

**MINUTES OF THE MILLVILLE  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE  
October 30, 2018 @ 7:00 PM**

In attendance were Mayor Bob Gordon, Deputy Mayor Steve Maneri, Secretary Peter Michel, Council Member Ronald Belinko; Town Manager Debbie Botchie, Town Code & Building Official Eric Evans, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling. Treasurer Susan Brewer was absent.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA PRESENTATION – Debbie Pfeil, KCI Technologies, Inc.**

Ms. Debbie Pfeil, of KCI Technologies, Inc., stated tonight’s presentation has to do with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, which, in the State of Delaware, a municipality is required every ten (10) years to submit, receive approval and get certification from the governor. Ms. Pfeil stated the components of those are several different chapters, including environment, land use, how the Town will grow, where the Town wants to grow, and, if necessary – such as using a piece of property for a different use – submitting an amendment to get certified by the governor. Ms. Pfeil stated a Comprehensive Plan is a legal, binding document of the vision of where the Town wants to head in ten (10) years. Ms. Pfeil further stated the Town also has to “play well” with Sussex County and the neighboring municipalities so there can’t be anything around the outskirts being controversial documents as far as land use. Ms. Pfeil stated every ten (10) years an update must be done, and the Town is ready to do that, starting with going through the scope of the Town, to see what’s changed, for instance. Ms. Pfeil stated she would review the project and what exactly KCI Technologies and the Town are doing, when we are doing it, review a few demographics, review the SWOT – which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – as well as the survey distributed to the community.

Ms. Pfeil stated the first step with the project update is “scope phases,” which are to identify resources, collect the data and start creating the chapters, and while collecting data is one line here, it’s actually several hours of data to review. Ms. Pfeil stated the second step is the kick-off meeting with community outreach and survey, and the next step, which is where the Town is currently, is the plan input, where KCI and the Town start collecting the plan of the chapters and draft the document. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI and the Town will then do a plan presentation, making sure everyone has plenty of time to read the document, and have public comment and adoption. Ms. Pfeil stated during this process, people will probably learn a lot about Millville that they don’t know, learning history and trends. Ms. Pfeil further stated KCI and the Town have already had their kick-off meeting, which was in February 2018, the data collection and survey, the survey outreach launch, and today is the data collection review meeting. Ms. Pfeil stated the next meetings will be Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings over land use and whether the

trends are changing, goals & implementation, draft document presentation, and draft document meeting; the next meetings will be with the Council and Comprehensive Plan Committee, like tonight, over the draft document presentation, which will go over the highlights of what is different in the Comprehensive Plan this year, followed by the State's Office of State Planning (OSP) Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) submittal and meeting, when the OSP will review and comment back to the Town. Ms. Pfeil stated the Town will be divulging these documents to the public so everyone will see what the State is suggesting. Ms. Pfeil stated after logging in all of the changes the Council and the Committee will have a public hearing meeting and finally the potential adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Pfeil stated when it comes to data collection, KCI has to collect data from the Town, Sussex County and the State. Ms. Pfeil stated she gives kudos to the Town's staff because they track everything – from building permits to revenue streams to land use changes to business licenses – and the Town has been tracking it all for quite some time so KCI can show some trends. Ms. Pfeil stated in other jurisdictions, KCI often doesn't have that data so it's difficult for KCI to determine how things are growing or where the Town wants to go with the trends. Ms. Pfeil introduced Lauren Good, of KCI, who will review some demographic results.

Ms. Lauren Good, of KCI Technologies, stated the first slide shows population trends from 1910 to 2016, and in 2016, the estimated population was just over sixteen-hundred (1600) people, and it's almost a two-hundred percent (200%) increase from 2010. Ms. Good stated between 2010 and 2016, the County only saw a seven percent (7%) increase and the State, as a whole, only had a four percent (4%) increase, so Millville's population is increasing at a very steep rate compared to County and State. Ms. Good stated the next chart is the age distribution from 2000 to 2016, with each row being about a ten (10)-year span, and the median age has increased and leveled back, so, currently, the median age is about just under forty-two (42). Ms. Good further stated, on the whole, the median age of the Town is slightly older than the County and State. Ms. Good stated the largest age group in the 2016 period is the ten (10) to nineteen (19) group, thirty-five (35) to forty-four (44), sixty-five (65) to seventy-four (74), and eighty-five plus (85+). Ms. Good stated it's important to know what these larger groups are because, when you get to the sixty-five (65) and older population, the residents tend to need different needs compared to the others. Ms. Good stated the next pie chart shows the Millville household income for 2016, with the largest single income range being between fifty-thousand dollars (\$50,000) and seventy-four-thousand-nine-hundred-ninety-nine dollars (\$74,999); and twenty-six percent (26%) of the Town falls into that range. Ms. Good stated under ten percent (10%) have incomes which are less than fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000) and about twenty-six percent (26%) have incomes greater than one-hundred-thousand dollars (\$100,000). Ms. Good stated as of 2016, there are just shy of nine-hundred (900) housing units in the Town, and, mirroring the population increase, there was an additional four-hundred-seventy-eight (478) units since 2000, so it's a one-hundred-fifteen percent (115%) increase over that time period. Ms. Good stated Millville is seeing a large increase in the 2000 to 2016 time period whereas the State and County saw their biggest increase back in the 1980s. Ms. Good stated the next slide shows the Town's composition of housing stock, split between single family detached housing, multi-family housing, and mobile homes. Ms. Good further stated the largest percentage of housing type in the Town are single family housing and there was a large increase in the percentage of multi-family housing between 2000 and 2010. Ms. Good stated the Town does a

great job at tracking the number of building permits so, using the data going back from fiscal year (FY) 2011 to FY 2018, the chart shows the number of single family home building permits, townhome permits, minor building permits such as decks, patios, fences, etc. Ms. Good stated the Town has issued permits for five-hundred-thirty-five (535) new single family homes, three-hundred-forty-eight (348) new townhomes, and just under five-hundred (500) minor residential permits between 2010 and 2017. Ms. Good further stated there are just under nine-hundred (900) housing units and about five-hundred-seventy (570) of those units are actually occupied and on the next graph, the green bar shows the percentage of housing units which are owner occupied; the yellow bar shows renter occupied; and red shows the percentage of units which are vacant. Ms. Good stated shown on this graph are Millville's numbers, along with some comparison municipalities as well as the County and State. Ms. Good stated Millville's vacancy and occupancy rates very closely nearer to the County; however, the Town has much lower vacancy rates than the three (3) comparison towns (Bethany Beach, Ocean View, and South Bethany), which is more than likely indicating those towns are really dedicated more towards seasonal and vacation uses rather than full-time residency.

Ms. Good stated the SWOT analyses talks about strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and the reason KCI likes to do this analysis is to get some individual responses from people, giving them an opportunity to think about the community as a whole, give KCI their responses in an anonymous way, and help KCI to identify key issues. Ms. Good stated this analysis is a way for people to look at the characteristics of the Town and let KCI and the Town know what it is about the Town give it an advantage or disadvantage, as well as the elements the Town could either use to its advantage or elements which could cause trouble for the Town. Ms. Good stated KCI asked people to fill out this information, which is displayed tonight, and Ms. Pfeil will go over them in just a moment, and it will be placed on the Town's website tomorrow morning. Ms. Pfeil stated when KCI goes through these demographics, KCI and the Town see the Town is not more renter occupied than owner occupied, and the needs for the age ranges are different. Ms. Pfeil stated ten (10) years ago, when people aged sixty-five (65) to seventy-five (75) were less active, but now there are more active retirees and their demand on the surface is a little different. Ms. Pfeil stated when KCI and the Town write this Comprehensive Plan, they have to take these trends into account, plus the younger generation and older generation want the same thing, which is "to play"; so the younger generation doesn't want a larger house, or larger dining room, but rather something which is easier to take care of, such as townhouses, smaller single family homes, because they don't want to come home and work more.

Ms. Pfeil further stated when KCI asked about the internal exercise that is the SWOT, which was also distributed internally amongst the Town staff, Council, commissions and boards, and is great to hear their opinion on what they felt were strengths and weaknesses, which is great considering they work at the Town daily (and know the ins and outs). Ms. Pfeil stated some of the strengths listed which people feel are important are: close to the beach, there's a major roadway, the Town park, low taxes, medical services, Town staff, low property tax, fire and EMS services, and the size of the Town – the Town is small enough that local government is relevant and accessible. Ms. Pfeil stated other strengths include active volunteers, proximity to quality health care, and these are things other communities are looking for and wanting. Ms. Pfeil stated the Town is doing something really right or the Town's growth demand wouldn't be as high as it is; however, the Town doesn't want to grow too fast. Ms. Pfeil stated everyone

wants the taxes to be reduced but, at the same time, people can't ask for services to be increased. Ms. Pfeil stated it's hard to ask for more park land and other things the Town will have to maintain, more snow removal, and have the taxes stay the same when your population is tripling. Ms. Pfeil stated there has to be a boundary here with these issues and KCI will identify it in the new plan, but also help Council members determine when things need to grow, when they have to properly allocate, and when is the time to raise fees based on services. Ms. Pfeil further stated another strength listed is the Town's ability for annexation, there is land to the west and south which could be annexed; however, there is a "tightrope walk" in not making the Town too big. Ms. Pfeil stated there were a lot of good strengths mentioned here.

Ms. Pfeil stated some of the weaknesses listed were no transportation to the beach or trolley, no town center where people can meet and walk (need to drive everywhere), lack of good restaurants, internet/cable is not available in all communities, need a better posting of entering and exiting Millville town limits signs, infrastructure improvements not keeping up with residential growth, Town elections – specifically too many years with no true elections due to number of candidates being equal to number of vacancies. Ms. Pfeil stated the size of the Town has tripled and no one seems to want to volunteer on Council after they've retired; but volunteers are what makes or breaks a municipality, and Millville has a lot of great volunteers. Ms. Pfeil stated getting involved in boards, committees and Council is important due to the knowledge and experience residents can bring to them. Ms. Pfeil stated other weaknesses are no movie theater, no police department, no public works, summer traffic, so some of the services are not being provided. Ms. Pfeil stated those services listed can be provided, but residents' taxes will be raised substantially. Ms. Pfeil stated, for instance, she has three (3) municipalities who don't have a police department, police departments take anywhere from sixty-five percent (65%) to seventy-five percent (75%) of a Town's operating budget, and Ms. Pfeil understands the need for a police department, but this is talking about the raising of a tax rate. Ms. Pfeil stated if the Town has a memorandum of agreement with the Delaware State Police (DSP) and the Town is paying for that service, the Town can figure out how best to use it, and have the DSP do more or less coverage. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI will not resolve such an issue in the Comprehensive Plan, although pros and cons will be presented, but the issue is a local and political budget decision which will just be identified in the plan. Ms. Pfeil stated every time a new service or existing service is increased, there has to be a way for people to pay for it, and it depends on the community and local elected officials if that is the way the Town wants things to go. Ms. Pfeil stated one of the weaknesses listed was the traffic in the summer, and Route 26 (going through Town) is a major thoroughfare, it's a DelDOT road; but if there are, for instance, people walking along the side of the road with no sidewalks, the Town can look at it in the Comprehensive Plan and try to get a study done to look into pedestrian connectivity. Ms. Pfeil further stated while there a lot of things which can be addressed in the plan, it doesn't answer all of the problems because it does take funding to conduct studies but it will identify the need and justify the need for funding.

Ms. Pfeil stated the next are the opportunities and some of those listed are: an increase in housing and population, and some things to think about is if services are raised, when does the Town raise its taxes, so that's something to think about. Ms. Pfeil stated other opportunities are the "small-town feeling," a more cultured art center, more annual events, public transportation, and the Town park could provide opportunities for residents to come together as Millville

residents versus individual development residents, more space for possible annexation, try to restart the Town farmers market; so there is a good theme of everyone wanting to work together for the betterment of the Town. Ms. Pfeil stated the next slide has to do with threats and those include: additional traffic on Route 26, Town rental policies – with the proximity to each, bad rentals could be an issue, so this is an issue where KCI meets with the Town Code & Building Official and asks what the status is on this and whether there is an issue and how can it be addressed for some of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Pfeil further stated other threats are illegal dumping (which is State-wide), a small town equals a small voice in issues facing the County and State – but Town Manager Debbie Botchie doesn't have a "small voice" at the County or State, the Town is well represented at every County and/or State function regarding funding, legislative issues, etc. Ms. Pfeil stated other threats listed are: total number of jobs per capita, changes in retail, but Ms. Pfeil stated the Town does have businesses and should be thankful they don't have an overabundance of vacant stores, so it should be added to the list on ways to keep businesses in Town. Ms. Pfeil stated while the police force sounds good on its face, it would start a massive surge in taxes, and that doesn't mean people still won't want it but there needs to be more education on the matter. Ms. Pfeil stated there are no "earth-shattering" threats here like there are with other municipalities, but some major threats are no public transportation, which should maybe be a major focus. Ms. Pfeil further stated other threats were crime – specifically with steady increase need for drugs, and that is State-wide and County-wide; and the State can relay information regarding crime statistics, which needs to be addressed, and crime will always be an issue for every town, county and state. Ms. Pfeil stated raising taxes is a threat, especially in Delaware, because people move here for many reasons, one of them being a low tax base. Ms. Pfeil stated, overall, the threats are not bad and there are a lot of good opportunities within the Town's threats.

Ms. Pfeil stated the survey was released on May 1, 2018, on the Town's website and through its Facebook page, and KCI wanted to release the survey through the Town's website because that is the portal for all information is located. Ms. Pfeil stated the survey flier was mailed to four-hundred-fifty (450) property owners, and whereas most municipalities would not mail out surveys to every person because of the cost, Millville went above and beyond, mailing out fliers to everyone. Ms. Pfeil stated there were also surveys mailed to one-hundred-thirty-four (134) business license holders, all homeowners associations (HOAs) were sent the link and asked to distribute, as well survey fliers posted in various locations throughout Town. Ms. Pfeil stated from May 1 to August 15, 2018, the survey was active and the highest number KCI has ever gotten was received back: four-hundred-fifty-two (452) people. Ms. Pfeil stated, regarding the business survey, unfortunately, there were only four (4) completed surveys submitted. Ms. Pfeil further stated this tells us either businesses are happy because they have nothing to complain about, or, because this survey was released in the summer, businesses were too busy to complete the survey. Ms. Pfeil stated just under seventy percent (70%) of 60+ year-olds completed the survey, and a little over sixty percent (60%) of those completing the survey are retired, which is great because it leaves a higher number of potential volunteers. Ms. Pfeil stated just under seventy percent (70%) of people who took the survey are permanent residents of Millville, and a majority of people – just under eighty percent (80%) – think the Town should be promoted as a bedroom beach community, followed by a live-work community, a resort destination, a retirement community and lastly, a retail and economic hub. Ms. Pfeil stated in a "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" survey, regarding steps the Town should take, the

highest “strongly agree” was for development being balanced with protection of farmland and open space; followed by development being encouraged primarily within the current Town boundaries, annexing gap (enclaves) within the current Town boundary, seeking to annex new areas of land adjacent to the current Town boundaries, and, lastly, with “disagree” being to increase the growth area and population base. Ms. Pfeil stated a majority of survey takers said there were enough apartments/multi-family units, townhouses, single-family homes, and mixed use of residential on top of commercial use. Ms. Pfeil further stated a majority of people said there were enough single detached retail and service buildings, multiple attached retail service buildings, large single retail chain stores, shopping complexes, mixed commercial-business uses and office, offices (research and development facilities), building supply and storage places, light industrial assembly, and storage units/warehouses. Ms. Pfeil stated a majority of survey responses strongly agreed there should be clearly definable sidewalk, trail and bike paths, the pedestrian system should connect with existing and proposed developments, the Town should work with neighboring municipalities to provide connection for pedestrian and bicyclist traffic, and there should be a form of seasonal bus or trolley service to the beach. Ms. Pfeil stated out of the services not currently offered in Millville, the majority of services wanted from those surveyed were a town library, a town police force, a public park, municipal trails and bikeways, and a parks and recreation department. Ms. Pfeil stated in the middle were a public works department and facility, and a building and zoning department. Ms. Pfeil stated the least desired elements were a town trash service and municipal parking.

Ms. Pfeil stated the tasks for KCI now are to analyze this data, starting with the SWOTs then the survey, and categorizing where it will fit into the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI will next finalize the maps and prepare for the next Comprehensive Plan meeting. Ms. Pfeil stated there is still a lot of work to do internally, also needing to talk about land use, maps, and what’s going to happen on the vacant lands. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI also received what accruments DelDOT is doing, what County has “in the mix” and what it will do with the Town’s sewer. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI is proud to serve Millville and asked residents in attendance to go back to their communities and spread the information they learned tonight.

Mr. Rich Duggan, of Bishop’s Landing, asked when KCI finishes up with the Comprehensive Plan, will the plan include each of the items having a dollar-and-cent cost to property owners. Ms. Pfeil stated no, it will not as KCI is identifying where the Town has been with several services in relation to where they are now and where KCI feels they need to go. Ms. Pfeil stated this lays the Town up with additional work which needs to be done and the implementation chapter in the back of the plan will have KCI giving recommendations based on results and education of particular matters requested to be implemented through these surveys. Ms. Pfeil stated every year, the implementation chapter gets looked at and is considered with the Town’s budget over the next five (5) to ten (10) years to see what’s most important, what the Town can pay for, what the Town can get a grant or loan for, and maybe start working on these action items; but it will not get into the details of ordinance changes, subdivision changes, how much things will cost, etc.

Ms. Valerie Faden, of Beach Plum Drive, asked if there is a possibility to have a timeline of this process put up for the public to show where the Town is in the process from start to finish so property owners can know when resident input will be appropriate. Ms. Pfeil stated yes. Ms.

Faden stated she thinks the County is in the PLUS process right now and one of their hot topics was the environmental development areas, which is basically the coastal area, which Millville is inside of, and having stricter regulations around those areas; and Ms. Faden is hoping the people will see some kind of coordination with the County. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI has had two (2) meetings with the County about coastal resiliency, and they will next have a meeting with Hans Medlarz about the sewer, which is more important than coastal resiliency because if the sewers cannot handle growth, you can be “hostaged” by the sewer and not grow. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI stated the next meeting is set for April and they just found out the State has tacked on another thirty (30) days for review, which is usually not a normal process, so KCI met with OSP and KCI will probably recommend to the Town Council to get an extension on its Comprehensive Plan and there is plenty of time for the public to be able to see the draft, go through all the changes, and meet the requirements. Ms. Faden asked how many total surveys were distributed. Town Clerk Matt Amerling stated well over a thousand (1000). Ms. Botchie stated at least fourteen-hundred (1400).

Mr. Karl Beers, of Whiteclay Drive, stated he heard from the results there is a big interest in a police department, and as someone who’s spent his whole life “in that world” and knows of the many dramatic increases of costs, Mr. Beers is very interested in not having a police department. Mr. Beers stated things are fine with the State Police. Ms. Pfeil stated KCI will not be making a recommendation on whether the Town should get a police department but will only be revealing the data and recommending a study to justify the need and cost and educational process. Ms. Botchie stated a lot of stuff like a police department is discussed during the budget process, taking a look at what the Town is expending for the State Police and the money the Town has put away for police coverage as well. Ms. Botchie stated the Town looks at the crime map (provided to the public through the State Police’s website) and while the survey says a police department is wanted or needed, no one has ever come to Council and suggested the Town do a study. Ms. Botchie stated she looked into a police department about eight (8) years ago with a crime statistic and security company, and the representative told Ms. Botchie “I’ve looked at your demographics, your area, etc., and you don’t need a police department.” Ms. Botchie stated since then, the Town has “upped the ante” on the State Police, and the Town can “up the ante” even more if it feels it needs more coverage, and still save money. Mr. Beers stated if you look at the difference between Millville and Ocean View, Ocean View is a “money pit” and he doesn’t want that. Ms. Botchie stated Millville puts away ten percent (10%) of the transfer tax received from the properties into a police fund every quarter, and the Town is close to seven-hundred-thousand dollars (\$700,000), which is utilized to pay the State Police, which is currently about ninety-four-thousand dollars (\$94,000) per year for twenty-four (24) hours per week, of which the hourly coverage can be increased.

Ms. Faden stated she knows the State Police put in a new system where they can electronically track crime, and she knows that system is not perfect when it comes to analytics, so will there be any opportunity when this group does its analysis to try and work with the State Police to extract that data? Ms. Pfeil stated one of the biggest problems with tracking criminal data information is how the crime is inputted and some police departments do it so the highest crime counts as one (1) and any other misdemeanors within that count as two (2), three (3), four (4) and five (5); so when we ask for numbers, the one pull-over incident has six (6) violations, and they’re reporting all six, whereas some only report one. Ms. Pfeil stated the reporting

mechanisms within all municipalities are completely different for KCI to analyze them. Ms. Pfeil further stated the information in terms of where the types of crimes are available and not exact individual addresses (maybe due to privacy), and the amount of crimes is usually the recording mechanism the Town will get back on the Town level. Mayor Bob Gordon asked if any increase would “set off alarms” to Council in terms of being something the Town needs to address and Mayor Gordon would approach the State Police to see what would need to be done because the State Police are the experts, not Council.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Gordon motioned to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. Secretary Peter Michel seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Amerling, Town Clerk