



The Town of Fenwick Island

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INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

September 12, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Tim Leahy (Zoom), Tim Bergin (Zoom), Andy Emerson (Zoom), Larry Bortner (Zoom), Geri Verlaque (Zoom), Jay Ryan, Susan Brennan.

Others Present: Natalie Magdeburger, Ann Riley, Thomas Bouchelle

Staff Present: Kathy Grab, Mike Locke

Flag salute and call to order at 10:05 am

1. Approval of prior minutes.

- **Motion to approve the minutes from the August 13, 2024 meeting on a Tim Leahy/Tim Bergin motion.**

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Update on Resiliency: Information and Discussion Session held on August 30, 2024.

- Susan Brennan stated this was the 2nd in the series of events and lasted an hour and a half. About 20 people in the room and 15 online. The format was a Power Point presentation followed by Q & A. Straughn Environmental engineers were present and took questions. The presentation online.
- She asked for committee feedback. Jay Ryan stated he had a text from Paul Hanebutt thanking the group for all the activities the committee has been doing, he hasn't replied because he would like to survey Paul's yard and be able to show him that the water that is collecting in his yard is due to low elevation of his yard and not that of his neighbors. FEMA raised the house, but he has not raised the lot. This is not a new issue. Tim Leahy stated Jon Miller sent an email with questions to the committee.
- Geri Verlaque's husband suggested extra riprap at the end of Farmington to help with the overflow at the street as a test. Tim Leahy thought it should be addressed by an engineer.

- Tim Bergin thought the biggest thing was the information that Nuvan has shared regarding flooding around his residence. Andy Emerson felt from the feedback he received; it was very helpful.

3. Resiliency working group update and Straughn summary.

- Tim Leahy stated the Straughn Group has finished their site review and has sent out the status report: [Resiliency Planning Prep project status 12 Sept](#). The group started at the corner of Houston/Bora Bora and came down recording and measuring using satellite and an iPad. Josh from Public Works took them out on the boat on Tuesday which they stated was valuable. High priority areas were completed. All of the data will be uploaded, and a map made. The report should be out around the 23rd or 24th of September. Hopefully, we will hear about the BRIC grant in October.
- Natalie Magdeburger informed the committee that she and Susan Brennan attended a SCAT breakfast with Philip Cane was the speaker and he is from FEMA he had advised the there was a big grant awarded to DNREC to help with mapping throughout the state of all stormwater management systems and they are current in progress. This does show that we are going in the right direction. With all these grants, the volunteer hours can be used towards the payback of the grant. Would need a time sheet for those who are volunteering, and we can also use the town staff hours as well.
- Tim Bergin stated that we do not look at that as a savings but as an offset to where we could use that money for other things. Natalie Magdeburger agreed as it is a way of making the money stretch further.
- Tim Leahy had an idea of the town obtaining access to software for mapping. ArcGIS is software, and it is a very affordable solution for the town. They host the software, and we become the users. Our data will be in their cloud, and we would have access to their tools. He has requested a formal quote from them. Straughn is supportive of it and helpful. Data is currently being collected, and past collections could all be used and uploaded. Andy Emerson asked if we would use the base maps from Sussex County as it is detailed. Sussex County uses ArcGIS as well. Sussex County has sewers, Fire Department has the fire hydrants, DelDOT has their information. We would just be adding to the layers.
- Tim Bergin talked about Cityworks, it is a comprehensive package that is being adopted across the country. Tim Leahy is familiar with it, it is for maintenance management and typically small municipalities do not use it.

4. Public Participation

- Ann Riley spoke as a follow-up to the meeting, there was a lot of good information, but it brought a lot of questions, but there was not an opportunity for long lengthy questions and answers. So, the one question she had was about Jay Ryan brought up the resident and the issue of flooding, on his property and other properties being built up causing his flooding. She spoke with the Straughn officials, and it

seems that we should get an official statement from the engineers for the benefit of the working group. The working group is working on whether or not we should think about changing the code to require homeowners' new builds to build up on the bay side, but we really need an official word from an engineer to determine whether it is a good idea or not. It also addresses someone like that resident. When speaking with the engineers they said that it is only a problem if someone builds up their lot and runs their stormwater off on to another property. Just raising the lot does not cause flooding.

- Natalie Magdeburger asked Mike Locke if when talking to people with new builds if he encourages them to build the base of the lot up. Mike Locke stated yes, and some people come to him and ask about raising their lot, there are restrictions on the height, etc. He feels that most new buildings in the last two years have raised those properties. He stated that there is a problem when raising a property puts water on the neighbors. In some cases, people are putting retaining walls, when water does find its way on those properties, it does not have a way out. Ann Riley stated that in terms of landscaping you can make improvements for water drainage. There are ways to go about it. The working group is at a standstill until we receive an official answer.
- Ann Riley saw the slide at the Infrastructure forum that the town had budgeted for 6-8 check valves to be replaced per year and as of March there were 7 that needed to be replaced, is that accurate? Mike Locke said he has a list of 4 that need to be replaced soon and some others that they are keeping an eye on. Public Works does a maintenance check, if there are some that need to be maintained, they take care of it. She was curious if the budget number was solid or if more were needed to be replaced, would they replace them. Natalie Magdeburger stated that what is in the budget is just a number to start off with but if we budget for 7 and 10 need to be replaced, then we will do it. It is not an issue with the Council.
- Susan Brennan asked about the shelf life of them and Mike Locke replied that depending on their location, those locations that get battered more do not have a long shelf life, canal locations 4 years, other locations on the bay that get battered more, less maybe 2-3 years. Natalie Magdeburger stated that Mike Locke and Public Works are working to extend their life of them. Mike Locke stated that maintaining and cleaning them helps their life of them. The town boat helps them to get out there to maintain them as well.

5. New Business

a. Implementation of Planning Commission Matrix Review/Update

- Susan Brennan brought to the attention of the matrix this was created a year ago and is now in the implementation, are the process of sliding a few things around for it. relative to who would be responsible. We are in the second six months of the committee report, chairs will be submitting their reports soon.
- Tim Leahy and Susan Brennan will be meeting with the University of Delaware for grant applications later in the day. They have questions and would like to discuss the volunteer hours with them. On the list to talk about is the bay side street ends,

six of them that may be able to function as resilience parks. Would like to see if there is funding available. A living shoreline or an application to be beneficial to the ends of those roads planted with native plants or trees that would be resilient to water and it being a park. There is lots of funding for parks. Tim Leahy will discuss questions about the Bric grant and if there are other opportunities that we should be starting to look at.

6. Old Business

- Jay Ryan stated he reached out to Sea Grant and spoke with Julie about bay levels prior to 2005, she stated they have nothing but advised him to connect with Delaware Geological Survey. He has reached out to them and is awaiting a reply. He contacted the US Geological Survey, and the guy was helpful. The guy confirmed that Ocean City has monitors and one at Isle of Wight. He has the numbers; he will connect with Tim Bergin. The closest is at 100th Street. They stumbled upon precipitation reports which are like bay data. Forty instances in the last ten years that water was over 2 ft. Tim Bergin felt they could certainly dig up this information and that this was a learning moment.
- Susan Brennan stated this is the last meeting of this current committee, new committees next month, those who have not signed up for committees please do so.
- Richard Benn will have surgery this month and we would like to keep him in our prayers, knowing that he will do great and have a speedy recovery. We look forward to seeing him back.

7. Next Meeting

- October 8, 2024, at 10 a.m.

8. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn at 1055 a.m. on a Geri Verlaque/Jay Ryan Motion**

Motion passed unanimously.