



THE TOWN OF Fenwick Island

Summer 2020 Newsletter

FENWICK ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Gene Langan
Mayor

Richard Mais
Vice Mayor

Gardner Bunting
Treasurer

Bernie Merritt
Council Secretary

Vicki Carmean
Council Member

Mike Houser
Council Member

Bill Weistling
Council Member

TOWN OF FENWICK ISLAND

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Town Manager

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**IMPORTANT
DATES**
August 28, 2020,
3:30 PM
Town Council
Meeting

September 8-10,
2020
Bulk Trash Pickup

September 15, 2020
Last day to pay tax
bills to avoid a penalty
fee

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR...

As everyone knows, we have had the most challenging Spring and Summer in memory and I want to thank everyone for “hanging in there” with us. Business owners, property owners, and full-time residents have been presented with problems and issues they have never faced before. Thanks to all of you for supporting the town and the difficult decisions we have had to make. Unfortunately, we are not over this pandemic yet and may still have some tough times ahead.

Mayor Gene Langan

ELECTION CANCELLATION NOTICE

The annual election for the Town of Fenwick Island Town Council scheduled for Saturday, August 1, 2020 has been cancelled.

The three (3) candidates: *Gardner Bunting, Vicki Carmean, and Bernie Merritt*, have been declared elected to fill the three (3) vacancies.

How Can We Save Fenwick Island From the Rising Tides?

by *Mary Ellen Langan*

When I was growing up, my family of five and I would pile up in our car and drive down to Delaware for a fun-filled summer. You always knew you were getting close when you began to see the Fenwick Island Lighthouse in the distance. The houses were squeezed between the ocean and bay and were not raised too high. There was no boardwalk where we would vacation—just the locals who grew up there and some visitors.

Years later, I would hold my daughter’s hand and walk to the water’s edge and watch her older brothers play in the surf. We’ve had picnics with cold watermelon, competitive frisbee tournaments, and breezy nights with flaming bonfires. We also enjoyed boating on the bayside, where we could go crabbing and fishing, hoping to catch that night’s fresh dinner.

Eventually, after retirement, my husband and I decided to move full-time to Fenwick. Though the houses were squeezed a little closer and raised a little higher, we could not imagine living anywhere else. We are not the only transplants in the town—we have a wonderful community of locals, summer residents, and friends that make calling Fenwick Island our home incredibly easy.

Fenwick Island is hugged by the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Little Assawoman Bay on the other. For the last ten years, the Army Corps of Engineers has worked on beach replenishment projects on the ocean side. Erosion and sea-level rise have happened so rapidly that they’ve had to return every three years. The renewal of this funding is critical because if we didn’t do this, Fenwick Island would already be underwater. On the bayside, most of the property is on private lands, and projects to mitigate the flooding are quite costly for private owners. Because of this, we’re finding ourselves continuously flooded, which is

threatening our way of life. Though we only have 300 or 400 full-time residents, we must ensure the continued protection of our homes and businesses, for ourselves and the upwards of 5,000 summer visitors upon which our local economy heavily relies.

I joined the Fenwick Island Environmental Committee eight years ago because I wanted to take part in making the best decisions for our home. We have hosted beach cleanups, prohibited smoking on the beach, and set up dog waste stations. Most recently, we put together a sustainability plan detailing the balance between the environmental, economic, and social needs of the town. In the fall of 2019, we received a local grant that allowed us to hire environmental consultants, take a physical survey of the town, and ultimately led us to find that bayside flooding is the most concerning threat to our small town.

So how can we save Fenwick Island from the rising tides?

It is important to build up. As the standards for building heights change, we must raise our homes and businesses to prevent flood damage. But most importantly, we must address the root of the problem: the climate is changing. If we fail to curb the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for warming our atmosphere and causing sea level rise, Fenwick Island residents will be among the millions of people around the world devastated by the climate crisis. No matter which path we take, we must come together and commit to building up, and building better, for Fenwick Island.

Our town might be small, but mighty it is. We have stood strong against hurricanes, winters storms, and nor’easters. It will not be an easy battle, but we must work together to keep this town afloat—literally. For my grandkids, I will continue to work with our community to make sure future generations experience sand between their toes, the salt in the air, and the love of Fenwick Island in their heart.



The Town of Fenwick has installed two new flashing pedestrian crossing signals, one at the intersection of Coastal Highway and Bayard Street and the second at Coastal Highway and Oyster Bay Drive. To operate the new device, press the button to activate the yellow caution lights. Next, carefully enter the crosswalk and proceed across the highway. Delaware law does not require a vehicle to stop unless a pedestrian is in the crosswalk. After entering the crosswalk, vehicles are required to stop by law. The Fenwick Island Police Department will be conducting pedestrian safety special duty patrols now through September to educate the public and stop vehicles that are in violation of State law at the crossings.



The Fenwick Island Police Department has a new Facebook page! Please “like” us and follow us on the page: **The Fenwick Island Police Department** (@FenwickIslandPD).

Fenwick Island Beach Patrol News

With a delay this season due to COVID-19, the F.I.B.P. was able to start the public side-by-side transportation on July 18, 2020. This service will be provided from 10:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. daily. The safety of our staff and public is priority and protocols are in place to ensure possible virus isolation control:

- Lifeguards will only transport one person at a time.
- There will be no assistance by the lifeguard in or out of the vehicle.
- The vehicle will be sanitized after each transport.
- F.I.B.P. will start transport off the beach at 3:00 p.m.
- A plastic shield has been installed in the vehicle to minimize contact.

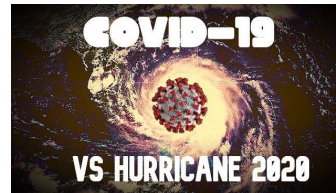
Due to the time it takes to transport and sanitize the vehicle, we will have to start transports off the beach at 3:00 p.m. There will only be one vehicle dedicated to public transport. The other vehicle will be dedicated to patrol and medical response.

We still do offer the beach wheelchair use upon request, but have limited availability.

I would like to commend Rookie Lifeguard Jackson Woodard. On July 7, 2020, before sign-on, Jackson was called by a mother that lost a visual of her 9-year-old daughter in the ocean. Jackson quickly reacted to the situation by locating the victim and promptly pulled her to safety. The girl was having a seizure in the water. Jackson and fellow lifeguard Ryan Bryson maintained the airway until medical assistance arrived. The girl was transported to a medical facility by Bethany Fire Co. and Sussex County medics. Jackson’s quick response, as well as F.I.B.P. training and protocols, likely save the girl’s life!

Beach emergencies so far this summer:

- Rescues: 49
- Surf Assists: 15
- Minor First Aid: 35
- Major First Aid: 3
- Missing Person: 4



This year’s hurricane season promises to be an active one, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). With many areas of the country still under COVID-19 guidance, people may need to adjust their planning—something that has not gone unnoticed by many community-based organizations (CBOs) across the United States.

NOAA predicts a 60% chance of an above-normal hurricane season, with 13 to 19 named storms. 6 to 10 of these storms will be hurricanes, with 3 to 6 becoming major events. FEMA has offered new guidance to both emergency workers and residents on planning for hurricanes.

Residents need to have enough food, water, and other supplies for every member of the family to last at least 72 hours. In addition, FEMA recommends adding two cloth face coverings per family member and cleaning items, like soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes, to an emergency kit. After a hurricane, access to these supplies may be limited.

For more information on hurricanes and how you can begin preparing, please visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes.

BEACH REMINDERS:

NO PETS OR OTHER ANIMALS ARE PERMITTED ON THE BEACH AT ANY TIME BETWEEN MAY 1-SEPTEMBER 30! THIS INCLUDES EMOTIONAL SUPPORT PETS!



NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED ON BEACH FROM MAY 15-SEPTEMBER 15.

GLASS CONTAINERS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE BEACH AT ANY TIME.

