



COUNTY COMMENTS

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

**August
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

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MEETING
Tuesday, August 21, 2012
6:00 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:
Vincent White - Delaware Real Estate Commission
Woodlawn Trustees Representative

and a Candidates Forum
targeted at the primary races for both State and County positions

Proposed - Amendment to Standards and Regulations for Subdivision Streets and State Highway Access

Mindful that we are still awaiting Secretary Bhatt's announced first priority of a report out with recommendation and corrective action in regard to DeIDOT's apparent slippery real estate deals, one would, reasonably, have believed in that one year interim, the Secretary's comment on the deviated Route 301 routing, and even, perhaps, his analysis on long range issues such as the following:

restoration/enhancement of interstate commerce/trade highways, renewed port/rail growth, control of residential sprawl, its current costs to DeIDOT and the State, the necessity of a lower, cross State transit from Maryland, leadership/control with leadership responsibility as to who should bear the financial burden for the current endeavors. Such topics should have at least been broached.

Instead, we are asked to comment upon that "one year" concentration by the Secretary on Standards and Regulations for Subdivision Streets and State Highway Access. Is such document, perhaps, the cartoon before the main feature? Still concerned, primarily, of the other priorities, herein, comment is given:

DeIDOT has presented analysis and revisions to elements within a broader document, the immediate portion providing a previously unaware function to this reader, — DeIDOT, giving forth multiple references, DOES HAVE control

(continued)

access to our State Public roads. Such is contrary to DeIDOT's previously given public testimony. Why have they not asserted such control? The contiguous commercial retailing along our interstates, and undue accommodation to local County rezonings, now requires mandatory and systemic correction.

Regarding monitoring the road system, and restricting need for traffic studies with selective applicants, somewhere within the bastion of DeIDOT is a comprehensive, computerized resource, fully graphic displayed and frequently updated, of our road system THROUGHOUT, receiving alteration with alternate scenarios for proposed changes. The knowledge required for any developer to access and propose change is already in hand and with the probable effects of alternate changes effecting the entire system — not just the next two intersections. It's even a little better than your GPS Traffic Check. The proposed Transportation Improvement Districts should be able to improve the State employment count — whether such Districts are needed or not. And despite all this analysis and desired recommendation, the County retains, herein, the ability for those nearby roads to simply ignore the recommendation and downgrade the required level of service, the latter evident policy for at least the last twenty-five years. There are two alternate courses of correction: The State asserts control of access and requires local user fees adequate for correction/improvement of the local access road system, or, the County assumes full responsibility for road maintenance/improvement to Federal/State standards. Contrary to that proposed by DeIDOT, there can be no "working it out" with the County and Developer — i.e. in the proposed regulation change, the Feds/State continuing to pay nearly the full freight. Look at the proposed example of funding for signal lights. One must question if any access should be permitted. Wherein, lies the justification by the State, assuming the ownership of private residential development road, and, thusly, required to provide snow clearing, etc.? Assertion of that right for alternate use by State in its ownership was attempted in the failed effort for a compromise secondary road system — proposing interconnecting of developments thru their own culs-de-sac. It didn't go very far.

Regarding the proposed Standards and Regulations for Subdivision Streets and State Highway Access, accommodation to the current residential developer's growth, we should not forget that the selected mode of growth by New Castle County was selective sprawl — mid income density to every square acre in the County, saving, perhaps, the swamp, and such direction known from the outset to require in the future satellite emergency health /fire/police, schools, and an elaborative, expensive, secondary/feeder road system. Suburban shopping was conveniently ignored (first battle won by a Civic League). The secondary road system was not forgotten in the Plan — three grotesque, full Northern County circumferential beltways, while relieving the City of Wilmington, slashed thru some of our Country's most gorgeous and historic countryside. Would not the shock of such at least stall the concept of planned sprawl? Ignoring that unacceptable proposed solution to a real need, we continued forward by band-aiding the Farm roads, such system emanating from the 1914 Federal Farm Delivery Road Act. — or, alternatively, compromising the main interstate transits to production and shipping. Transportation funds to each Legislator, to be used at individual discretion — or at the Legislator's option to be traded, provided adequate hush money, silencing them from more legitimate concerns. Is anyone thinking of "quality of life?" Seeking solutions of "fair play" by assignment of partial financial responsibility, the document attempts to categorize by formulae, prescriptive-one size fits all, not only location but cost sharing for at least the signal lights. Such prescriptive generalizations have been the boon for attorneys involved with Variances, litigating departures from such uniform standard. Further, such formulated solutions are the very compromise of the County's standards set forth in their Unified Development Code. (The extensive volumes of the UDC document are also given some discredit by this commenter in their similarity to a mid-lands document dealing mostly with flat land.) In application of such formulae, an accredited design professional should be required to look beyond in each incidence and broaden that concern toward an adequate design resolution. Does not DeIDOT have that capacity?

The Road system must be tightly coordinated at a central Planning level, wherein lies most State and Federal funding. For the rural/suburban residential system, distant from jobs and the economy, substantial cost should be borne by the private individual user or that land developer. Submerging in the study by our leadership Standards and Regulations for Subdivision Streets and State Highway Access, is but evading the issues more strongly at hand.

CHARLES M. WEYMOUTH, AIA

Note: In addition to the author's background as an architect, he also served (4) years on the New Castle County Planning Board.

In this election year a national business news organization has given Delaware voters important points to ponder as both the primary and general election dates approach. I, like many, have received campaign literature expounding "all the hard work" purported to have been done by those holding elected office. Well, how about Delaware's having slipped again in the national rankings for "Quality of Life", now to #49, just above Louisiana, and confirmed in a July 13th, 2012 email from the Delaware House of Representatives!

The 2012 rankings by CNBC, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/46413845> list Delaware with an overall ranking of 43 (out of 50), a drop from #36 in 2011. As for the individual ratings:

Category	Score	2012 Rank	2011 Rank
Cost of Doing Business	152	32	31
Workforce	135	36	19
Quality of Life	112	49	48
Infrastructure & Transportation	173	27	40
Economy	171	19	22
Education	107	31	26
Technology & Innovation	70	40	32
Business Friendliness	122	19	1
Access to Capital	41	30	35
Cost of Living	14	37	35
Overall	1097	43	36

On August 21st, 2012, the Civic League for New Castle County will conduct a candidate forum targeted at the primary races for both State and County positions.

We will also introduce Vince White, a member of the Delaware Real Estate Commission, and representative(s) from the Woodlawn Trustees on the aspect of a new public park in the Brandywine Hundred area.

We will meet at 6:00 PM in the:
Paris Community Room
Delaware State Police Troop 2
100 LaGrange Ave
Bear

Tentative agenda times:

6:00 PM Woodlawn Trustees
6:30 PM Delaware Real Estate Commission member
7:00 PM primary candidate forum, with questions already distributed to candidates.
9:00 PM Adjournment

Hope you can attend.
Chuck Mulholland
President, Civic League for New Castle County

Don't forget to renew your Civic League Membership for 2012/2013