



**CIVIC LEAGUE**  
**For New Castle County**

*Informed Citizens for Sound County Growth*

P.O. Box 11523 - Wilmington, DE 19850

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**DECEMBER**  
**2009**

**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, January 19, 2010**

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

## AGENDA

THE LAW AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF  
NEW CASTLE COUNTY MAINTENANCE CORPORATIONS  
Guest Speaker: Former Senator Steven H. Amick, Esq., of  
the Law Firm of Conaty, Curran, and Sisk in Newark

## Stop Deepening the Delaware River

Deepening the Delaware River from a depth of 40 to 45 feet puts in jeopardy all who rely upon the river, and wastes tax dollars in the process.

According to the Army Corps of Engineers, the few economic benefits claimed for the deepening would be enjoyed largely by six oil facilities - one of which recently shut down. None of these facilities has invested in the project and some even oppose the deepening, or have stated that it would provide them with no benefit. Why should taxpayers fund a project to which the primary beneficiary, a multi-billion dollar industry won't contribute a dime?

A deepened channel is not needed to support port economic growth. In the past five years alone, record port growth has taken place along the Delaware with its current 40 foot depth. For the year 2007, the Port of Camden recorded its third-highest volume in its history. Last summer the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority reported that containership traffic in the region was up 12%.

According to DRPA, deepening to 45 feet will still not be enough depth for all ships. Meantime the current 40 foot depth is serving the region well as a feeder port, a role that is emerging for all ports along the Delaware. It will continue to be adequate as vessels that are becoming available for the feeder require less than 40' draft.

Deepening the river to 45 feet is not the same as the constant dredging necessary to maintain its current 40 foot depth. Deepening includes widening reaches of the channel into areas that are not now currently dredged - a number of which have been characterized as toxic hot spots.

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Deepening brings with it the need to dispose of more spoils - soils laden with toxins which are going to be disposed of in areas and in ways that bring harm.

Contrary to the public claims of Pennsylvania Governor Rendell, all of the spoils are going to NJ and DE communities; None of it is planned for disposal in Pennsylvania.

The undocumented claims of jobs being made by Gov. Rendell for the project have never been documented by him or anyone, and in fact, are not even based on jobs from the deepening - they are jobs that would be created by other port projects Pennsylvania is considering. By contrast, the deepening puts at risk the fish, shellfish, and wildlife that are critical for providing hundreds of millions of dollars for income and jobs.

These jobs, this revenue, and the community economies dependent upon them are vitally important to our region - and they are all put at risk by deepening the Delaware.

Courtesy of  
Maya K. van Rossum  
Delaware Riverkeepers

(See the full text of this article: [www.CivicLeagueforNCC.Org](http://www.CivicLeagueforNCC.Org) - click on "Members Comments"-Editor)

## **UNFAIR TO SENIORS: Under the Health Care Plan, Medicare beneficiaries 13% of our population will pay over 30% of the projected added cost**

An urban legend tells about a large construction project with a severe pilferage problem. In desperation, the general contractor fenced the worksite and put guards at the gate. At quitting time about twice a week thereafter, the same laborer left with a wheelbarrow full of straw. Each time, the guards combed thru that straw, finding nothing. On the last day of construction, when the same laborer left (this time without a wheelbarrow), the guards said: "Buddy, we know you've gotten away with something, but we couldn't catch you at it. Just for old time's sake, would you tell us what you've been stealing?" The laborer said: "Wheelbarrows!"

The lesson: When you want to hide something really big, put it out in front where it's so obvious that nobody notices what you're up to.

Our Congressional leaders and our President are using exactly that strategy to sell us the sort-of-universal health care plan they've contrived. They've put some key details out in front. All it takes to understand the thievery is some census data and some simple arithmetic we can do in our heads.

At the outset, the President announced that he wouldn't accept more than a \$900 Billion increase of the Government's health care expenditures over a 10 year period. Then Congress announced that it would save a fortune by reducing Government expenditures on Medicare by \$400 Billion over 10 years as reported by media friendly to the President, or by \$500 Billion over 10 years as reported by unfriendly media. Let's split the difference and call it \$450 Billion over 10 years. It's still unclear whether the Medicare expenditure cut will pay for half of the \$900 Billion or a third of the unmentioned \$1.35 Trillion sum over a 10 year period. So let's work it both ways.

Let's recognize that virtually all of what Medicare spends right now buys health care that Medicare beneficiaries and their physicians regard as needed, sometimes crucially, though perhaps sometimes overpriced. Recognize also that precious little has been said about how the Government plan will reduce the PRICE for that care. Reducing what Medicare pays doesn't mean the price goes down. What Medicare doesn't pay, the beneficiaries (or their supplemental insurers) will have to pay for unless they do without. And if the supplemental insurers pay, the premiums must rise.

A simple Internet search leads to [www.statehealthfacts.org](http://www.statehealthfacts.org) where the following numbers appear. As of July 2008, the total numbers of Medicare beneficiaries were 44,831,390 nationwide (13% of the nation's population), and 139,709 for Delaware (also 13% of the State's population). (The population numbers shown at the website are 300,544,200 nationally and 859,800 for Delaware.)

Now we can see what's hidden in plain sight. Between a third and a half of the cost of the planned increase in the Government's health care expenditures is to be imposed on about an eighth of the total population. Our Congressional leaders and the President evidently think that's fair, because it's their plan.

With simple arithmetic, we compute the burden that the plan imposes on Medicare beneficiaries. \$900 Billion over 10 years is \$90 Billion per year. \$450 Billion over 10 years is \$45 Billion per year. Divide the Medicare reduction by 45 million Medicare beneficiaries nationally. That's \$1000 per beneficiary per year, \$2000 per year for a married couple both on Medicare. That's how much more will have to come out of their wallets to get what they're getting now, or to pay the premiums for that supplemental insurance, unless they do without.

Simple arithmetic also shows that locally, \$140 million per year that Medicare beneficiaries now spend - - or have available to spend - - for food, goods or services other than health care will be diverted from these other elements of our economy and used for health care. Or else they won't get the health care.

Remember also Gov. Markell's "Delaware Facing Forward" projection (while still the State Treasurer) that "Delaware will have an increasingly larger share of retirees and smaller proportion of workers. . . Delaware's population will grow by nearly a third between 2010 and 2030, with a majority of that growth among the state's senior citizen population." The burden placed on our senior citizens under the plan being sold by the Congress and the President is inherently unfair when averaged nationally. The burden on Delaware seniors will be even worse.

Analysis by Victor Singer

## **NEIGHBORS OF PROPOSED "MILLTOWN SQUARE" FIGHT REZONING**

Under the guidance of Bill Franey, President of the Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance, the neighbors of a proposed mixed use development to be known as Milltown Square have mounted an organized and appropriate campaign to stop the rezoning. By appropriate, I mean they understand the law that applies, they know this rezoning does not meet the standards for obtaining one, and they have catalogued the serious adverse impacts it will cause-all of which makes this clearly not in the public interest.

Approval or denial of a rezoning is completely within the County Council's control.

The location of the parcels at issue is a shallow strip along Limestone Road in what has been a residential neighborhood protected by dense vegetation and a slope from the heavy traffic on the other side. The houses are along Old Limestone Road and they include an old stone farmhouse built in 1789. It is important enough to be listed on the National Historic Register. This lovely small neighborhood will lose a significant percentage off the value of all the homes if Milltown Square is built. Apartments with stores and offices underneath will tower over them blocking sunlight and bringing foul air from thousands of automobiles to their yards when the vegetation is removed and the apartments are occupied. While this is a major "adverse impact," alone it might not be enough to stop the rezoning, but it creates more problems with runoff. The homes are much lower than the parking lots will be and they lie along a creek bank. Typically, storm water, oil, and debris wash off large parking lots. Flooding will undoubtedly occur during heavy rains and snow melts as water runs downhill. This puts all the homes at risk for destruction and affects those downstream as well.

State Senators Peterson and Sokola and Representatives Ramone, Manalokas and Gilligan appeared at the Planning Board hearing to state their concerns. In terms of the entire region, the most significant adverse impact will be on traffic safety. The intersection of Limestone Road, Milltown Road, and McKennan's Church Road has been an intractable problem for DeIDOT for years. A large shopping center and a filling station lie at the junction of these roads, and traffic movement cannot be further improved without removing all the hundreds of years of development that grew up around it. DeIDOT has managed to time all the lights on Limestone Road southbound so that cars approach the light doing at least 50 mph across three lanes until some peel off to the turning lanes onto Old Limestone Road or Milltown Road east or west. In the midst of this, cars are attempting to pull out of the filling station and the shopping center and the church or Old Limestone Road. Cars going south on McKennan's Church Road must turn right and then within a very short distance turn left onto Limestone Road. The backup of the four lanes at the stoplights can be a real mess. If they turn right and right again to go north on Limestone Road, they must watch out for cars entering and leaving the filling station and the shopping center, as well as cars turning north from Milltown Road headed east and the northbound lanes of Limestone Road. Can you imagine adding more turning cars to this scenario? The only way to avoid chaos at this intersection would be to have cars enter the new shopping/residential center from Old Limestone Road. That would create a problem where cars turn onto Milltown Road headed west because the roads are too close together and the older one cannot be seen until a driver rounds the corner.

DeIDOT-apparently under orders as all State agencies seem to be to approve anything that will provide even the most temporary jobs-approved the plans. The neighbors hired a traffic engineer to reveal the irrational nature of DeIDOT's decision.

All this detriment to the public interest means the rezoning does not measure up to the common law and statutory standards for approval. First, the uses are not needed. There are many vacancy signs all over the area stores and offices. There are even vacant apartments and rental homes in the region. So the first requirement for a rezoning is not present. Then the question of whether or not it complies with the Comprehensive Plan becomes critical. Ordinarily, the Council just amends the Comprehensive Plan when they want to approve a rezoning, but this time a paragraph stops them. The 2007 Comp Plan expressly says an infill plan like this should not be approved on a small strip parcel-which is a perfect description of this situation.

This vote will be a test of whether their "Smart Growth" policy can be handled by the Coons Administration and County Council in a reasonable manner. If they are willing to do so much harm for the sole financial benefit of a developer, we will know what to expect from future "Smart Growth" plans. If you want to comment on this rezoning, you need to contact your County Council Member. Each one needs to hear from constituents in his or her district. Councilman Cartier announced one night that he does not care what happens to anyone outside his district, but call him anyway if you care about the future of this County. If you are not sure in which district you reside and you do not use the Internet, call the Department of Elections and ask who represents you on Council. That number is 571-6545.

Opinion of Christine Whitehead

*(See "Elected Officials" section in your Civic League Membership Directory-Editor)*