

# TODD ESTATES & NEWARK OAKS CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** April 15, 2026

**Location:** Kirk Middle School Library

## 1. Road Conditions & Paving

- Residents raised concerns about cracks and deterioration in neighborhood roads
- Explanation provided:
  - DelDOT maintains a **road rating system** (poor → very poor → etc.)
  - Roads are prioritized and repaired based on condition ranking
  - Limited funding allows only **5–6 roads per cycle** to be fully repaved
- **Potholes** are addressed separately and patched as needed
- Full resurfacing (mill & pave, curb repair) requires higher prioritization
- Additional funding has been introduced through:
  - **Subdivision Streets Program** (approx. 5 years in place)
  - Aims to address backlog of poor-condition roads over a 10-year period
- Roads are **re-evaluated every 2 years**, which may shift priority rankings

## 2. Route 72 Traffic & Infrastructure

- Resident inquired about widening Route 72 to four lanes
- Response:
  - No current plans for expansion in that section
  - Major limitation is the **CSX railroad bridge bottleneck**, which is not expected to be expanded
- Past infrastructure expansion efforts have been halted due to:
  - Community opposition
  - Historic preservation concerns (e.g., Cooch's Bridge area)

## 3. Route 72 Bridge Closure (Upcoming Project)

- Bridge over Amtrak on Route 72 scheduled for **full closure**
- Timeline:
  - Expected start: **Mid-June**
  - Duration: **6–8 weeks**
- Project includes:
  - Bridge repairs and improvements
  - Potential widening adjustments
- **Detour Plan:**
  - Traffic redirected via **Route 4 → Route 273**
  - Goal is to keep traffic off neighborhood roads

- Acknowledged that GPS navigation may still route traffic through local streets
- Closure timed to coincide with school recess to reduce impact

#### **4. Route 4 Pedestrian & Bike Path Project**

- Ongoing project to add **pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure**
- Extends through Ogletown historic area
- Includes connection across Salem Church Road and continuation along Route 4
- Residents advised to expect **temporary delays and construction activity**

#### **5. Traffic Congestion (General)**

- Ongoing concerns regarding congestion on:
  - Route 72
  - Route 4
  - Route 273
- Noted increase in **north/south traffic flow**
  - Attributed to population shifts (residents living south, working north)
- Peak-hour congestion expected to worsen with upcoming construction and detours

#### **6. Electric Utility Costs & Energy Concerns**

- Residents reported increased electric bills

- Explanation provided:
  - Increased regional demand on the **PJM power grid** (multi-state system)
  - Growth in **data centers** increasing energy demand
- Higher costs due to:
  - Increased wholesale electricity pricing
  - Delivery charges (now itemized more clearly on bills)
- Discussion of potential future actions:
  - State-level legislation
  - Possible taxation on large energy users

## **7. Data Center Development (Route 273 Area)**

- Proposed data center project discussed (White Clay / Route 273 area)
- Current status:
  - Early **exploratory phase**
  - Property is “**by-right**” **zoned**, meaning no rezoning required
- Key concerns raised:
  - Noise (diesel generators)
  - Air quality
  - Impact on nearby residential communities
  - Lack of retroactive protections under new regulations
- Clarification:

- New regulations (water usage, setbacks, etc.) apply only to **future projects**, not this one
- Actions discussed:
  - Formation of a **community working group**
    - Two representatives requested per neighborhood
  - Encouragement for residents to:
    - Submit concerns to county officials
    - Participate in public hearings when scheduled
- Timeline:
  - No immediate construction expected
  - Project will proceed through extended review and planning phases


## **Point of Contact for Data Center Questions**

Residents seeking additional information or wishing to participate in the working group may contact:

### **Michael Rodriguez**

Legislative Assistant to Councilman Timothy Sheldon  
New Castle County Council – Ninth District

 [Michael.Rodriguez@newcastlede.gov](mailto:Michael.Rodriguez@newcastlede.gov)

 302-395-8369

## **8. House Bill 315 (Tipping Legislation)**

- Brief discussion on proposed legislation affecting credit card processing fees on tips
- Summary:
  - Would prevent fees from being applied to tipped amounts
- Concerns raised:
  - Potential unintended consequences for tipping practices
  - Conflicting messaging from banking industry vs. legislators
- Bill remains under discussion and possible revision

## **9. Drainage Issues & Proposed Improvements**

### **Background:**

- Longstanding drainage issues reported (approximately 9+ years)
- Conditions include:
  - Standing water
  - Swamp-like areas
  - Sinking driveways and sidewalks
  - Soil erosion and instability
- Prior repair attempts (including utility work) have not resolved the issue
- Residents have incurred personal costs for drainage mitigation with limited success

- Safety concerns:
  - Slip hazards
  - Structural instability
  - Odor and quality-of-life issues

### **Proposed Solution (New Castle County Conservation District):**

- Installation of **French drain system**:
  - 6-inch perforated pipe
  - Installed in stone and wrapped in filter fabric
- Addition of **lawn catch basins**
- System to connect to:
  - DelDOT stormwater infrastructure
  - Existing private drainage systems where applicable

### **Key Concerns:**

- **Water source not confirmed**
  - Potential causes:
    - Underground spring / high water table
    - Utility leak (Viola)
- Concern that solution may manage water rather than eliminate source

### **Project Challenges:**

- Requires **homeowner permissions**
- **Funding not yet secured** (state bond bill required)
- No defined timeline

### **Next Steps:**

1. Secure funding
2. Obtain homeowner approvals
3. Bid project to contractor

## **10. County Town Hall Meetings**

- Additional town hall dates announced:
  - **May 5 at 6:30 PM** – Cranston Heights Fire Company
  - **May 11 at 10:30 AM** – Newark Senior Center
- Residents encouraged to attend for budget discussions and community input

## **11. Closing / Transition**

- Officials offered to provide:
  - Code enforcement reports
  - Police reports upon request
    - *Both have been received and will be published separately*
- Contact information shared for follow-up questions
  - *Refer to item 7.*
- Meeting transitioned into detailed drainage discussion and review of proposed plans
  - *Refer to item 9.*
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