

Introduced by: Ms. Kilpatrick
Ms. Diller
Date of introduction: July 23, 2013

ORDINANCE NO. 13-066

TO AMEND *NEW CASTLE COUNTY CODE* CHAPTER 2 (“ADMINISTRATION”) TO EXTEND AND IN INSTANCES EXPAND EXECUTIVE BRANCH DEPARTMENT AND OFFICE MONTHLY STATUS AND/OR PROGRESS REPORTS TO COUNCIL AND TO THE PUBLIC TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SERVICES AND PROJECTS OF KEEN INTEREST TO RESIDENTS

WHEREAS, the core mission of New Castle County is to ensure the public health, safety and welfare of County citizens and to do so through the fair and consistent application of the law and provision of services; and

WHEREAS, the County’s wide range of services helps individuals and families, builds social capital, improves neighborhoods and promotes safe havens for citizens to live, work and recreate; and

WHEREAS, the means to achieve these goals are communication, fairness, and the application of best practices; and

WHEREAS, of keen interest to County residents are those services for which they routinely contact County officials and employees via the internet, telephone and personal contact, such as code enforcement, property maintenance, park maintenance, sewer services, storm water management, community housing, recreational services and neighborhood stabilization; and

WHEREAS, both the Gordon Administration and the New Castle County Council have committed to increased transparency for the benefit of the public; and

WHEREAS, County law currently requires the submission to Council (and consequently the public) of annual reports from boards, committees and commissions (*New Castle County Code* Section 2.04.001); prospective contract information from the Department of Administration updated weekly (Section 2.02.004); monthly reports from the Office of Law (Section 2.05.514); monthly financial reports from the Chief Financial Officer (Section 14.01.001); reports from the Office of Human Resources on employees affected by a proposed personnel action and other reports (Section 26.01.004); and a written report from the Chief of Human Resources to the Executive annually and at such other times that the Executive shall designate with reports sent to the Human Resources Advisory Board, County Council and other interested parties upon request (Section 26.03.1303), and other such reports; and

WHEREAS, extending monthly written reports to Council, available to the public, on the status of certain essential activities by the Departments of Community Services, Special Services, and Land Use will enhance the commitment to transparency, information and communication touted by the Executive and Council; and

WHEREAS, currently Council legislative aides and other employees may pull certain code case information by district from the County portal; however, the portal is unavailable to the public and lacks certain details of significance to Council members and their constituents; and

WHEREAS, although legislative aides previously were provided reports from Special Services, such reports have not been made in some time, lacked some details of interest to Council and residents, and were not readily available to the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNTY OF NEW CASTLE HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. *New Castle County Code* Chapter 2 (“Administration”), Article 5 (“Departments and Offices”), Division 2.05.100 (“Department of Land Use”), Section 2.05.101 (“Functions”) is hereby amended by adding the material that is underscored as set forth below.

Sec. 2.05.101. Functions...

R. The Department shall provide to the President and Members of New Castle County Council, the Clerk of Council, and the County Auditor a monthly written report containing a list, by Council District, of the nature and number of each type of property maintenance, licensing, or other request/complaint under the jurisdiction of the Department, made to the Department, currently pending in each district. The list will include the source of each complaint (for example, citizen, Executive branch or County Council Office), the date each request/complaint was filed with the Department, the procedural status of each request/complaint, fines levied if any, and any explanatory comments by the Department. The report also will list requests/complaints closed since the last monthly report and the final disposition of those requests/complaints. The monthly written report shall be made available to the public upon request to the Department of Land Use and the Clerk of Council.

Section 2. *New Castle County Code* Chapter 2 (“Administration”), Article 5 (“Departments and Offices”), Division 2.05.300 (“Department of Special Services”), Section 2.05.301 (“Functions”) is hereby amended by adding the material that is underscored as set forth below.

Sec. 2.05.301. Functions...

H. Shall provide to the President and Members of New Castle County Council, the Clerk of Council and the County Auditor a monthly report, listed by Council district, of each request/complaint made for assistance to the Department of Special Services, the source of the request (Council office, Executive branch, or citizen request), the date of the request, the nature of the request, the status of the request, and the dollar amount spent on the request by the Department or designee during the reporting period. Projects shall include, but shall not be

limited to, maintenance of sanitary and storm sewers and drainage systems, manhole repair, sinkhole repair, park maintenance, debris and trash clean up, paving, and other functions of the Department. The monthly report shall be made available to the public upon request to the Department of Special Services and the Clerk of Council.

Section 3. *New Castle County Code* Chapter 2 (“Administration”), Article 5 (“Departments and Offices”), Division 2.05.400 (“Department of Community Services”), Section 2.05.401 (“Functions”), is hereby amended by adding the material that is underscored as set forth below.

Sec. 2.05.401. Functions...

F. Provide a monthly written report to the President and Members of New Castle County Council, the Clerk of Council, and the County Auditor regarding dollars expended during the prior month, in each Council district, for specific programs administered by the Department or a designee, including, but not limited to, community development and housing, neighborhood stabilization, senior programs, park-related activities, summer youth camps, community cleanups, special library programs and recreational/sports and athletic activities. The monthly written report shall be made available to the public upon request to the Department of Community Services and the Clerk of Council.

Section 4. This ordinance shall become effective on the first working day of the month following the first full month after adoption of this ordinance by New Castle County Council and approval by the County Executive, or as otherwise provided by 9 *Del. C.* Section 1156.

Adopted by County Council of
New Castle County on:

President of County Council of
New Castle County

Approved on:

County Executive of
New Castle County

SYNOPSIS: This ordinance would require monthly reports on County projects of keen interest to County residents, listed by Council District, from the Departments of Community Services, Land Use and Special Services. Both the Gordon Administration and New Castle County Council have committed to increased transparency for the benefit of the public, as well as the fair and consistent application of County law and policy. These reports, along with those already issued by other departments and boards and commissions, will further the County's commitment to communication, fairness and the application of best practices to all of its endeavors.

FISCAL NOTE: The fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be determined at this time as each department required to submit monthly reports would need to do an analysis of time and effort needed to meet the requirements of this legislation.