



COUNTY COMMENTS

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

**June
2012**

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.

Chuck Mulholland,
President

WWW.
CivicLeagueforNCC.Org

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MEETING

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

7:00 PM at the Delaware State Police Troop 2 Building
100 La Grange Ave
(Route 40 East of Route 896)
Bear, DE 19701

AGENDA

Guest Speakers:

Mr. Dan Blevins - WILMAPCO Planner
Mr. Chip Flowers (tentative) - State Treasurer

Proposed questions for candidates and incumbents at our August Candidate Forum

1. In three sentences or less, what responsibilities should the County uphold and what duties should it carry forth?
2. What incentives for economic improvement do you believe County government should offer? To what selective bodies — agriculture, trade, research, corporate law, finance? Do you see any importance of a residential population growth requiring a precedent economy?
3. What duties should you perform? Do you foresee needed changes and what should they be?
4. Regarding Land Use and the present UDC, what does the term "concurrence" mean? Do you believe it is being presently consistently applied? Do you think the UDC should remain intact? If not, what changes would you propose?
5. In land use changes, what infrastructure should be funded? By who? Do you think schools, local roads, sewer, library, police services should be incorporated in the County budget? Is the present system adequate? Do you see any problems in traffic flow of our interstate highways due to our directly and immediately adjacent commercial usage?
6. Should residential growth in our unincorporated areas be encouraged? Who should pay for the infrastructure?
7. What are the truly 'vital' services the County should perform?
8. What local services, and for what infrastructure should local residents pay? Should local taxes be increased if such local services are to be paid by local residents?
9. Should Municipal and County Governments be combined in a Metropolitan form to concentrate for efficiency and coordination of services?

(continued)

10. What do you include as "infrastructure" when speaking of Federal, State, County, Municipal government? What annual contributions into the County Government are Federally and State funded?
11. Do you think County Government has been best representing your local constituents?
12. How do you think reduction of our National debt should impact State and, particularly, County programs?
13. In establishing a Capital project, do you think an inducement for such a project should be to establish and maintain ongoing personnel as a legitimate purpose in founding such project? Do you see any urgent Capital needs?
14. Do you believe County Government should endorse "open shop"?
15. Do you believe County taxpayer contributions to retirement benefits and pensions for County employees are equitable?
16. Regarding County Police responses, what percent do you believe, result in restraint and arrest?
17. Should fire response for the County remain essentially volunteer?

Submitted by:
 Charlie Weymouth
 Civic League Director

More questions for candidates for County office

1. Would you support the Delaware State Real Estate Commission seller's disclosure form regarding affordable housing and workforce housing?
2. Would you support all potential buyers in a workforce / affordable community be given a disclosure sheet concerning the 15 builder incentives?

Respectfully,
 Fritz Griesinger
 former Planning Board member
 Civic League Director
 Community advocate since 1960

Smart Growth ?

I was sitting across from a mixed use shopping center last week at TD Bank and it hit me how obnoxiously large the building is on Limestone Road. It's four stories with a large pointed roof. I have noticed before how close it sits to the property line of the homes behind it. This kind of smothering of neighborhoods should never be done by right. Mixed use needs some fine tuning. I cannot imagine there is really any residential in the top of that building. With all the push for redevelopment, we are headed for trouble if we cannot get some ordinances drafted soon. It's not right to destroy the property values of neighboring residents. There was no great need for that shopping center. This is Smart Growth at its worse.



Christine Whitehead

The Current Civic League Slate as of our May 2012 Elections

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Barbara Finch	Victor Singer	

Note ! Contact information for Officers and Directors is available on our website: WWW.CivicLeagueforNCC.Org

It's Renewal Time !

June 30th marks the end of another Civic League membership year. The 2012-2013 membership year starts on July 1st. You will receive an email soon asking for your support of the Civic League in it's activities on behalf of the citizens of New Castle County. Please download a membership form from our website WWW.CivicleagueforNCC.Org and mail your check and form to the address indicated

OR -- renew your membership via PayPal at our website: WWW.CivicLeagueforNCC.Org

Thank you for your continued support.

More points to ponder:

Lately there has been some renewed interest in consolidation of government services and, perhaps, a move toward more efficiency. The term most commonly used is **metropolitan government** and was returned briefly for a millisecond of muted discussion, as reported in the daily news on May 25th http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20120525/NEWS02/305250026/Benefits-metro-government-touted?gcheck=1&nclick_check=1

As government expenditure continues to rise, and with the reported expectation of lower revenue for next fiscal year, is it now time to resurrect the discussion? Have you ever counted the number of councils, directors, executives and related publicly funded positions within the News Castle County area, not to forget the other (2) counties? Perhaps, over the coming months, an effort to calculate the cost might be made. At least, as we move toward another election season, keep in mind that expenses are mounting and, at least in private industry, the efficiency move is unrelenting.

On another note, much ink has been used to explain the woes of the real estate arena, from the downward spiral in construction, to underwater mortgages, strategic defaults (a brand new term not known before 2008), to foreclosures and plummeting home values. Lately we have reviewed the drastic reduction in transfer tax receipts by both the County and State governments.

Has there been any consideration to repeal that aspect from the State Code, <http://delcode.delaware.gov/title30/c054/sc01/index.shtml> Title 30, section 5401, an effort beneficial to all of those who own and sell real estate, including thousands and thousands of homeowners, and voters. The likelihood of this is remote, but food for thought in a time when the weaning from past dependence on this tax is now evident in some budget line items.

This very tax was referenced as pernicious by the former Delaware Chancellor, William B Chandler III, on March 25, 2008 while making his keynote presentation - **Posing the challenge of creating a livable Delaware** - at the University of Delaware: in part-

*We must also address the third cause of overdevelopment - that **pernicious realty transfer tax**. As low as property taxes are, the counties have made up much of their revenue through the levy of the realty transfer tax. Because the transfer tax has come to represent a significant portion of the counties' budgets, the county governments now have a built-in conflict: to disallow zoning variances, raise property taxes, or do anything that would limit development means risking a very substantial revenue stream.*

*I spoke earlier about the mining of Sussex County's beauty. The transfer tax is, in reality, **a royalty paid on destruction**. As I have said, if it goes to general revenue **it creates perverse and pernicious incentives....***

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<http://www.udel.edu/PR/UDaily/2008/mar/keynote032608.html>

The theme of the Chancellor's remarks were a *livable Delaware*, including "Quality of Life", when our national ranking 47th in the nation. The most recent ranking shows we dropped another notch, to 48th, just above Mississippi and Louisiana.

compiled by Chuck Mulholland