



CIVIC LEAGUE For New Castle County

Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth

P.O. Box 11523 - Wilmington, DE 19850

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Happy Holidays !

*Best Wishes for the
New Year !*



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**DECEMBER
2008**

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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COUNTY COMMENTS

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

MEETING

Monday, January 26, 2009

(Note: Special Meeting Date)

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

AGENDA

**Setting the Stage
for the New Government Year**

The Stoltz 8000 Conundrum

Stoltz Real Estate Partners has simultaneously filed plans to develop or redevelop four parcels in Northern Delaware which they say will create 8,000 new jobs. This will presumably introduce 8,000 more cars daily traveling in the area since there is essentially no public transportation and large scale car-pooling is only feasible when a large employer, such as Dupont or Astra Zeneca, is in a position to mandate and coordinate it.

As the excitement about the proposals gives way to more considered thought, we find ourselves faced with a traffic conundrum demanding our immediate consideration. What effect will 8,000 more vehicles a day have on Northern New Castle highways and roads, particularly those surrounding the Brandywine Valley? Do existing roads have the capacity to accommodate this extra traffic, and can Delaware ever afford the improvements needed to cope with it? Most importantly, will the added congestion cause us to lose far more than the proposed developments seem to offer?

Once upon a time, traffic engineers sought to predict the impact of development by simply counting cars passing through nearby intersections. To their surprise, however, the engineers learned that multiple developments in adjacent vicinities tended to compound traffic problems in ways their tabulations did not predict. Repeatedly, they found themselves faced with unexpected problems that led to expensive and time consuming fixes that might have been avoided by better planning.

(Tour continued)

* Some commuters are already beginning to use an alternate route from the Greenville Center to the Shops at Brandywine site, rather than make the troubled left turn from the Center onto Buck Rd. and subsequently endure the Tyler McConnell Bridge traffic backups. Do prepare for a tortuous but scenic route as you right exit from the Center onto Kennett Pike Rte. 52 and go to the light at Kirk Rd. Turn right and go to the dead end, turn left onto Rockland Rd. and go down the hill to the Brandywine Creek. Cross over the bridge and make a sharp left turn up onto Mt. Lebanon Rd. This will take you to Concord Pike Rte. 202, for a left turn and then on to the Shops at Brandywine.

The Stoltz organization operates sites across the nation, which you'll find detailed at www.stoltzusa.com. This displays their success in meshing the desires of their tenants with the harmony of surrounding neighborhoods. It is this balance which we are seeking as development of their four sites proceeds in Northern Delaware. You and the various civic groups involved in this process may be the major factors, which eventually determine whether the developed sites reach a balance that preserves the integrity of our traffic network and the beauty of the Brandywine Valley or instead, marks the beginning of a major acceleration in the decline of both. You can help by being informed and by letting your elected officials at every level know that you want responsible growth in Northern New Castle County.

(continued)

(*Conundrum continued*)

More recently, the best traffic planners realized that they needed to study - TTT - total traffic time. It's the total time it takes a driver to travel a route along various roads and various intersections, before reaching a destination. This is not theory, but a practical concern of all who commute.

The 8,000 drivers will be converging on the four sites from all directions and not just from Delaware, and they will be accompanied by an armada of other vehicles - trucks, vans and limousines - bringing supplies and catering to the needs of tenants occupying the buildings at all four sites. Their impact on our roadways will extend throughout, not only Northern New Castle County, but the entire region.

Evaluating all this sounds complex, and it is, but it is essential to any attempt to fashion a plan to improve roadways, intersections and bridges to deal with this and future development. Kennett Pike and various area intersections are already overwhelmed during rush hour. Without careful planning, all our scenic rural byways will also become congested shortcuts for frustrated commuters trying to get to and from work.

Keep in mind another complication if road and bridge expansions are indicated. Use of eminent domain may be called for to acquire adjacent land or demolish obstructing buildings. To avoid this, double-decking portions of roads has proven viable in areas where land expansion has been unacceptable.

Future developments by other land owners and businesses need to be factored into any planning to accommodate the immediate needs of Stoltz. Consider that Woodlawn Trustees owns 500 acres close to the proposed Shops at Brandywine, along Rte. 202 into Pennsylvania. The Brandywine Town Center is still adding tenants. Innumerable plots of empty land line the roadways leading to and within the area of the four Stoltz properties. All are relying on there being road capacity to meet their needs also.

Only a regional bi-state traffic study that addresses all the issues discussed above can produce the kind of farsighted plans needed to address both the current Stoltz proposals and future economic growth, while protecting and preserving the natural beauty that we have inherited in the Brandywine Valley.

Those of us concerned about the future of our community, can begin to participate in this process, and thereby help shape the future by first, becoming familiar with the present situation - by taking the Stoltz 8000 Preview Tour - presented here and also at the Civic League's website www.CivicLeagueForNCC.org.

While on the tour, envision all the happy construction workers busily tearing down or rehabilitating existing structures and putting up new ones at the four Stoltz sites. Flash ahead to a scene with 8,000 enthusiastic employees parking and rushing toward their new places of employment. Then reflect on the impact all this activity will have on the surrounding community.

It is sad, but realistic, to also anticipate that not all jobs will be new or for Delawareans. There will be relocations from shuttered businesses elsewhere including wage-tax downtown Wilmington. Others will have special skills, or be relocated here by occupying tenants from distant places. Whether new or relocated, all will be grateful if their travel needs have been anticipated and met.

Now take the tour, especially during rush hour, for full appreciation of the situation.

Take the Stoltz 8000 Preview Tour

Armchair observers are speculating what effect these 8,000 cars could have when added to existing traffic in the general area of the four Stoltz projects. Better than theorizing, you are invited to make a quick tour of the four sites, especially during rush hour. After taking the tour you may want to explore, on your own, the narrow country roads in the area which drivers may elect to take when traffic on the main roads becomes unpleasant.

Start at any point as you take this circular tour. Do note that the area is not served by any interstate or limited access highways. Bear in mind that successful operations at the four sites will require employees traveling from distant homes. Also there will be an additional unknown number of trucks and commercial vehicles servicing the sites. This all means the traffic impact will extend far back from the immediate area of the four sites.

Now for the tour. One starting point could be Barley Mill Plaza, at the intersection of Rte. 141 Center Rd. & Lancaster Ave, Rte. 141 & 48. This former DuPont facility consists of 2,846,000 sq. ft. and is envisioned as a mixed use development with office, residential and commercial tenants. All existing buildings will be demolished with new structures up to 11 stories tall added, including a number of multi-story parking garages.

Leaving this site, go along Center Rd. toward Pennsylvania Ave. Proceed under the avenue and turn right at the light. This is the intersection with Montchanin Rd. Rte. 100. Look quickly to your left and note the beautiful 20 Montchanin campus with the office building at the far end. This building will be rehabilitated and a new 138,000 sq. ft. medical office building built at the edge of Montchanin Rd. to afford greater visibility for tenants.

Passing 20 Montchanin, make a right turn at the intersection with Pennsylvania Ave, Rte. 52. This will take you just beyond the interchange and to Greenville Center. This compact site, to your right at the intersection with Buck Rd, is intended to be revamped as a mixed use development with 138,770 sq. ft of office, retail and residential. One plan is to tear down 44,477 sq. ft. of office and add 128,500 sq. ft. of retail and residential in two 6 story buildings.

Drive through the Center and exit onto Buck Rd.*, turning left onto Buck Rd, and proceed to the next traffic light - Montchanin Rd. Turn right on Montchanin and go the next light for a left turn onto Powder Mill Road Rte. 141. Proceed carefully down the hill as the road narrows to one lane for crossing over the Brandywine Creek. The road turns sharply to your left at the entrance to the DuPont Experimental Station, continuing on to the intersection with Murphy Rd at the entrance to A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital. Keep to the left approaching the intersection and turn left onto Murphy Rd. Go a short distance through the AstraZeneca Campus and turn left at the intersection with Concord Pike, Rte. 202. Follow 202 through two miles of time-integrated lights to the intersection with Naamans Rd. Route 92. There to your left is the site for the proposed Shops at Brandywine Valley.

You cannot safely stop in the area of the Shops for an extended look. This is an incredibly busy intersection complete with red light traffic cameras. It is envisioned as a 527,800 sq. ft. mixed use facility with hotel, residential, and retail tenants. Plan to look quickly, for your safety, as you make a left turn at the light and begin going along what now becomes Beaver Valley Rd. Go the next traffic light and turn left onto Ramsey Rd. which becomes Thompson Bridge Rd, then Montchanin Rd, while remaining Rte.92 and eventually intersecting with Barley Mill Rd. Rte 141. Turn right and quickly you're back to your starting point.

(*continued*)