



The Town of Fenwick Island

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RESIDENTIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Janice Bortner, Deborah Cowell, Sharon Harris, Geri Verlaque, Rose Mary Hoy (Zoom), Megan Staczek (Zoom), Cindy Kerns (Zoom)

Other Participants: Natalie Magdeburger

Staff: Kathy Grab

Flag Salute & Call to Order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Approval of the August 5, 2024 meeting minutes

a. **Motion to approve the August 5, 2024 meeting minutes with amendments on a Geri Verlaque/Sharon Harris motion.**

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and Action.

- a. Next steps for implementing the Green Infrastructure Initiative – Community Forestry Support Meeting hosted by the RCC Green Infrastructure Working Group on 9/11/24 at 1:00 p.m.
- Janice Bortner reminded everyone that Deborah Cowell and the Green Infrastructure Working Group has their meeting on September 11th at 1:00 p.m. with guest speaker Taryn Davidson We will be learning about urban and community forestry outreach, find out how to get a soil sample kit and sign up for site evaluations for fall tree planting. FISH has been contacted by their members as well regarding planting trees. Flyers are in the back of the room, and you can sign up online. Everyone should reach out to their friends and neighbors.
 - Geri Verlaque wanted to note that Taryn Davidson specializes in trees not flooding, which is an issue they have. Deborah Cowell agreed but this is our first step.
 - Janice Bortner asked that Deborah Cowell resend the pdf of the meeting to the committee for everyone to share.

b. RCC- DarkSky Working Group consideration for the Town Council to request C&O to review the RCC recommendations on updating the current Fenwick Island lighting ordinance.

- Janice Bortner stated that Rose Mary Hoy and the DarkSky Working group have done a great job at educating the community about the benefits of embracing the DarkSky principles in Fenwick Island.
- The first step is the implementation of the recommendation toward the comprehensive plan (which Janice Bortner read to the committee).
- Rose Mary Hoy has reached out to members of the DarkSky International Community for guidance regarding updating our lighting ordinance. They have sent out their policy and template for review.
- **Motion to request that the Fenwick Island Town Council send to the Charter & Ordinance the Residential Concerns Committee's request to conduct a review of the current Fenwick Island lighting ordinance and suggest appropriate revisions in compliance of the current standards and technology guided by DarkSky on a Rose Mary Hoy/Sharon Harris motion.**

Motion passed unanimously.

- Rose Mary Hoy shared slides on DarkSky Working Group Update and Next Steps. [DarkSky Lighting Ordinance](#). She explained the Comprehensive Plan and the lighting and implementation, DarkSky Working Groups educational campaign and making connections and partnerships/relationships. On August 28th an announcement from DarkSky International 's Outdoor Lighting – Municipal Ordinance Template and User Guide is now available, and lastly the considerations for discussion of motion.
- Natalie Magdeburger advised that there is a lot of public education that needs to be provided to the community, more educational events with experts, forming a foundation of proof of health and welfare to change the lighting ordinance.
- Janice Bortner thought it would be up to C&O to evaluate the template from DarkSky and the legality. Natalie Magdeburger advised that C&O will send back a request for the scientific health and welfare benefits, we need to collect the articles and the data. Scientific basis is needed. Natalie Magdeburger continued to discuss the most successful route to bring the request to C&O, suggesting a working group with DarkSky and C&O. Setting up more meetings to educate the residents as Green Infrastructure had done.
- Geri Verlaque asked if anyone has seen or heard of any new communities requiring or suggesting DarkSky principles. Natalie Magdeburger said she has read about a few doing so.
- Deborah Cowell stated that she felt Rose Mary Hoy and DarkSky were so ahead of the game with the educational portion.
- Rose Mary Hoy answered a few of the questions and concerns raised by the discussion. Regarding education, she stated we are not done educating and may never be done with educating people about the topic, but we have made a lot of progress. The group will

never be done educating because everyone has their own opinions on this issue. There have been strong cases for changes based on the health and welfare of humans, of nature and safety. There is a plethora of data and science around this. The template DarkSky has sent does reference to them taking a proven approach. The data exists and can be collected, it is doable. New ordinances are suggested for new construction. Push back from residents would be less than we think. She feels that this is a long-term project, as it is complicated. On-going education is necessary.

- Janice Bortner stated that on-going education as the comprehensive plan states is a must. At the FISH forum she didn't hear current council members or those running speak up opposing this.
- Natalie Magdeburger would like to see the working group with both DarkSky, and the C&O collect the data and evidence to then bring to the Town Council and C&O for changes in the lighting ordinance.
- Geri Verlaque asked if there is a way to add a working group. Natalie Magdeburger replied that making a second motion to take to Town Council that says we would like to have a working group made up with a member of Residential Concerns Committee and C&O to look at the DarkSky Initiative and make a recommendation as to how the town would like to pursue.
- Rose Mary Hoy stated she thought that what Natalie Magdeburger was advising was the route they would need to take.
- Janice Bortner asked Rose Mary Hoy if she agrees to wait and discuss this further for the next meeting, or if she feels we should move forward with the motion. Rose Mary Hoy feels we are ready to move forward but understands the process and the legal issues with moving forward. She read to the committee what she thought Natalie Magdeburger was advising. She then asked if this is something they should go back to Natalie Magdeburger to be sure it is accurate. The consensus of the committee is that if Natalie Magdeburger is not in agreement with this, the Town Council and the town will not be either. Even waiting for some time and waiting for the new members to join and give more guidance. Rose Mary Hoy is fine waiting, she wants to get this right, she doesn't want to bring this to the Town Council, and have it shut down and it gets misunderstood or makes the committee feel deflated.
- Deborah Cowell stated that she likes the idea of modifying the motion as Rose Mary Hoy stated, and she suggested that Rose Mary Hoy set up a public meeting say what DarkSky International is saying and do a one-hour presentation to the town about what is happening around DarkSky.
- Rose Mary Hoy asked if she could read something to the committee to see if she is interpreting what Natalie Magdeburger is saying because she feels it meets their objective. What if they withdrew the prior motion and create a new motion: "The Residential Concerns Committee recommends that Town Council create a workgroup or ad hoc committee to conduct a review of the current Fenwick Island lighting ordinance, and evaluate it relative to current standards, technology, and DarkSky guidance."

- **Motion to withdraw the previous motion and propose a new motion to the Town Council on a Sharon Harris/Geri Verlaque motion.**
Motion passed unanimously.
- **Motion for the Residential Concerns Committee recommends that Town Council create a workgroup or ad hoc committee to conduct a review of the current Fenwick Island lighting ordinance, and evaluate it relative to current standards, technology, and DarkSky guidance on a Sharon Harris/Geri Verlaque motion.**
Motion approved unanimously.

c. Lending Library

- Public Works has tried to fix it, if it does not work, we will purchase two more.

3. Old Business

a. Bike Racks

- Mike Locke to review Farmington and other locations.

b. Signage

- These issues will need to be brought up with Pedestrian Safety.
- Janice is working on data of tickets and such and she will advise.

c. There are some clubs in the area that would like their activities to be added to the town website, Janice Bortner would like to discuss with staff.

d. New land has been given to the town with stipulations.

e. Janice gave thanks to all the committee members for their time and commitment and participation to the committee.

4. New Business

a. Last Day to provide DNREC your comments on the US Wind Project

- Geri Verlaque asked for a blurb that we could use. Janet Bortner stated that Rose Mary Hoy has one. Rose Mary Hoy will send the blurb to the committee.
- Geri Verlaque asked if Town Hall could add a reminder on Facebook.

b. Implementation of Planning Commission Matrix Review/Update

- Talks about the things that the committee does, but the main priority is to educate, advocate and impact the community by listening to their concerns, and advocate for residents and solutions. Janice Bortner asked the committee to get back with her with any additional ideas that give us relevance.

5. Public Participation.

- a. None

6. Future Meeting.

- a. October 7, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn.

- a. **Motion to adjourn on Geri Verlaque/Sharon Harris motion at 12:06 pm**

Motion passed unanimously.