



THE COMMITTEE OF 100

FYI

August 16, 2016

Wilmington Comprehensive Plan Update

Since late 2015, The Committee of 100 has been engaged with the City of Wilmington on updating its Comprehensive Plan, particularly on ways the City can attract more investment.

The Committee of 100 convened groups of leaders from the development, banking, law, construction, real estate, and architecture/engineering communities and asked them to assess the factors holding back Wilmington's growth – and to propose specific solutions. Over 25 professionals participated in the Wilmington Working Group sessions and the final recommendations were presented to the City in April.

The issues identified run the gamut from the need for a clearly enunciated neighborhood revitalization strategy, to City staff qualifications and attitude, to significant reforms in the City's permitting process.

The project reinforced The Committee of 100's belief that Wilmington's government and business community can be more effective partners if they work together to eliminate barriers to investment in the City. Recognizing that common purpose is the key to making Wilmington a more vibrant place to live and work.

Development Review Reform

In June, The Committee of 100 convened a meeting of the Wilmington Working Group, City of Wilmington officials including Lenny Sophrin, Ray Rhodes and Jeff Flynn, along with their consultant Karen Black, to review the recommendations.

The meeting focused on the second of the C100 Wilmington Working Group recommendations (listed below), namely that the permitting process must be made transparent, consistent and predictable so that developers have the information and confidence to invest in the City.

Karen Black, principal of May 8 Consulting, presented the City's work to-date and the first set of reforms to be implemented, including:

1. Creation and distribution of the current review process to every applicant.
2. Creation of checklists for all documents and materials required for a submission to an agency.
3. All forms and checklists made available online on a single web page.
4. Require all departments to inform applicants of incomplete forms within 48 hours of submission.
5. Identify key code provisions or procedural requirements that commonly cause delay or confusion and recommend fixes.

CSC Contributes Expertise and Resources

The City asked for assistance from The Committee of 100 to digitize the paper-based permitting process. C100 member Corporation Service Company (CSC) stepped forward to provide considerable expertise and staff resources to digitize the forms, which will soon be available online for the first time in Wilmington's history.

"In doing so, CSC facilitated an improvement the City would not have otherwise implemented this year."

Jeff Flynn, Director, Office of Economic Development

[Read the entire City of Wilmington thank you letter to CSC](#)

C100 Wilmington Working Group Recommendations

Here is the complete set of recommendation put forward to the City of Wilmington by The Committee of 100 Wilmington Working Group:

1. The City should partner with Cinnaire (DCIC) and other financial institutions to establish a loan fund for neighborhood revitalization to work in coordination with Wilmington's Neighborhood Conservation Land Bank and the Housing Partnership.
2. Establish a formal permit pre-application process, including development of a comprehensive checklist for moving through the process, and a transparent system of tracking the review process, possibly online. Consider establishing a Permit Clearinghouse group to coordinate and facilitate interdepartmental plan review and permitting decision-making.
3. Establish an advisory board of architects, engineers, contractors, and attorneys to periodically review the building code and recommend modifications to the City, seeking to minimize code conflicts hindering redevelopment projects.

The advisory board could also recommend improvements to the operation of the permitting and inspection process, including adequate staffing and training.

4. Work with The Committee of 100 and others to overhaul the City's zoning code. It is antiquated, unclearly written, and subject to arbitrary interpretation by staff.
5. Create a Comprehensive Plan working group focused on the visible indicators of the City's redevelopment strategies. The group should imagine the creation or redevelopment (and future maintenance) of major public features, such as Rodney Square, gateways into the city, principal multimodal transportation corridors, and should consider a parking masterplan.
6. Re-examine Wilmington's revenue structure to seek the most cost effective abatement options to spur investment in the City.

The Committee of 100 looks forward to continuing this collaboration with the City on reforms to encourage investment in Wilmington.

The Committee of 100 Part of Coastal Zone Act Modernization Discussion

The lead story by Molly Murray in the Sunday News Journal focused on efforts by The Committee of 100 and other groups to modernize the Coastal Zone Act.

"...for months now, the state's business community, led by the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 100, a coalition of the state's top businesses, has quietly begun to challenge the 45-year old act, suggesting it may be an impediment to the growth of high-wage manufacturing jobs in the state. They say the act hampers redevelopment of old industrial sites that could be cleaned up and put back into production, at a time when manufacturing jobs continue to flee Delaware, often replaced by lower-paying positions in service industries."

Later in the article, Paul Morrill, executive director of The Committee of 100, stated "the business community would like more flexibility in the act to upgrade and improve sites from Delaware City north to the Pennsylvania state line. There is no interest, he said, in developing virgin sites along the Delaware River and Bay."

[Read the entire article at delawareonline.com](http://delawareonline.com)

Prepay and Save on 2016-2017 Dinner Meetings and Member Receptions

We are pleased to once again offer Members the opportunity to save money by prepaying monthly meeting charges for next year's Committee of 100 meeting season. This **PREPAYMENT PLAN** includes Dinner Meetings in September and November 2016, and January and March 2017, plus the Annual Barbecue in June 2017. NOTE: The Committee of 100's Annual Auction in December 2016 and a special 50th Anniversary celebration we are planning for May 2017 are not included.

The popular Member Receptions continue! Every other month (October 2016 and February and April 2017), we will host an extended Member Reception with light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, with one drink ticket included with registration.

If you pay monthly, 4 Dinners Meetings (\$46 each) and 3 Member Receptions (\$25 each) plus the June BBQ (\$50) will total \$309. But if you take advantage of the **PREPAYMENT PLAN**, your cost for the same 8 events is only \$284, **a savings of \$25**, or attendance at one Member Reception free! Actually, you save even more - postage, bookkeeping and check handling in your office and The Committee of 100's office as well. Everyone benefits!

[Sign up today for the convenient 2016-17 Prepayment Plan!](#)

