



# Councilwoman Diller's Community Corner

5th District, New Castle County Council

May 2015

## **Councilwoman Diller's Committee Assign- ments:**

Co-chair: Boards & Com-  
missions

Co-chair: Community  
Services

Chair: Subcommittee on  
Aging

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activities and events.

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## **Vacant Property Reporting**

During the past several years, the vacant property crisis in the 5th District has grown at an alarming rate leaving our communities with abandoned, boarded-up houses, which diminish property values. Additionally, these vacant properties pose a serious danger to our communities by attracting trash, debris, criminals, squatters and in many cases, the properties become a den for drug dealers and drug abusers causing a negative impact on the quality of life of neighboring homeowners.

Senator Townsend, along with several legislative Co-Sponsors, have recently introduced Senate Bill 66, which would create “land banks” that could take possession of eligible vacant properties. As stated in the Act, “A land bank would have the authority to obtain such properties at sheriff’s sales instituted by the jurisdiction that established the land bank, where such properties have been abandoned by their owners because of unpaid property taxes or substantial liens arising from property code violations. The land bank would have the ability to do one or more of the following: (1) purchase liens from the local jurisdiction; (2) acquire properties at a sheriff’s sale on credit from the local jurisdiction; (3) assert a trump bid at a sheriff’s sale that would allow the land bank to acquire abandoned properties for the price of the outstanding liens. The land bank would retain the acquired properties until such time as a suitable and vetted buyer could be found who would be able to return the property to productive use.”

Unoccupied properties are not necessarily defined as vacant or abandoned, but any property that also includes a violation of the New Castle County Property Maintenance Code can be reported as a vacant property. My office and the New Castle County Code Enforcement Department work diligently to keep up with maintenance issues such as high weeds, unsecured doors or windows, trash and rubbish, debris, and a host of additional code violations that are associated with vacant and abandoned properties; however, we need your help by reporting any code violations or crime that you witness in and around these structures. It is up to all of us to work together and take control of the vacant and abandoned property crisis in our community. Code violations can include, inoperable motor vehicles, vehicles parked on the grass, trash, debris, structures in disrepair, overgrown grass, stagnant water, outside storage of household items, and bushes or hedges that encroach on the sidewalk. If you see a vacant property in your community that is not in compliance with the County’s property maintenance code, please take a moment to contact me and report the problem. Together, we will rebuild, strengthen, and beautify our neighborhoods.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

- **5th District Heroin Alert - Public Meeting** - Wednesday, May 6, 2015, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Kirk Middle School, 140 Brennen Drive, Newark, DE 19713. Please join us for this important public meeting, presented by the New Castle County Police Heron Alert Team, to discuss solutions to the heroin epidemic spreading throughout our communities. For more information please contact Councilwoman Lisa Diller at 302-395-8365, or email [slmoore@nccde.org](mailto:slmoore@nccde.org).
- **Newark Senior Center Health & Wellness Fair** - Wednesday, May 6, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The Newark Senior Center is hosting its annual Health and Wellness Fair to enhance the lives of the older adult community by providing resources and opportunities for growth in mind, body, and spirit.
- **Rittenhouse Station, Mayor's Fun Ride** - Saturday, May 16, 2015. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. Join the fun at Rittenhouse Station, 250 South Main Street, for a 5 mile bike ride benefiting the Bicycle Community of Delaware. For more information visit [www.cityofnewark.us/play](http://www.cityofnewark.us/play), or call 302-366-7000.
- **Memorial Day Parade** - Sunday, May 17, 2015, A memorial service will be held on the University of Delaware Green at 1pm, featuring Delaware National Guard units, local ROTCs and more with a review of the troops, wreath laying ceremony, and presentation of colors. This ceremony will begin at 1pm. The 80th Annual memorial Day Parade will follow at 2pm with marching units representing all branches of the service, veteran's organizations, schools and community parading down Main Street displaying the pride of our nation.
- **First Friday With Councilwoman Lisa Diller** - 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - June 5th at the Newark Senior Center. Please join Councilwoman Diller on the First Friday of each month to chat about topics that are important to you and your community.
- **Year-round Volunteer Opportunities** - The City of Newark's Parks and Recreation Department offers many volunteer opportunities. From teens through older adults, the department utilizes volunteers in many of its exciting and fun programs. For more information about the volunteer program, please call (302) 366-7060.