quality of life.

Attending the CL meeting on November 27, will give you valuable information for use in planning how to benefit from BRAC in the days immediately ahead. Come and be prepared to ask questions and to pick up literature that will be on hand.

Is there an * on your mailing label?

If so, unfortunately, this will be your last issue of the County Comments. Your membership for 2007- 2008 has not been renewed. We appreciate your past support and hope that you will reconsider your participation as a member of the Civic League.

If you need a membership form, go to our website and download a PDF form or call Ronni at 302- 894-0344 to have a membership packet mailed to you.

WWW.CivicLeagueForNCC.Org

Approach to Indian River Inlet Bridge Questioned

As the cost of replacing the current Indian River Inlet bridge continues to soar, questions arise about the priority of spending some \$130 million for a principally local state highway structure used by only a calculated 14,000 vehicles daily. Could some of that money be better utilized to speed badly needed expansion of I-95 to ameliorate its daily clogged condition? Also being asked is how much of a toll could be charged, and how long would it take to recoup even a portion of the investment in a new bridge.

How many times have we heard general claims about traffic congestion, followed by suggestions for alleviating the alleged condition. If you're not already familiar with it, there is now an easy way to begin factual discussions about traffic conditions.

Go to:

http://www.deldot.gov/information/pubs_forms/manuals/traffic_counts/2006/pdf/rpt_pgs1_38_rev.pdf

Browse this site and notice traffic counts are shown by county and the results are indeed interesting. Hopefully we'll be able to use this source in developing items to be posted on our website (www.civicleaguefornc.org) including routing 301 down 896, the need for an additional bridge alongside Summit Bridge, the value of a new bridge over Indian River Inlet, the continuing need for a revamped I-95 sky-link over the interchange with Route 1, and other projects as they are announced.

Filling Perryville to Newark Commuter Rail Gap

It has been talked about for years and now extending the commuter rail line from Perryville, MD to Newark, DE is one step closer to reality. Heather Dunigan, Senior Planner for Wilmapco, will make an announcement at the CL meeting on November 27.

There has long been tantalizing interest in closing the gap between the two communities, now heightened by the coming of BRAC. The new rail line will provide a low cost alternate for reaching Baltimore & Washington DC. Even more interesting is the fulfillment of rail buffs' dream of being able to take a series of commuter rail lines connecting all the way from Boston to St. Louis.

You are invited to experience a portion of this travel available today by visiting two web sites and noting the ease and low cost of reaching NYC

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (www.septa.org)
to plan & price your journey from Wilmington to Trenton NJ.

NJ Transit Corp (www.njtransit.com)
to do the same from their connection in Trenton to NYC's 30 St station.

This may be for the adventurous and also patient travelers.

Further Review Urged On Affordable Housing

Significant changes have been proposed for the Affordable Housing Ordinance and even further adjustments are being suggested before the legislation again goes before County Council

You will hear specifics about these further changes after which you will have an opportunity to express your comments. This legislation can have a significant impact on the quality of life and value of properties in your community.

SMART GROWTH COMMITTEE

Excerpts from the minutes of the October 31, 2007 meeting

Overview of Smart Code Draft

Dave Culver gave an in-depth review of the Draft Smart Code v. 9, calibrated for New Castle County. Some projects have come to the Land Use Department that would like to utilize neo-traditional development, though that would require changes to the UDC. In order to make these projects possible, changes need to be made to the Hamlet and Village Code. After the Comp Plan was voted in by Council, New Castle County contracted with a consultant company, *Placemakers*. They've provided a very rough draft of the Smart Code calibrated for the needs of New Castle County. The calibrated Smart Code if adopted will replace section 25 of the UDC. The process for reviewing plans would be the same as it is done today, just utilizing a new set of standards. Mr. Culver's review of the Smart Code noted the following items for the Smart Growth Committee to review.

- ♦ Community types are listed on 25-5 of the Smart Code document. As a committee there should be discussion on what natural resources should be protected, and how to tie them into the code.
- ♦ References to road standards and TIS standards need to be reviewed to determine what is best for New Castle County.
- ♦ Density Calculations, included in Article 25, may need to be added to Table 4, however *Placemakers* included them as placeholders in the Smart Code document
- ♦ In the calibrated Smart Code document, page 25-13, landscape standards, and page 25-21, public planting, have been added as placeholders, and these items will be discussed by committee.
- ♦ *Placemakers* survey and analysis provides photos and densities of existing places in New Castle County, to compare with transect districts.

Public Comment

Herb Inden

Great to recreate mixed use hamlet/villages. The committee may want to schedule time to go out to Eagle View, PA to see how other states address hamlets/villages. Different areas should be considered, perhaps to identify target areas for hamlets/villages, as they won't always work everywhere.

Paul Clark

There is a difference of opinion regarding cul de sacs in communities. Some communities like cul de sacs, for privacy and for their safety. Retail units in communities, may find it difficult to survive. Density would have to get pretty extreme in order to provide the traffic necessary for success. "Livable" means different things to different people.

Fritz Greseinger, Community Advocate

Visionaries vs. implementation. If a vision isn't compatible with reality, than committee will claim they know better than the public. He believes that by right plans take away the public's opportunity to comment on plans. Connectivity is not popular with civic community. How much commercial retail can be added to an 80 acre community? Celebrations is a poor example for New Castle County to refer to because it is an offshoot of Disney World.

The minutes from the October 31st meeting and documents referenced at that meeting can be found on the Smart Growth Committee website at:

<http://www.co.new-castle.de.us/countyCouncil/Home/webpage22.asp>