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**May
2013**

COUNTY COMMENTS

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

MEETING
Tuesday, May 21, 2013
7:00 PM
Delaware State Police Troop 2 Building
100 LaGrange Ave
Newark, DE

AGENDA
Speaker: Senator David Sokola
Topic: "Race to the Top" and other education issues
under consideration in the Delaware State Senate

**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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**"What do taxpayers owe at-risk communities?"
Response to NEWS JOURNAL : 'Opinion'-**

"What do taxpayers owe at-risk communities?" Do you mean who eventually pays for such malfeasance? Denying truths via the label "Buyer Beware" is a practice not solely confined to the Real Estate industry. Federal discouragement to build within flood plains and Coastal flood waters has been in place for over thirty years. Counter poised is the continued Federal Flood insurance programs to resurrect these lost blemishes. For the most part, private Insurance underwriters won't get near such risk. Yet, the locals are permitted to simply issue a variance and the new construction begins. A similar parallel lies within the State and DeIDOT who CAN control access to most public roads. Avoidance of this responsibility in preventing future travesties is craftily reinforced in the "Guide for Master Planning in Delaware". The position taken is to enjoin the local governments as equals in the design decision process, including determination of required infrastructure, and then let the Feds or State eventually pay for such projected needs. Any problems ?--- they'll just point the finger at each other---like Barley Mill. Discussion of priorities, costs and determination as to who should pay, is simply avoided in the Planning process. There is some errant thinking that user fees in the form of transfer and franchise taxes will eventually pick up the full tab.

Government overview/enforcement with Federal money implies inefficiency, over costing and failure to achieve any one specific goal. Due to the individual's size, for the current Governor from New Jersey pleading for Federal recovery money for beachfront second homes, there is inadequate suspension for an effigy. Too Big and Would Fail.

Immediate action must be taken:

- From whence derived the largesse, therein should lie control.
- Stop building along the shorelines and interior flood plains. (The issue is beyond whether or not the seas will rise two inches in the next thirty years.)
- Firmly fix in ones mind that you should pay, not the next generation. Demand the truth be broadcast, purpose/priorities well announced, the costs, and who should pay for such. Not doing so, for Planning, is simply relocating Spring time dead plants.

Charles Weymouth,
Civic League for NCC Board Member

Get involved

With the recent excitement over nominations to the Pension Board, you may want to take a look at the current openings (two vacancies on the planning board) and make a nomination suggestion to your councilperson

<http://www2.nccde.org/boardscommissions/default.aspx>

Nancy Willing
Christine Whitehead

NOW IS THE TIME TO CREATE AN INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires that electoral districts be periodically adjusted or redrawn to account for population shifts among them.

Every 10 years, following the release of new census data, legislative districts are adjusted by each State to reflect updated population numbers so that districts remain of relatively equal population.

If the redistricting is done by political insiders with no public input, the result is new district boundaries that are meant to protect the interests of incumbents and their political parties rather than the citizens they represent. This attempt to hold on to power creates an obvious conflict of interest. It has led to gerrymandered redistricting maps, collusion among the major political parties to create safe legislative districts and the packing and splitting of concentrations of voters. All of this weakens or strengthens the influence of one party or another or one or more politicians when they gain an unfair partisan advantage. Unfortunately, the public often is not aware of this impact and typically plays a minor role in redistricting.

We strongly believe that redistricting decisions must be removed from the current partisan legislative process to make our votes truly count. In this effort we support Senator Blevins Senate Bill 48. This bill creates a Nonpartisan Independent Redistricting Commission that replaces current partisan, insider, closed to the public process.

The Independent Redistricting Commission will be comprised of 10 appointed members and a non voting Chairman elected by the members. No Commission member shall hold elected office, be a registered lobbyist, be permitted to run for the General Assembly in the year following redistricting, be an elected official or officer of a state political party or have been an elected official within two years of his or her appointment to the commission. A member must be a resident of the State and a qualified voter. All meetings shall be open to the public with 7 days notice and subject to the provisions of the FIOA and the Administrative Procedures Act. All work shall be done in public view. Please visit the Legislative web site for more detailed information on Senate Bill 48.

For the sake of our democracy in Delaware, it is imperative we strive to create legislative districts that are representative of the population and districting plans that result in more competitive legislative elections.

So, we hope you will join us, the Delaware League of Women Voters, DelCog, Common Cause Delaware, Civic League for New Castle County and support our effort in the coming months as we push for an independent commission and other steps necessary to ensure the redistricting process is fair and open.

Please visit www.ReDistrictingGame.org/

Frank Sims
Civic League for NCC Board Member

Civic League for New Castle County Resolution # 11-01-01

Community Bill of Rights Dated: 1/21/11

Whereas. Communities and residents often find that the Comprehensive Development Plans and codes seem to ignore existing character and quality of life issues.

Whereas. Interpretations of protective codes are insufficient.

Whereas. Individuals and communities have a reasonable expectation of what can be built or used surrounding them.

Now Therefore be it Resolved by the Civic League for New Castle County that current and future residents are acknowledged to have a bill of rights to the basic services and to a decent quality of life including, but not limited to community character, basic services such as listed below but not necessarily in this order.

- 1) Potable water of quality, quantity, pressure and reliability based on appropriate standards.
- 2) Emergency medical services as appropriate to meet national standards with periodic public report of attainment.
- 3) Police and fire protection services to maintain adequate response time to insure safety, order and preservation of life and property.
- 4) Open space to be a combination of neighborhood, local and regional with facilities sufficient to preserve biodiversity and provide recreation facilities to serve our population.
- 5) Traffic flow to be concurrent with new or redevelopment and other construction. Level of Service (LOS) shall be Level D above the canal and LOS C below the canal with no by right for redevelopment, workforce housing or other uses. Provision shall be made for safe use of mass transit, bicycles, motorcycles, and walking
- 6) Community character so that existing and future residents can feel secure and confident in what will occur next to them.
- 7) Drainage so that flooding will be eliminated on adjacent and downstream properties based on minimum 100 year storm including quality of discharges.
- 8) Sewer capacity shall prevent overflows or backups anywhere in the system and the county shall not grant waivers for development due to infiltration or lack of capacity by using back flow preventers or discharge into waterways.
- 9) Transparency and ability of residents to have ample opportunity to comment in a timely and meaningful way on rezonings and various stages of development plans. Reinstate 3.319 hearings and reduce the number of waivers and interpretations the general manager of land use may grant.
- 10) Preserve quality of life and community fabric as listed above but not limited to specific combinations.
- 11) Air shall be free of dust, dirt, particulates and smog generating materials and enforce the rule that construction dust must be kept on the property.
- 12) Toxic sites shall be isolated to avoid threats to communities, individuals and water supplies.

Therefore be it further resolved: that the above items shall be listed prominently in an opening appropriate agenda/preamble section of the 2012 Comprehensive Development Plan.