

MILFORD LIVE

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First Juneteenth Celebration in Bicentennial Park



Southeast Second & Marshall Sts. Signal Under Review



All-Star Softball Thriller

HEADLINES



photo link: Marcia Reed



FIRST JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION HELD IN BICENTENNIAL PARK

Carney signed a bill making it a state holiday as well.

“It’s a holiday for everybody, not just black people. Juneteenth actually is one of the oldest known celebrations, commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on Jan. 1, 1863, it did not immediately free all enslaved people in the United States.”

Dr. Hollingsworth explained that Texas was seen as a safe haven for slaves even though the Emancipation Proclamation was issued which freed all slaves in Confederate states effective Jan. 1, 1863.

“It wasn’t until June 19, 1865, when several union regiments of the United States Colored Troops, led by Major General Gordon Granger marched along with more than 2,000 Union Congressional soldiers, traveled to Galveston, TX, to take control of the state with the news that the war had ended, and that the 250,000 enslaved people were now free,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Major Granger said the people of Texas were informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between the former masters and the slaves, and the relationship heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor.”

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BY TERRY ROGERS

Fourth Ward councilpersons Katrina Wilson and Jason James led the first Juneteenth celebration in Bicentennial Park on Monday, June 19. The celebration offered vendors providing items for sale as well as information on various organizations.

“Juneteenth is about where we came from, but also about what we’re doing to start this thing out putting God first,” Elder Oscar Walker of Williams Chapel in Bridgeville, said before leading the group in prayer. “It says ‘seek first the Kingdom of God and all these other things that we seek for will be added’”

After Elder Walker completed his prayer, Dr. Reba Hollingsworth, a noted Delaware historian, spoke about the history of Juneteenth. Dr. Hollingsworth pointed out that Juneteenth did not become a holiday until June 17, 2021, when President Joe Biden signed a bill making it a national holiday. On Oct. 10 of the same year, Gov. John

NOTICE

The Milford School District is again applying for funding, under IDEA B P/T (6-12) and IDEA-B 619 P/T Preschool, to provide special education services to those students identified as disabled. For the period of **July 2023** through **December 2024**, the District proposes to use this funding to assist in their students' programming.

1. The IDEA B P/T (6-12) funding will facilitate screening, evaluation and service delivery to eligible students ages 6 through 21.
2. IDEA B 619 P/T Preschool funding is requested to facilitate the delivery of services to children with disabilities birth through kindergarten.

We will be presenting information regarding the Child Find Process at the upcoming Federal Programs meeting to be held at the Milford Central Academy on June 27th, at 5:00.



The freedmen were advised to remain quietly in their present homes and work for wages, told not to collect at the military post nor should they be “idle.” Many of those living in Texas at the time were unaware that slaves had been granted freedom by President Abraham Lincoln two years earlier. Dr. Hollingsworth commented that the white slave owners were aware, but they had not informed their slaves that they were free.

Although Dr. Hollingsworth mentioned that President Lincoln had given credit to freed black men who fought during the Civil War, she also pointed out that his motives were not entirely based in abolitionist thinking.

“There is evidence that suggests that Mr. Lincoln’s proclamation was a tactical move designed not to free the more than 3,204,313 slaves in the United States until he could gain what he wanted, but he wanted to keep them slaves as long as possible, until he gained the support of his real plan,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Lincoln wanted to free Negroes gradually and to ship them out of the country to deport them, to move on what he called “racial cleansing” of the United States of America. Like Martin Luther King, Lincoln had a dream. His dream was to have a lily white America without Negroes and Native Americans. He tried to maneuver to fulfill his dream of ensuring that Negroes left America as a body as the Hebrew children left Egypt, Abraham Lincoln, like many white people in 1800s, was known to use the N word all the time in both public and private.”

After his election, President Lincoln had to deal with the issue of slavery, Dr. Hollingsworth continued.

“President Lincoln conceived the plan for emancipation of the slaves through compensation to slave owners by the United States government. Since Delaware, was the smallest of the slave-holding states, holding only 1,790 slaves, he decided to submit a proposition to the state of Delaware,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “The proposition was that the government of the United States would pay the state of Delaware the sum of \$900,000 so that there would be a gradual emancipation of slaves from year to year, extending over the period of 10 years. And that the payment that the United States will give to Delaware would pay the slave owners the value of the emancipated slaves. The Proposition passed in the Senate but it did not pass in the House. After that, President Lincoln and the Republican Party were unpopular in Delaware.”

Lincoln, himself, had darker skin and Dr. Hollingsworth suggested that he may have been confused about his own racial identity. She stated that there were 12 presidents who have admitted to having Negro blood, but, in her opinion, all people had Negro blood in their DNA. She continued that great pressure was brought on President Lincoln to free slaves at the outbreak of the Civil War.

“But he refused in his inaugural address, he repeated his often made statement that he had no wish to interfere with slavery where it already existed. His concern was to preserve the Union and to prevent the secession of the southern states,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “President Lincoln proposed the constitutional amendment to the

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from page 4

emancipation of slaves by the year of 1900. Now, God knows that Lincoln did not want to issue an executive order to emancipate the slaves, but he had to face facts. He could no longer dodge the issue. The Senate Republicans staged a revolt and threatened to bring down his government. Lincoln realized that he was on the brink of destruction. In order to save the Union, Lincoln had only one option and that was to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. He knew that if he failed to sign this proclamation, he would then be in rebellion in the north.”

In order to appease his supporters in the North, President Lincoln played politics with southern slave owners, making deals that exempted them from freeing slaves in areas that heavily depended on the practice, Dr. Hollingsworth explained.

“He shrewdly crafted the Emancipation Proclamation to reestablish slavery in favor of the southern masters. In a word, he re-enslaved some 500,000 slaves,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “In his own words, Abraham Lincoln said, the Emancipation Proclamation did not in and of itself, and would not make a single Negro free beyond our military reach. Lincoln broke faith with the slaves.”

The fact is that the Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves among the rebellion states, but did not in border states that had not joined the Confederacy, including Delaware, Dr. Hollingsworth stated. It was not until the ratification of the 13th Amendment in December 1865 when slaves were officially freed in Delaware.

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CULTURE



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BY TERRY ROGERS

Donnell Fears, a Dover native whose passion is promoting family-friendly events has partnered with the Boys and Girls Club in Milford to bring a carnival to the area. The William Fears Carnival and Fair Company offered rides, carnival foods and games on the grounds of the Boys and Girls Club. The carnival was held June 14 through June 17.

“I’ve always had an attraction for entertainment. I think that’s what led me to promotions. I’m from Dover and I just wanted to give the people something positive

DE PROMOTER BRINGS CARNIVAL TO BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

and that’s family oriented. And I think that’s what all three counties need as we as we looked around in today’s society,” Fear said. “The simplicity of family entertainment is historic. You don’t have it anymore. Most people have to wait yearly for the state fair to come. Jobs are scarce. When I was growing up, they had the summer youth programs for the kids that wanted work. There just seemed to be more opportunities and activities growing up, when I was younger, that seemed to be lacking today. I know there’s really nothing going on and one of the main things that we have going on is the crime and epidemics with drugs and alcoholism and mental health and things of that nature. So, when things like that happen, one of the first things that people say, ‘Well, if people had just had something to do, then maybe we wouldn’t have such problems.’ That’s where I come in as a promoter. I’m giving people something to do.”

Fears and his business partner and mentor, Bobby Wilson, operate F.E.A.R.S., Inc., which stands for “Forever Evolving Always Respecting Self.” They offer job training in various fields, mental health treatment as well as substance abuse counseling. The company partnered with Jim Houghton of Houghton Enterprises to bring a carnival to Smyrna which had over 125,000

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visitors. Fears' love of carnivals began when he was just 11 years old and got his first job as a carnival worker at the Blue Hen Mall.

"I can recall as a child walking from all alone from the Capital Green housing complex, something my friends and I did often because there was nothing else for us to do," Fears said. "Yes, we would have an afternoon school program that Ms. Butler, the CEO of Drop-A-Tot structured, but that was seasonal. Delaware State College would host an NYSP program but that, too, was seasonal. Other than that, we would sort of fend for ourselves. The 1980s and 90s was hard for young minorities. Sometimes we would have to wait for the city's free lunch program just to fill our bellies."

Since that time, Fears has watched some of the children he grew up follow a path of crime and drug abuse. Watching this, he knew he wanted to break the system and bring joy to communities, offering hope, providing family fun and providing jobs to those less fortunate.

"Some of the proceeds will go to the Boys and Girls Club," Fears said. "A lot of times they say charity begins at home but organizations like this are home to some. This is a way for families to make memories that will last a lifetime."

The carnival had typical foods like funnel cakes and ice cream, as well as the popular games many come to expect at a fair or carnival. Initially, Fears was told it may not be possible to bring the Himalaya, a popular ride, but he insisted. The ride was set up on the grounds

of the carnival close to The Zipper, which Fears says is one of his favorites. Fair goers were allowed to purchase individual tickets or a wristband was available for unlimited rides.

"The wristband is really a better way to go," Fears said. "Instead of coming back and getting eight tickets or 20 tickets, get a wristband and be done with it. The kids can wave it as if they are VIPs."

Putting smiles on people's faces is what drives Fears and he hopes the carnival becomes an annual event.

"This is an effort where we all have to collectively come together," Fears said. "We are a nation where we say, 'United We Stand,' so it's time we do just that. It's going to take everyone's help in joining forces and making a difference."

For more information about F.E.A.R.S., email info@fearspromotions.com or call 302-437-6364.



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FLAG DISPOSAL BOXES PLACED IN MILFORD

I adapted mine to be put at Tractor Supply and at Ace Hardware in Milford.”

The disposal bins are painted to resemble an American flag and have the Boy Scout fleur de lis displayed as well.

“The most challenging part of the project was figuring out how to paint and stencil the boxes to look like the American flag,” Caldwell said. “The most interesting part was hand painting the fleur de lis with my mom in our garage.”

According to the Department of Defense, the United States flag is considered a sacred symbol and the approved method for disposing of a flag that is no longer serviceable is to burn it. However, the flag should be burned in a dignified manner. For this reason, many military organizations like the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars hold special flag retirement ceremonies. The boxes provided by Caldwell will make it easier for the flags to be collected and retired appropriately. Many flag retirement ceremonies are held on Flag Day which was celebrated on June 14.

Caldwell was one of seven members of the Class of 2023 to earn Eagle Scout Honors.



BY TERRY ROGERS

Jackson Caldwell recently earned his Eagle Scout honor with a unique project that he learned about from another scout. Caldwell knew that the American flag had strict disposal requirements, but many people were unaware how to get them to a location where they could be disposed of properly. That was how he came up with the idea to build special flag disposal boxes.

“I built mine after getting the idea from another scout who built them to put outside,” Caldwell said. “However,

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STAFF REPORT

Second Street Players announces auditions for Brian Clemens's play, "Strictly Murder."

Director Mike Amory has announced open auditions for Second Street Players' production of "Strictly Murder." Auditions will be held from 6-8 p.m. on Monday, July 3 and Wednesday, July 5, at the Milford Senior Center, 111 Park Ave. Casting will be for five people: a woman 22-35 years of age, a man 25-40 years of age, two men 40+ and one woman 40+. SSP notes that the ages are set as guidelines for the parts and not exact for the person to audition. Those auditioning will participate in cold readings from the script. A prepared monologue is not requested.

Taking place in 1939, an English couple, Peter and Suzy, who are living in Provence in idyllic isolation, far, it seems, from the rumblings of the coming war. Their peace is shattered from within when Suzy discovers she has been betrayed: Peter is not the man he claims to be.

AUDITIONS ANNOUNCED FOR SSP'S FALL PRODUCTION

Suzy's life is thrown into turmoil as the possibility arises that Peter may in fact be a ruthless killer on the run. Then a Scotland Yard detective arrives, and events become even more complicated and frightening.

Please have your calendars to note any potential conflicts on your audition form that you may have between the auditions and the close of the show. Show dates are Sept. 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 2023. Auditioners **MUST** be available for all performances. Additional questions may be sent to the director, Mike Amory, at amorymj55@gmail.com.

Second Street Players values diversity and inclusion in casting and in all other areas of production. For a synopsis of the show and parts or other information about Second Street Players, please visit www.secondstreetplayers.com. "Strictly Murder" is presented through a special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

Second Street Players values diversity and inclusion in casting and in all other areas of production. This show is supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment of the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.



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BUSINESS



photo link: Marcia Reed



BY TERRY ROGERS

With sawdust and wood chips flying, nine chainsaw artists demonstrated their talents at an event sponsored by Milford Southern States over the weekend. The event, the first of its kind in Milford, also provided funds for Carlisle Fire Company.

“I had cut a tree down in my yard and decided to make the stump into something cool,” Josh Miller of Felton, who coordinated the event, said. “I’ve been doing this ever since. I go to events and competitions all over and decided to bring one to Delaware since there had never been one here.”

The event was well attended with an auction held on Saturday at 1 p.m. where people could bid on some of the unique items presented, some that were actually carved on site. Some of the unique carvings included bears, birds, signs and even pens.

CHAINSAW ARTISANS DISPLAY TALENTS IN MILFORD

“For many years, I wanted a decorative carving of a bear displaying welcome to my manor,” Glenn Gillespie posted on social media. “Marcia and I strolled through the [First State Chainsaw Carving] event where we discovered a little fella we have named Little Smokey.” With the comment was a photo of a small, carved bear with a welcome sign.

Bill Sammons, who attended the event on Saturday, said it was mind-blowing what the artists could do with a chainsaw and a stump. One visitor requested that a carver create a fire helmet for him, and his wish was granted.

Dawn Delia Ceriani, who attended with one of the carvers, commented on how exciting the event was, noting that they stayed in the Causey Mansion and had some of the “most amazing seafood.”

“There was incredible hospitality, I got to spend some time with bossman doing what he loves again and seeing awesome friends,” Ceriani said. “I even got some sand between my toes and got away from being the ice cream lady for a few days! It was a great carvecation.”

There were carvers from all over the United States, including two from Delaware as well as others from Maine, Michigan, Texas and more. Miller hopes to make this an annual event, planning to grow it as much as possible.

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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo credit: Ben Muldrow

SOUTHEAST SECOND AND MARSHALL STREET SIGNAL UNDER REVIEW

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council approved a purchase order that allows Century Engineering/Kleinfelder to evaluate whether the traffic signal at the corner of Southeast Second Street and Marshall Street is necessary. The review is part of a process that would allow DelDOT to take over signals throughout the town.

“Second and Marshall was on the list for upgrade and to later be accepted by DelDOT in terms of ownership, operation and maintenance. In the course of evaluating that intersection, they, as a matter of routine would evaluate the warrants for the signalling system,” Mike Svaby, director of Public Works, said. “And they’ve come upon the same situation as they found when they began to evaluate the intersection of South Walnut and Southwest Front and Causey that it could in fact, possibly be changed to a full stop. So, the process of evaluating that and if it comes out that the warrants are

no longer there for signals, they put together a package that we go back to DelDOT and recommended the change be a four-way stop as a one-year trial, the same way we’re doing at the intersections downtown.”

The cost of the evaluation by Century Engineering/Kleinfelder was \$53,900. Councilwoman Katrina Wilson, who expressed some concerns about the removal of the lights on Walnut Street, asked what was prompting the changes to signals throughout the town.

“This is not really a new thing where these changes are coming about. What is driving this is not really a new thing. Actually, before I began my tenure here in 2020, there was an effort to turn the city’s traffic signals over to DelDOT as a mutually desirable thing between the city and DelDOT,” Svaby said. “For us, so we don’t have to maintain and repair when there’s malfunctions.

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It is beneficial for DelDOT in that they can introduce the signals here in Milford to the Transportation Management Center and get control of their operation.”

Svaby explained that the process would lead to DelDOT taking over the signals and that this was just one of six that were on the list for review.

“One of them is part of the TAP project going on Northeast Front Street that’s already begun. Because of its physical location, that intersection and its upgrades to keep that signal has been absorbed by the TAP project and we will pay what we had budgeted for that upgrade and DelDOT will in fact be taking that signal over, that one won’t go away,” Svaby said. “But just as part of their process, now, DelDOT evaluates before they take another signal into their inventory, whether or not a signal is necessary, and in fact, the best way to control traffic at the intersection, and that’s what this process would do.”

Mark Whitfield, city manager, explained that if it is determined the signal is warranted, DelDOT would require the city to upgrade the signal system before they took it over. That process could be an expenditure of \$250,000 or more. He felt that spending \$53,000 to have it evaluated prior to requesting DelDOT to take it over was more cost efficient. Svaby also explained that the process was ongoing throughout the state with many municipalities reviewing the need for traffic signals as opposed to all-way stops.

Council voted unanimously to approve the purchase order.



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CITY STREETScape PLAN OPENED TO PUBLIC COMMENT

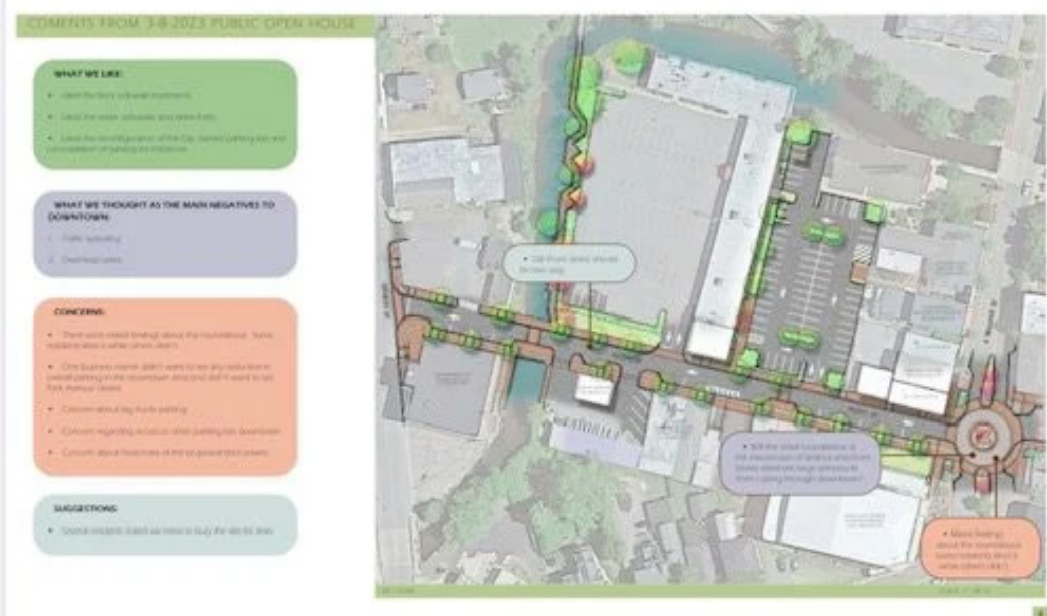
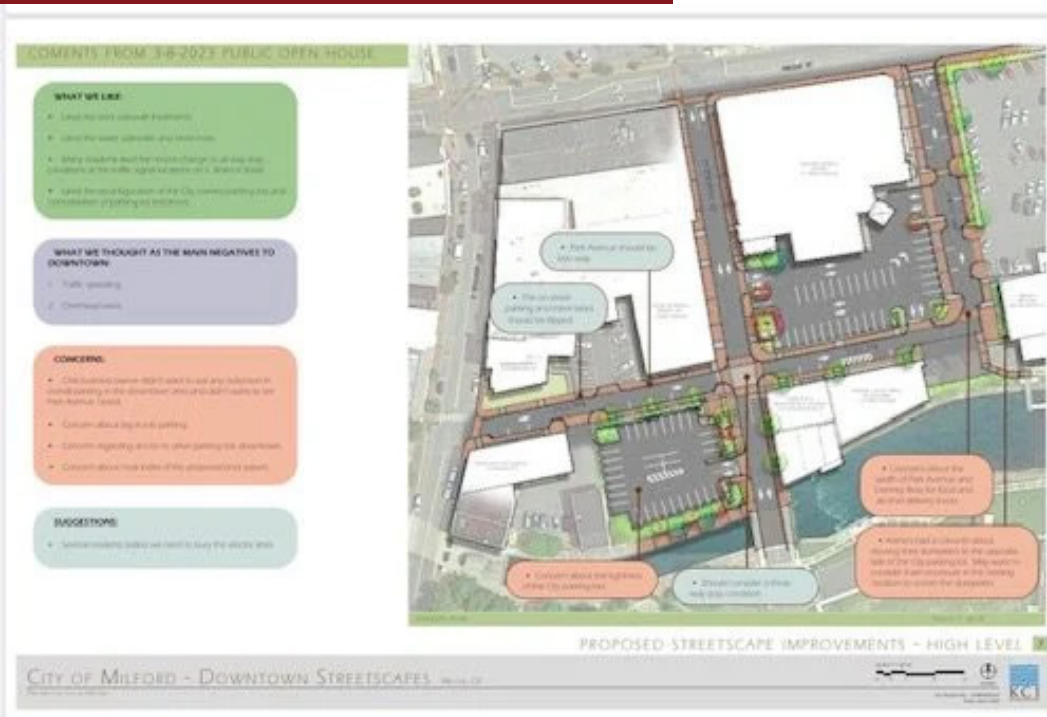
BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council chose to table a request to approve proposed downtown streetscape upgrades at a recent meeting. Due to some disagreement among council about changes downtown, it was felt that public comment should be accepted regarding those changes at the June 26 meeting.

“In October of 2022, the city engaged KCI Technologies, to develop concept plans and streetscape improvements in the downtown area. And this ties into several projects that are in our Capital Improvement Plan,” Rob Pierce, city planner, said. “I’ve included Southwest Front Street from South Walnut to North Church, and it also included Park Avenue from North Walnut and Denney Row from Park Avenue, Northeast Front and North Washington Street from the river to Northeast Front and also included to public parking lots that are in our CIP for repaving reconfiguration.”

Pierce explained that the streetscapes were outlined in the Downtown Master Plan and are part of the redevelopment plan for the central business district. Using the Rivertown Rebirth Master Plan, KCI Technologies performed field visits to the downtown area, met with staff and generated renderings for consideration. Public meetings were held March 8 at

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City Hall and those comments were incorporated into a presentation before council in April. After obtaining feedback from council, additional updates were made to the plan, which was presented for approval on Monday, June 12.

“Major changes or revisions from the last iteration that council reviewed, the roundabout that was at Walnut Street and Southwest Front Street was removed from the concept plan for now. And we also flipped the parking and the drive aisle on Park Avenue to give better separation and sightline visibility at that intersection at South Washington,” Pierce said. “We added potential retractable bollards on Park Avenue for our special events which would take place of our barriers that we currently use. And at the corner of Denney Row and Park, we left the dumpsters alone that are privately owned at the request of the business owner and tried to redesign that to provide some screening instead. So those are the main revisions to the plans.”

Councilman Andy Fulton asked if the dumpsters were along Park Avenue by Park Place or located elsewhere. Pierce explained they were located next to Arena’s and the original concept plan moved them in front of the building. The owner of Arena’s preferred leaving the dumpsters where they were. The new concept also added a loading area for deliveries near Arena’s. Councilman Brian Baer stated that he heard from constituents that they like the two-way traffic on Southwest Front Street in front of My Sister’s Fault. Councilman Todd Culotta commented that he was glad the lights had been removed near that location and that he felt it was working well.

“It’s not,” Councilman Fulton said. “It’s terrible. You can’t see the cars that want to go right and they just blindside you. All of a sudden, they are there. When you’re on Walnut and Causey Mansion is right there and you’re going straight, the cars coming out [from Causey Avenue], you can’t always see them. Then, vehicles coming out of our finance office because that’s always a surprise.”

Councilman Culotta commented that he lived near there and was through the area “15 times a day.” He also reminded council that he made the comment that the light at Causey should be “thrown in the river.” Councilman Fulton expressed concerns that someone was going to get hit at the intersection, whether it was a pedestrian or a vehicle. City Manager Mark Whitfield stated he had received many comments about the change to the intersection and that most of them were positive. Councilman Baer pointed out that the traffic signals were not at the intersection he was discussing.

“One thing for council to consider is if you have two-way traffic, you don’t have the ability to have on-street parking on that street,” Pierce said. “So, by eliminating one way of traveling, we can fit parking in, widen the sidewalks and make it more pedestrian friendly. So, two-way traffic would be more vehicle friendly while one-way traffic would be more pedestrian friendly.”

Councilman Culotta acknowledged that there had been an open house session where the public could make comments, but that he felt additional comments were necessary.

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“People have not had a chance to speak in front of us on their opinions on it. You know obviously there’s four different opinions right here, on council alone,” Councilman Culotta said “I mean, I like it. I mean, the stuff was good, and they’ll do a lot for downtown enhancement. It’ll do a lot to attract business and economic development. I agree with that. I don’t know if Southwest Front Street needs on-street parking. But I would like to hear from the public.”

Whitfield pointed out that the plan could be altered in the future if council desired two-way traffic, but Pierce stated that, for the purposes of design, the decision would need to be made ahead of time as converting a street from one-way to two-way was difficult once other streetscaping was completed. He also pointed out that he wanted to get moving on the projects in order to start the process as of July 1. Councilman Fulton also agreed that additional public comment was warranted.

“Okay. I appreciate Rob’s comment that they were generally well received,” Councilman Culotta said. “Well, I have a lot of neighbors that had a lot of things to say on it that weren’t included, so therefore, an open forum in front of all council, what would be ideal.”

Councilwoman Katrina Wilson asked how many times council planned to take the information to the public, concerned that this could lead to delays. She felt council needed to make a decision one way or another.

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SENATOR OPPOSES MENTAL HEALTH DAYS FOR STUDENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Republican senator believes Delaware’s youth needs to toughen up so they aren’t lost in the world when they grow up. Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said in Wednesday’s Senate Education Committee meeting that anxiety is a vital part of a child’s development and he was opposed to a bill that would allow students to take mental health days.

House Bill 3, sponsored by House Majority Leader Rep. Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, provides excused absences for the mental or behavioral health of a student. It also specifies that any student missing two days due to mental health to be referred to a behavioral health specialist.

According to a recent CDC survey, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an existing mental health crisis for students.

“One in five school aged children has a mental health condition and 45% of children may have experienced a

traumatic event,” said Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin and chair of the committee. “Each school district and charter school are able to determine the maximum number of excused absences allowable.”

Creating more opportunities for students to miss school is a problem when the state is already challenged with rebounding from the pandemic, both in terms of student achievement and absenteeism, Buckson said.

“There are plenty of kids that have real mental conditions,” he said, “but when you take a young person who just needs to go through stuff, it’s vitally important that in our schools they develop those calluses learned in a hallway or by having to get up and go to school if they don’t want to by facing their anxiety.”

He recalled the nerves his own daughter had when entering middle school.

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HEALTH



photo link: Bayhealth Medical Center

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



Sen. Dave Wilson

STAFF REPORT

As legislators near the end of their session, Sen. Dave Wilson introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 71, which will recognize the month of September 2023 as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month in the state of Delaware.

In 2023, approximately 288,300 cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed and result in an estimated

BILL NAMES SEPTEMBER PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

34,700 deaths. Studies show that 1 in 456 men under 50 will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, prostate cancer is the most common among men, followed only by skin cancer, but can be treated successfully if caught in the early stages. Since 2014, the incidence of prostate cancer has increased by about three percent overall and by about five percent for advanced-stage cancer. Statistics show that one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

The disease is more common in older men and has a higher incidence in non-Hispanic black men. About 60

percent of cases are diagnosed in men over 65 and it is rare in men under 40.

Prostate cancer is also the second leading cause of death in American men, only following lung cancer with about one in 41 men dying of the illness. However, with early detection, prostate cancer can be treated and there are currently more than three million men alive today who were diagnosed with the disease.

For more information about prostate cancer, visit the [American Cancer Society](#).

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SPORTS



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ALL-STAR SOFTBALL THRILLER ENDS WITH WALK OFF WIN

BY GLENN FRAZER

Over 40 of Delaware's best seniors took the field for their final high school softball game at the Smyrna Little Lass complex Tuesday evening. The "picture-perfect" weather complimented an outstanding performance by the Blue and Gold all stars in front of a large crowd.

The Gold team included players from Caesar Rodney, Delmar, Delmarva Christian, Indian River, Laurel, Sussex Academy, Sussex Central, Sussex Tech, Woodbridge and Brandywine. First year head coach Rachel Fetterman (Delmarva Christian) was assisted by Cape Henlopen's Mike Tkach and Michael Oberly (Brandywine). While the Blue was coached by Nicki Shirey of Smyrna, who is retiring, and was named the Coach of the Year by her peers. Shirey was assisted by Sean Brennan from Milford and Jon Thomas of Saint Mark's. The Blue team consisted of players from Appoquinimink, Archmere, Caravel, Charter School of Wilmington, Conrad, DMA, Middletown, Milford, Red Lion, Saint Mark's, Smyrna

and William Penn.

The Gold squad won the pregame skills competition to be designated as the home team for the extended nine inning game. The skills competition consisted of a home run derby, bunting accuracy, throwing drills, speed around the bases and an "around-the-horn" contest with the Gold barely edging the Blue.

The game was officiated by a group of upstate and downstate umpires who volunteered their time and travel for the event that benefits the DFRC. Jim Miles, Ed Morris and Dave Wilson represented the Delaware Umpire's Association, and alternated with Ron Kinslow, Rob Maloney, Ozzie May and Ron Lynam from the Delaware Softball Umpires Association.

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photo link: Downtown Milford Inc.

CFC VOLUNTEERS COULD BENEFIT FROM TAX REFUND

STAFF REPORT

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council approved an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Carlisle Fire Company that could allow its volunteers to receive a tax refund of up to \$1,000.

“In the FY2023 budget, one of the items in the budget was an additional \$65,000 that was to go to Carlisle and that \$65,000 was to pay for additional EMT firefighters that would be relocated or be located at the station that would improve response times,” Mark Whitfield, city manager, said, “In order memorialize what the agreement was between Carlisle and the city I have put together an MOU that outlines what this \$65,000 is for and that they will do reporting of such on their response time.”

In addition to the additional \$65,000 provided to the fire company, the city will now offer a tax refund up to \$1,000 of city property taxes for company volunteers.

“In order to qualify for the refund, the volunteer must be listed as active which means he or she has responded to at least 30% of all the calls for a 12 month consecutive

period, that they provide proof of residency that they have owned and occupied the home for a full 12 months, provide a receipt that they actually paid the taxes and that the city retains the right to determine final eligibility,” Whitfield said. “We reviewed this with the fire company and they agreed to this change in the MOU and we’ve also agreed that we would relook at the MOU that we signed back in 2020 and do a revision to include these items here.”

Councilman Jason James supported the new MOU terms.

“I think this addresses council’s request that there was some accountability for the taxpayer funds that we were allowing to be passed on to the fire department and it is to increase response time and safety for the residents of the city of Milford,” Councilman James said. “I think there’s a way this can be measured or at least try to attempt to measure it. I think it’s a good faith effort to show partnership for the safety of our citizens.”



Councilman Andy Fulton also felt that this agreement would be beneficial to the volunteers who risk their lives for the safety of others.

“The incentive is also wonderful for the people that get up in the middle of night to run out to fight fire, save lives, so on and so forth,” Councilman Fulton said. “I think this is a wonderful thing we’re doing, helping them increase their staffing. Also, increase the response time. It will decrease the response time and make everyone a little bit safer.”

Whitfield commented that it was his hope that the fund would require additional money due to an increase of volunteer firefighters living within city limits.

The MOU changes passed unanimously and the tax refund will be in place starting with the 2023-24 fiscal year which begins July 1, 2023.

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