



# CIVIC LEAGUE For New Castle County

*Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth*

P.O. Box 11523 - Wilmington, DE 19850

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**NOVEMBER  
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

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# COUNTY COMMENTS

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## MEETING

**Tuesday, November 18, 2008**

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

## AGENDA

### Dialogue with Chris Coons

Our newly re-elected New Castle County Executive

## Something for Everyone with Workforce Housing

What do you get when you combine the dreams of social engineers with the aspirations of clever developers, fueled by the government guaranteed money of bankers: Workforce Housing.

Recall the old days when the factory owner provided housing to keep his employees content and nearby. Fast forward to today when with mixed motives, social engineers want to concentrate people near where they work, shop, and recreate. Developers want to maximize the number of housing units per acre. Bankers want to safely loan all the money possible. One difference today is the factory owner is now leaving town.

For modern day innovators, the object of their affection is the modest income worker; Too poor to afford a "McMansion" on spacious grounds, too proud to live in existing enclaves, but eager to live in a tricked up dwelling disguised among affluent neighbors. Get details by perusing the new legislation.

Take all these basic ingredients and stir in with the desire of legislators for a quick budget fix based on increased transfer taxes, and what do you have: Workforce Housing. Along with it is the need for new infrastructure, more streets and sewers, new schools and additional fire and police protection. Missing is a realistic provision for financing it.

Workforce legislation has come upon us with what many believe is undue haste and less than full explanation. It also comes at a time of new home

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## Good Government Reception

The Civic League is joining with the League of Women Voters and other civic organizations in sponsoring a Good Government Reception on Monday, December 8, 2008.

You are invited to attend on behalf of your civic organization to mingle with re- elected and newly elected officials and use this opportunity to discuss with them your ideas on "quality of life" issues and other community concerns.

The cost is \$3. Light snacks will be served. There will be an open bar.

### Location:

Terrace at Greenhill Restaurant, (Ed Oliver Golf Course),  
800 N. duPont Road, Wilmington  
5:30 - 8:00 pm

Please mark your calendar now and call the League of Women Voters office at  
(302) 571-8948 or email [lwvde@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvde@voicenet.com)  
to help them anticipate attendance.

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inventory build up along with an abundance of existing homes for sale in all areas and in all price ranges. Even the future portends but virtually no housing growth, per near-flat population growth projections.

The alarm bell of future problems began ringing with the unanticipated rush of developers filing plans now, even for future dreamed developments, to preserve density bonus approvals (up to twice the normally allowable units per acre). This amounts to legally reserving a place in line to immediately benefit upon recovery of the current economy.

This may be an appropriate time for a careful review of the workforce housing concept; not merely the benefits for participants, but for the financial and social impact on the entire encompassing, taxpaying community.

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## BILL OF RIGHTS

### Entitled protections for homeowners as adjacent areas are planned

Hi fellow members of the choir

As a certified eccentric, I suggested during my participation on Livable Delaware, a residents bill of rights regarding development. Predictability, there was plenty of can't do but not much can do.

- 1) Involve surrounding neighbors and communities.
- 2) Certify that sewage will not overflow within the community or downstream / upstream.
- 3) Certify stormwater will not aggravate on-site or downstream / upstream areas.
- 4) Prohibit building on flood plains or flood prone areas.
- 5) Prohibit construction on steep slopes to minimize erosion and sedimentation.
- 6) Prohibit construction on riparian buffers.
- 7) Prohibit construction on mature forest areas.
- 8) Provide suitable active / passive open space.
- 9) Prohibit construction on aquifers and well heads.
- 10) Prohibit construction which will result in LOS in excess of level D.
- 11) Design residential streets to minimize cut through traffic.
- 12) Certify adequate school capacity.
- 13) Certify adequate police coverage.
- 14) Certify adequate EMS service
- 15) Certify that library service is adequate.
- 16) Provide statement that existing community fabric and quality of life will be maintained and how this will be done as called for in the 07 comp plan.
- 17) Provide for adequate parking.
- 18) Provide overlay of maps of protected areas to verify construction will not infringe on these areas. This can easily be done with existing county GIS mapping data and technology.

Respectfully,  
Fritz Griesinger  
Community Advocate

## Stoltz Proposal in Perspective

We should all join in thanking Stoltz Real Estate Partners, Inc., for seeking **simultaneous** development of five parcels in Northern New Castle County.

Developers have traditionally pursued projects on an individual location basis. This makes it impossible to see the whole picture when evaluating proposals on a piecemeal basis. For example, along Route 40, decisions about granting approvals to build were only made by considering their potential impact on traffic on an intersection-by-intersection basis. Now that many new businesses are in place, and troublesome traffic is being encountered, it is probable that numerous earlier County approvals to build may well have been decided differently.

The lesson learned should be the importance of studying potential traffic impact well beyond the nearest intersection. There is a cumulative effect at work. The effect may not be appreciated in initial stages of traffic growth, but it will definitely be recognized in due time. Thus the fortuitous Stoltz circumstance.

It should be noted at the outset that only four of the five proposed Stoltz projects are in close proximity and contributing to the feared traffic gridlock. Traffic impact of the New Castle City project should of course be studied and determined on its own merits. The other four should be studied as a unit as will be clear from a quick look at a map. Note that no freeways, and only limited capacity highways, serve the compact area location of Barley Mill Plaza, Greenville Center, #20 Montchanin Road/old Columbia Gas site, or Shops of Brandywine Valley.

These four locations would occupy more square footage area than all the King of Prussia Mall. The businesses in them would involve interaction with more people than reside in Northern New Castle County. Page 30 of your Civic League Directory provides a quick glimpse of the local population today and projected for 2030 indicating that major outside traffic would be engendered by successful operation of the four projects.

It is this influx of traffic from people working, shopping, transacting business - that portends to overwhelm the current network of highways and even byways.

Unfortunately, no factual basis exists today for determining how much of the area's current highway capacity is already in use and committed or how much capacity is available to accommodate future growth. Studying individual roadway intersections **one at a time** will clearly be inadequate for evaluating the interacting impact of the four Stoltz proposals.

Often cited is the specter of picturesque and historic secondary roads being clogged with traffic seeking to bypass overloaded main thoroughfares. Even the accuracy of this assumption can only be addressed with the benefit of an **area-wide traffic study**.

We are requesting that our elected representatives - State and County - acknowledge their responsibility for the overall welfare of its citizens by committing full resources and participating in the evaluation process in seeking a long range accommodation for the Stoltz proposals. This must begin by first determining just how much traffic the affected area can bear. Then keeping in mind the coming traffic capacity needs of others seeking to continue orderly growth in the area, particularly those of Woodlawn Trustees and its hundreds of acres of land slated for development in coming years.

There is no turning back traffic congestion once it has built. But there are advance steps that can be taken to minimize it. It all begins with a measurement of traffic today.