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**January
2015**

**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 consistent with the aims and purpose of the organization.

Advocate these positions.

Founded in 1962, the Civic League is a 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.

President - Charles Stirk
V.President - Jordyn Pusey
V.President - Mark Blake
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COUNTY COMMENTS

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

MEETING

**Tuesday, January 20, 2015
7:00PM**

Paul J. Sweeney Public Safety Building
3601 N. DuPont Hwy (Route 13)
New Castle, DE 19720

AGENDA

Issues Involving Vacant Housing

A diverse panel will discuss issues & solutions concerning the more than 10,000 vacant residential units in New Castle County

Priority Schools

In the weeks since the state's education administration laid down the gauntlet, Red Clay has won state approval of its Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) and has a few weeks left to come up with "acceptable" plans for its three schools while Christina has held over thirty public meetings and produced nearly one hundred documents including MOUs and plans for its three schools but the state is hedging on whether or not these plans are deemed acceptable.

If the fate of these six so-called Wilmington Priority Schools is on your mind, know that it will be resolved one way or the other by the end of the month unless the Governor's Special Advisory Committee has its way.

In an unexpected move, the committee issued this letter (below) on Friday, cautioning the Governor and Department of Education to slow down and give stakeholders a chance to participate in this game-changing, federal agency-led mandate for state takeover of Red Clay and Christina School District schools.

Nancy Willing

Wilmington Education Advisory Committee
January 9, 2015

Email: tonyallen@comcast.net Phone: 302.290.1445

The Honorable Jack Markell

Governor, State of Delaware 820 North French Street, 12 Floor Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Governor Markell:

When you appointed the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, you charged us with advising you and Secretary Murphy on how best to strengthen educational opportunities for all Wilmington students. Our Committee has been

(continued)

diligent in this regard. As such, today, I am writing on behalf of the Committee to request that you defer final actions on the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School District priority schools until we issue our interim set of recommendations.

Our intention is to submit this set of recommendations by Monday, January 26, the contents of which will include initial analyses and proposals in the following critical areas we have identified.

- Governance and the current landscape of traditional, Vo-Tech and charter schools in the City of Wilmington
- The role of the City of Wilmington, particularly as it relates to formal representation, participation and influence
- Overcoming barriers to student success, including the impacts of race, class, geography and the unique needs of Wilmington children and schools
- Needs-based student funding, and
- Implementation

We intend to make these interim recommendations available for public comment, which we will seek in earnest through early March.

Our final report will be submitted no later than March 31.

We recognize that the approval process already is underway for the plan submitted by Red Clay and that the timetable is confirmed for actions on the priority schools in both districts. To be clear, we will not be commenting on the plans themselves, but do expect that our recommendations will have impact on the broader set of governing responsibilities for all Wilmington schools, including the priority schools in Christina and Red Clay. As such, we believe it is prudent that you consider our recommendations before moving forward.

In thinking through this request, we have gained the support of Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams, Wilmington City Council President Theopolis Gregory, New Castle County Councilman Jea Street, the Wilmington delegation of the General Assembly as well as other elected officials and community partners

The Advisory Committee agreed early in our convening that we would take the long view with respect to public education in Wilmington, but would also take advantage of any opportunity to weigh-in on specific action items during ‘moments that matter.’ This is one such occasion.

In that vein, I hope you will accept our request. We look forward to your response soon.
Thank you.

Sincerely,
Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman

New Castle County Not Getting Fair Share of Farm Preservation \$\$\$

To avoid the close scrutiny of the Delaware Farm Bureau, a blowup was ignited by someone at the Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation. This team in the last 20 years has spent \$207 million to purchase perpetual easements to keep Delaware farms from being lost to development. In that period, more than 50% of New Castle County's tillable acres were developed. Some of the richest farmland in the country became stores and parking lots.

Through the Realty Transfer Tax (which is used to get matching federal funds) and direct county contributions, we have been responsible for producing half that amount. Yet farms in this county received

only a bit more than 15% of the dollars invested. The Gordon Administration is determined to go after federal funds directly and preserve farmlands east of Route 1 which were nearly lost to developers and then try to get others into a preservation status. It has been estimated that it might be done within 7 years. That would require a little bit of the Realty Transfer Tax to be returned or some requirement be put on the Foundation to do more for this County. They have ignored for a long time the need to spend more to build a barrier of farms ringing growth areas to stop sprawl and annexation in SNCC. We lose not just taxable land down there, but also territory governed by the County. Yet those residents will continue to need State and County services into the future. This is not a good formula for a state that has lured in new residents by claiming to be a tax haven.

Whether we should do nothing and eventually allow the rising sea level to take most of DE, whether in the interim as food production becomes increasingly difficult in a world of extreme climate instability we allow ourselves to become dependent on other regions to obtain all our food, and whether we allow one of our top two industries to disappear seem easy questions to answer. Get out your Civic League Directory and email your elected Council Members and legislators! Tell them our farmlands must get a higher priority. They must think about the future in realistic terms. Action now will mean we have land and food in the future.

P.S. to fellow Civic League Director Fritz G., The U.S. Department of Agriculture agrees with you about the 25 years. Will be removed from the law.

Opinion of Christine Whitehead

From : C.M. Weymouth, AIA
DRAFT

Sponsors

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF DELAWARE

HOUSE BILL NO

AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 1 OF TITLE 9 OF THE DELAWARE CODE BY ADDING THERETO A NEW SUBCHAPTER III RELATING TO STATE LAND USE PLANNING WITH DESIGNATED CAPITAL EMPHASIS AND PROVISION FOR RESIDENTIAL GROWTH BASED UPON A PREREQUISITE, EXPANDED ECONOMIC BASE.

Synopsis of Proposed Legislation:

Subject Legislation returns Land Use overall determination within State Jurisdiction and for residential growth, residential need determined upon prerequisite long term economic growth requiring proximate residential housing. For permitted residential growth, provision is herein made for direct fiscal responsibility for such growth to be upon those immediate user beneficiaries, such to include Owner responsibility for necessary infrastructure, including but not limited to roads, sewers, lighting, and, substantially, capital and maintenance costs of schools, and future ongoing physical maintenance thereof demanded by such development and for existent private housing development, including but not limited to maintenance/upkeep, snow removal, etc.. Be it further provided in subject legislation in denial of additional residential growth, such provision consistent to earlier resolve by the Civic League for New Castle County, that such restriction determined herein to continue forth, diminishing State and local government duty, fiscal outlay and employment until there exists necessary economic basis requiring an additional housing response and with adequate tax base immediate thereto to absorb such costs.

WHEREAS, planning, zoning, and the regulation land use have become of the most important functions delegated to County and Municipal governments (in their administrative and legislative capacities); and because decisions made by each sub government have far reaching and serious consequences for the future of this entire State and our neighboring jurisdictions: and

WHEREAS, the quality of our lives, the health of our citizens, the appearance of our natural and manmade areas, the functioning of our roads, the health of our waters and air, the sustainability of our wildlife, the availability of local food sources, the safety and security of our residents, are each impacted by actions and decisions by subject government sub units, though, in fact, fiscally underwritten by direct State and Federal subsidy and,

WHEREAS, a disproportionate number in population have moved to Delaware due to low taxes and have chosen to stay for those purposes and the new found quality of life and open space, and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the State Legislature with its preemptory powers to clarify existing standards, formulate new standards to guide government sub units and their subject agencies,

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE: Section 1. Chapter of Title 9 of the Delaware code is, hereby, amended by adding thereto a new Subchapter which shall read as follows:

Subchapter III. Coordination of State, County and Municipal Planning under strict guidance of economic parameters and assignment of fiscal responsibility.

Sec Mandates of local planning agencies and sub unit governments

Local sub unit government mandates shall be modified to the following:
Existent and proposed State comprehensive planning and regulatory provisions, Federal laws and regulations for roads, infrastructure, pertaining to the environment health, safety and welfare shall be followed in strict accord. Local planning agencies, including Counties and all Municipalities and unincorporated lands thereto shall place upon the individual land owner fiscal responsibility for all elements of infrastructure as heretofore described and the continued enforcement of such maintenance upon the individual land owner, whether as enjoined local civic body or, alternately, as an individual. No State and Federal mandate may be altered or nullified.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that any existent or proposed residential subdivision within any unincorporated lands of the various Counties shall provide, at their own cost, maintenance of those correspondent subdivision roads, walks, local open space/parks, sewers, including but not limited to snow removal, lighting replacement with school capital costs apportioned to each land owner and with incumbent user fee for the later based upon projected enrollments. County Parks and Libraries shall be incorporated within the State system, the County Police system reincorporated into the State Troop. It shall not be the responsibility of the State to establish or maintain local feeder roads to the intrastate road system. State capital improvement costs, now and henceforth, until determined by the State Legislature in future session, shall be confined to the State's long term private economy and comprehensive protection of Health, Safety and Welfare, wherein not provided by the Federal government or private, independent resource. Capital investment by the State shall be immediately applied, and only as found under current State income, for the overall economic improvement of interstate road access, high speed passenger and freight rail, harbor and waterway and air transport improvements, state-of-the-art communications, law access and highest end applied educational research.