

Civic League for New Castle County

Informed Citizens for Sound
County Growth

2017- 2018

Annual Membership Letter &
Dues Notice

Civic League News

Thank you for your continued Support

We would like to thank every one of you who has renewed membership year after year. We hope you are enjoying the monthly newsletter, our guest speakers, and the topics we have debated upon in the last year.

It is our mission to provide information to help guide civic leaders and citizens of NCC in advocating for their own quality of life through careful review of new legislation and policies from State and County agencies.

We believe that informed citizens are the strongest defense against thoughtless and imprudent public policy. We value transparent, ethical government, and properly planned growth strategies that benefit all of New Castle County's Residents.

I would like to highlight some of the issues that our board and members have been involved with recently. We have been assisting various communities in understanding the complicated County land use process. We have authored and passed resolutions supporting their positions, and provided a public platform for their concerns to be addressed.

Our members have served on the transition teams for our new County Executive, lobbied the General Assembly and County Council on issues of importance to the CL, and passed several resolutions regarding parks, lead paint, legalized marijuana, and the Coastal Zone Act. We have hosted debates for County and Statewide Candidates.

Our History



Founded in 1962, The Civic League is a non-profit, non-partisan organization made up of local and regional civic groups, and individuals who monitor government. We assist communities with zoning and planning issues and have always advocated for the public interest. We find it important to provide a forum for debate on the pressing public policy issues of our time and take action.

Our membership is diverse and consists of current and former legislators, civic leaders, business groups, governmental planning agencies, public committee and board members, as well as individuals who care greatly about ethical, smart government, well thought out growth strategy, and transparent public policy.

www.civicleagueforncc.org

We have also welcomed the Secretary of Transportation, County Executive, Land Use General Manager, and others as our guest speakers.

Our members have been intimately involved in workshops for the revisions of the United Development Code. This is an ongoing comprehensive process that involves code language changes in several phases. The first phase was completed with the passing of three ordinances by County Council.

These ordinances are part of a review and update of targeted sections of the UDC, including guiding principles, establishing economic overlay districts, and neighborhood preservation overlay districts.

The next phase will involve process and site design. As always, we will provide our input and opinions on these updates in the newsletter.

We have been following the vacant property issues since assisting the Recorder of Deeds in passing legislation in 2014 that established a registry for these properties. Unfortunately, we found the Dept. of Land Use was not keeping a comprehensive database on registered properties, and only was aware of the 1300 that had been identified by code complaints. A new ordinance was passed that mandates registry, and it seems the new LU General Manager will be seeking a more data driven approach to identifying vacant property, with the intent of encouraging these homes to be rehabbed, and eventually occupied.

As far as the State is concerned, we are extremely disheartened that HB 190 was passed, despite over two dozen groups coming together to ask for a public dialogue, and studies to be performed on the economic and environmental impacts of the Coastal Zone Act in its current form. We passed a resolution on the bill, which you can find in our June Newsletter. Our hope is that there will be open, transparent, and public process when the regulations are promulgated, and that no conversion permits shall be issued prior to that occurrence.

These are just a few highlights of what the Civic League does, and will continue to do. We ask that you consider supporting us now by simply continuing your membership, submitting articles for our newsletter, attending meetings, or joining our board. The civic community is stronger when we work together.

The Importance of Civic Involvement

A note from the President

Civic engagement is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means protecting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes by using individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.

There are many ways to positively affect your community. One way is by simply joining your local civic association and regularly attending their meetings and social events. Communities that exhibit a strong collaboration between neighbors and maintain open lines of communication tend to have a greater response from their elected officials. This is due to the fact that they possess a sense of awareness of the

problems facing their communities, are actively working on solutions and are constantly in contact with those in positions to address various concerns. As the saying goes, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease”. This remains true of issues regarding crime, code complaints, land use planning, park maintenance, transportation planning, and road maintenance; all of which civic associations can help address.

We all have the same hopes for our communities. Hopes like feeling safe in our homes; to know that future generations will have clean parks and open spaces to explore; that our schools can properly educate our children; that our property values will stay constant; that our tax dollars are being spent responsibly; that we are not exposed to toxic contaminants in our groundwater and soil; and that any development surrounding our neighborhoods will improve, not diminish, our quality of life. We also expect certain things from our elected officials. We expect that they are to remain accessible, that they will continually work to address our concerns, and do so with both transparency and openness, and that they continually uphold their oaths of office.

Unfortunately, for many communities this is simply not the case. Their concerns are ignored. They do not have the organizational strength to advocate for their own interests. They cannot find people willing to serve them in a way that will meet their needs. In today’s political scene it is clear that not all politicians are created equally. There are far too many who tend to grandstand, and who are much more interested in their own upward mobility rather than serving their constituency. When there are no strong civic leaders present to take them to task, we all suffer from our government being all the weaker. We suffer while laws are implemented which do not reflect our values, but rather the will of the special interests. Our health suffers with a lack of accountability. Our commutes get longer from deteriorating infrastructure. Crime goes unaddressed. In these seemingly forgotten communities many have come to expect that these are the conditions with which they must live with, but this should not and cannot continue to be the case.

Maintaining a strong community requires constant diligence. It means sending emails, making phone calls, attending meetings, and joining a civic association board, or a civic umbrella group. It means setting up neighborhood crime watches. It means fighting the good fight over and over again, not because it is easy or politically sound, but because it is the right thing to do. We must protect our quality of life and remember the value of ground level advocacy.

It takes up time and effort and for some of us, and that sometimes comes at a personal toll. Yes, we may have less time with our families and less time to relax and just breathe. But I can assure you, it is worth it. Our communities are worth it. Our futures are worth it.

- Jordyn Pusey

Please renew your membership today!