



The Town of Fenwick Island

800 Coastal Highway, Fenwick Island, DE 19944-4409

302-539-3011 ~ 302-539-1305 fax

www.fenwickisland.delaware.gov

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

January 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Richard Benn, Jack Armstrong (Zoom), Tim Bergin (Zoom), Ed Bishop (Zoom), Larry Bortner (Zoom), Susan Brennan (Zoom), Tim Leahy (Zoom), Jon Miller (Zoom), George Murphy (Zoom), Jay Ryan (Zoom), Nuvan Seneviratne (Zoom), Geri Verlaque (Zoom)

Others Present: Lori Dabbondanza, Kathy Hessler (Zoom), Mike Hoy, Rose Marie Hoy, Amy Kyle, Natalie Magdeburger (Zoom), Ann Riley, Mike Locke, Pat Schuchman

Flag salute and call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

1. Approval of prior minutes

The minutes from the December 12, 2023, meeting were approved with one minor correction to Tim Leahy's title for the working group.

MOTION passed unanimously.

2. Discuss RFP for engineering study and make recommendations to Council

Richard Benn discussed the proposals that were received for the engineering study. The deadline for submission was yesterday, January 8 at 6:00 p.m. He indicated that we received a total of 5 proposals. Given the tight turnaround between the submission deadline and now, another meeting has been scheduled for **Thursday, January 18 at 1 p.m.** to discuss the proposals more in-depth. Ed Bishop noted he'd like the committee to identify the top three bidders and bring those companies in via Zoom for discussion sometime in the next few weeks. Richard Benn noted that he will be having a discussion with UDel to see if we can/should start spending some money now with the understanding that it would count towards the matching funds for our grant. Ed Bishop stated that the working group can regroup this week and will aim to have a cost estimate project put together by the end of the month for consideration. Richard Benn noted that we can look to our state legislature for any bond money as well.

Jon Miller asked if the working group can request the vendors that submitted proposals to restructure their response to keep the ball rolling. Funding will not be available until Fall 2024. Work likely won't begin for approximately 3 years. Ed Bishop noted that as long as we keep moving the project forward, we can apply for the next grant in 2025. The cost study is of utmost importance. We need to hit home the long-term cost benefit is for DEMA. The most important question at this point is what our grant funding will be. Richard Benn noted that our grant award will probably be about \$400,000, with 25% matching.

DEMA has indicated that they would like us to pick a firm by February 1. The grant is a 2-stage process, so we would have to reapply for the grant once a vendor is chosen. Ed Bishop clarified that we may need to rebid for any portion of the work that is not the lowest bid. Discussion followed.

3. Discuss Charter & Ordinance Committee's request for recommendations to changes to Code to strengthen resiliency

Richard Benn noted that C&O has asked us for recommendations to update the Code in an effort to strengthen resiliency. He indicated that he's not sure he's prepared to discuss this issue at this point. Ann Riley asked specifically about Freeboard and mentioned that Codes were changed to recommend an increase of 2 feet to be added to new home construction. Pat Schuchman noted that the original intention of the ordinance was misinterpreted and stated that an ordinance change would be welcomed to help prevent flooding of homes. Discussion followed. Ed Bishop noted that the proper way to rewrite the ordinance would be to encourage property builders to raise their land/property by 2 feet. Tim Bergin recommended the creation of a new working group that would be tasked with looking into rewriting the ordinance.

Richard Benn suggested a joint task force between C&O and Infrastructure to begin looking into current ordinances and suggested a rewrite. Tim Bergin and Ann Riley suggested strong language with a specific recommendation from our committee. Natalie Magdeburger suggested creating flood elevation zones. The point is to save our town and prevent loss. Anyone that is interested in serving on the working group, please contact Richard Benn directly. Natalie Magdeburger will also put together a working group on C&O so there will always be a representative from C&O present at the Infrastructure Committee meetings.

4. New Business

Richard Benn shared his disappointment with AECOM's response to our Initial resiliency proposal.

5. Old Business

None

6. Public Participation

Amy Kyle – 1205 Bunting Ave. She discussed the FISH newsletter. She would like to discuss all the infrastructure issues that are being discussed and talk about ways to make them more digestible for the residents. Specifically, she recommended:

- People are confused about the aspects of all the infrastructure discussion.
- SR1 can be used as a reference or example for what we can do to share information with our residents.

Richard Benn stated that he will add an agenda item to have a liaison to work with Amy on the clarification article for FISH.

7. Adjournment

At 11:15 a.m. Susan Brennan **MOTIONED** to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Nuvan Seneviratne.

MOTION passed unanimously.