



CIVIC LEAGUE
For New Castle County

Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth

P.O. Box 11523 - Wilmington, DE 19850

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APRIL
2008

COUNTY COMMENTS

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

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

MEETING

7:00 PM at the Paul Sweeney Public Safety Building
3601 N. duPont Hwy
(Rte 13 South of DMV, North of Gracelawn Cemetery)

AGENDA

Prudent Use of Your Taxes

Dave Burris, Founding President of the Delaware Taxpayers Coalition will be the featured speaker

“The Delaware Taxpayer Coalition does not believe taxes are inherently evil, but it does believe those tax dollars should be handled with utmost, care, discipline and respect for where those monies come from”.

Budget Up, Revenue Down for New Castle County

The budget is up and the revenue is predicted to be down, making it necessary to dip into reserves for 2009, is the gist of the March 18, budget address by New Castle County Executive Chris Coons.

There is no way for New Castle County to have a balanced budget for fiscal 2009, in the traditional sense that money received will equal money spent. The proposed 5% increased budget of \$240 million spending will be \$17 million more than the anticipated revenues of \$213 million. Taxes were increased in each of the past two years, but a further tax increase this year would be unpalatable. This means a balanced budget can only be achieved by withdrawing \$17 million from reserves.

Employment levels are stable but costs for personnel keep increasing due importantly to a County Council legislated mandatory 5% increase in wages annually – for selected employee groups, enjoyed by no other public employee groups in the state - in the face of declining revenues from old sources and no new sources on the horizon. Compounding of wage increases will totally deplete fund reserves within a few years. Recall that personnel costs constitute 84% of the County's General Fund: \$144 million of the Fund Total of \$172 million.

You are invited to email your comments to civicleagueforncc.org, and to attend budget hearings by County Council on Monday afternoons from 3 to 5 Pm in the City/County Building at 800 North French Street, prior to the budget being voted on by June 1, 2008.

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.

Dan Bockover,
President

WWW.
CivicLeagueforNCC.ORG

PO Box 11523
Wilmington, DE 19850
302-529-1529

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Visit our website at:
www.CivicLeagueforNCC.Org

Yard Waste Ban Revisited

This is a follow-up to our Yard Waste article in the February issue of County Comments.

Yard waste reaching the Cherry Island landfill over the course of a year is calculated to weigh 50,000 tons with a volume of 90,000 cubic yards*. It poses the question – how much is this contributing annually to the increasing height of the landfill. The surprising answer is – Not Much! Perhaps three inches.

Check these numbers on your pocket calculator. Cherry Island is reportedly using 238 acres of a 520 acre site. Therefore 90,000 cubic yards piled one foot high would occupy 2,430,000 square feet or 55.785 acres @ 43,560 sq. ft. per acre, thereby annually adding some three inches to the landfill height. (55.785 acres used, divided by 238 acres available, equals 0.23439 foot or three inches).

Then consider the matter of compaction. Yard waste compacts well - often rated at 50% in the industry - further lowering the annual yard waste height to just one and a half inches. Each year there is further settling as the yard waste decomposes. This incidentally produces methane gas which can be collected and sold for even a minor profit.

Homeowners are being asked to pay extra for a problem that may not really be a problem.

Right now, while the Delaware General Assembly is still in session, may be a good time to urge your elected leaders to take a second look at the situation. It's not complicated and won't take much of their time. But it could save money for you now, and even more in the years to come.

**These estimates are provided courtesy of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) and the Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DWSA)*

Transparent Resolution Adopted March 18, 2008

A RESOLUTION OF THE CIVIC LEAGUE FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY in Support of Adoption of Senate Bill - 4 in the Delaware General Assembly

WHEREAS, The General Assembly of the State of Delaware has exempted itself from the laws governing Freedom of Information that apply to all other governmental agencies in the state, and

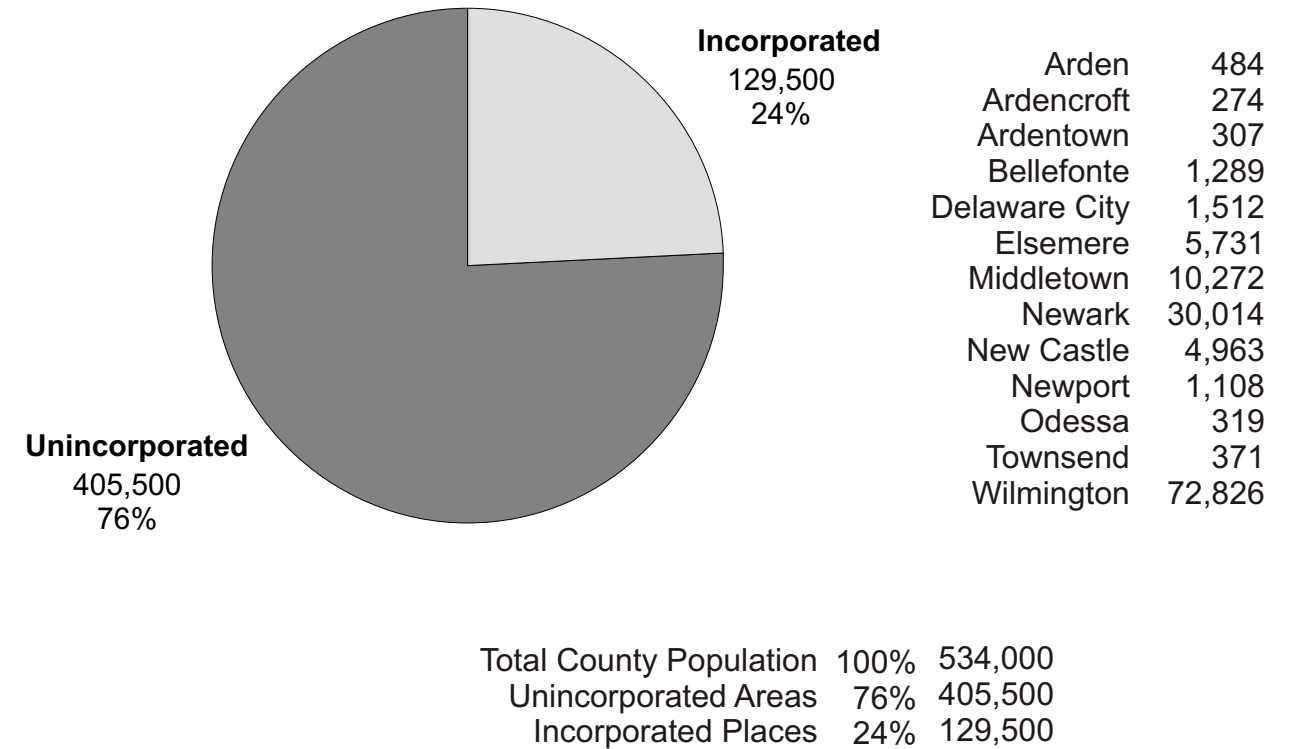
WHEREAS, The Citizens of Delaware have a right to know how their state is being governed and how their tax dollars are being spent,

Now, therefore,

Be it Resolved, That the Civic League for New Castle County strongly urges the Senate of the State of Delaware to pass Senate Bill 4 that will provide open access to all proceedings of the Delaware General Assembly in session or committee. All records of such proceedings shall be open to the public upon request in accordance with Delaware's Freedom Of Information Act laws.

When Size Is Significant

Civic Associations in unincorporated areas may find this chart helpful whenever County resources are being allocated.



Source: US Census 2006

General Assembly To Buy/Sell What on June 30 ?

In recent times it seems the General Assembly has made major purchases at midnight, June 30, as legislative sessions were ending. Cited as examples are Garrison's Golf Course, MBNA Louvier's Gold Course, and Bank Of America's Rodney Square Court House. Legislation was quietly passed at mid-night last June 30 allowing for the sale of our toll roads by concurrence of three State department heads – and no legislative oversight.

This year, without passage of "transparency" legislation, what is it possible that the General Assembly, at midnight June 30, may buy – or sell on our behalf. You are encouraged to actively support pending bills calling for transparency in government; otherwise, consider sending an email to: President@CivicLeagueforNCC.Org. with your "buy/sell" suggestions and comments.