

## **OBSERVER CORPS REPORT**

### **August County Council Meetings--Highlights**

Five planning and zoning requests were discussed. (Aug. 1).

- Four requests were passed, and one was deferred to the next meeting.
- Mr. Reikert, a citizen from Council District 2, asked me to report his concern that the individual from District 3 was representing District 2 on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Reikert also made his concern public by addressing the council during the public comment period.

(This issue relates to the Council's failure to approve Councilmember Green's nomination of Bob Mitchell from District 2 for the Planning & Zoning Commission. When the approval vote failed, Councilmember Rieley proposed a nominee from District 3 who was approved by the Council. This issue continues to be discussed by Councilmember Green as unfairly giving District 3 two representatives on P& Z and leaving District 2 unrepresented. The President has ruled any extensive discussion to be out of order).

United Way Presentation on Child Poverty in Sussex. (Aug. 15).

Sarah Carter presented the following facts on childhood poverty:

- 38,000 + children live in Sussex, 8,000 of whom live in poverty.
- Only 32% of third graders from low-income households are reading at grade level.
- Most high school students from lower income communities are not ready for college or a career.
- Overall, there are 96,000 households in Sussex of which 11,500 live in poverty and 27, 840 are in crisis.
- Major UW programs focus on education, health care, financial aid, housing and food insecurity. UW works with county agencies and non-profits including First State Community Action Agency.

### **Buffers and Solar Arrays (Aug. 29)**

Mark Isaacs, Director UD Carvel Research and Education Center, discussed the importance of agriculture as a larger economic driver in Sussex County's economics. Mr. Isaacs was asked to comment on the impact of proposed 300-foot buffers. Mr. Issacs stated that while buffers take income producing land out of production, it appears to be a best practice.

The Council continues to approve solar farms (also called "solar arrays") in AR-1 Agricultural Residential Districts (Seaford Community Energy Initiative, LLC & Sussex CSG 2, LLC), but deny approval in C-1 General Commercial Districts (Frankford Community Energy Initiative II LLC adjacent to Rt. 113).