



# The Town of Fenwick Island

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## INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Town Hall

### MINUTES

**Members Present:** Jack Armstrong (Zoom), Susan Brennan (Zoom), Geri Verlaque, Jon Miller, Nuwan Seneviratne (Zoom), Tim Leahy (Zoom)

**Others Present:** Rose Mary Hoy (Zoom), Ann Riley (Zoom), Natalie Magdeburger (Zoom),

**Staff Present:** Kathy Grab, Mike Locke

Flag salute and call to order at 10:05 a.m.

A moment of silence was observed for our dear friend Richard Benn, an instrumental part of the committee.

1. Approval of prior minutes.

a. **Motion to approve the minutes with a correction of item 5 a, bullet 4, Jay Ryan requested that the word "full" prior to the word moon be added and Jon Miller requested to strike the last sentence including the website.**

*Motion passed unanimously.*

2. Update from Tim Leahy

a. Straughn Environmental deliverables

- We are currently wrapping up the resiliency project from the summer.
- Comments from the last meeting on the report were provided to Straughn.
- The five southernmost streets were not completed in time allotted, Tim Leahy requested from Town Council to contract change order to allow Straughn to come back and finish the remaining streets which was approved. They will be here at the end of the week and document the information from those streets.
- Additional information will be added to the report which should be ready around the beginning of December.

- Within the final report, Straughn will be adding another layer of information relating to the collection of assets. Many are not Town owned but rather private and will be included with a filter so that we have this information within our data.

b. BRIC Grant

- Tim Leahy and Susan Brennan contacted Philip Cane at DEMA, and he stated that FEMA has not yet responded to this grant and there is a delay due to staffing issues.
- Jon Miller asked if there was a projection of when they would be able to do it, and Tim Leahy stated no. Susan Brennan added that Phil's suggestion was that we would perhaps hear from them around Thanksgiving. We are more or less ready.
- We have had support from Straughn regarding how we can use the mapping software in the future and transform it in the database they have created. There is a budget ~~area~~ issue as we will need to incorporate some new software. This will need to go to the council in the new year.
- Straughn will be providing the final report after completing the last streets, then we will close out the contract.

c. Discuss/Create Comprehensive Strategy for Next Steps of the Bayside Flooding Concept Design Plan.

- Tim Leahy would like to propose reestablishing the working group again but renaming it something like Bayside Storm Water and Flood Protection Working Group, which would focus on the BRIC grant and in preparation for the new scope of work.
- Natalie Magdeburger stated she is working with our attorney on working groups and compliance with FOIA regulations. She will advise once she has an answer, please stand by. There are requirements that we will need to follow.
- Tim Leahy stated that once they approved the BRIC grant, we will need to re-quote the work. The scope of work will be better since we have had the past year to learn and improve the tasks, Straughn has been helpful with this. There is still some missing information we need to gather, for example invert measurements.
- Jon Miller asked for clarification on the process of the working group, assuming it would be a viable group, it would meet, restudy the scope and edit in anticipation of the BRIC Grant. Would it only go to Straughn or to an open RFP? Tim Leahy replied that we will need guidance on that, however I will need to be bid out.
- Tim Leahy wrote a project report, and Susan Brennan asked if he could share it with the group. Tim emailed it to the committee following the meeting.
- Tim Leahy stated there are open items on that list they will see that are for future discussions.

- d. Discuss Street End Flood Mitigation at Georgetown Design Concept and Budget – Jay Ryan.
  - Tabled to next month due to unavailability.

### 3. Update from Susan Brennan

- a. CIB, CAC Meeting on 10/24/24.
  - Center for Inland Bays, Citizen Advisory Committee met last month (they meet quarterly), and the meeting was entitled “Caring for the Land, Managing the Land and Tackling the Challenges Under Changing Conditions in Our Watershed. Susan Brennan attended. It is a hybrid method and was hard to hear. Interesting conversation, by a panel of four people who presented and took questions. It is good information source.
- b. Update from Philip Cane at DEMA Re: Volunteer Contributions.
  - An email was sent to Philip Cane with reference to clarifying some questions. Susan Brennan stated the first is that there is a way to include some volunteer hours when preparing a grant funding project to be included in the cost of the project, amounts applied on the local cost share. FEMA has a guidebook to assist in those calculations. As we move to the next step, just another layer we can add on to the process.
  - Natalie Magdeburger asked about Industry standards stated in the requirement and if it is based on the experience and background of the volunteers? Susan Brennan stated that according to Phil Cane’s correspondence there is a FEMA guidebook, which she will research and advise at the next meeting.

### 4. Geri Verlaque

- a. Update from DNREC Climate Action Plan 10/29/24.
  - Open forum that Geri Verlaque attended. Geri Verlaque stated that it was an open forum, with no presentations. Different tables with people who were there to answer questions on various issues. There was a board that you could write your concerns or wishes on. Wealth of information, but not a lot of answers regarding Sussex County, specifically Fenwick Island. There was not a lot of understanding of what we are going through. She feels they did not understand the flooding issues that the climate is affecting.

- The heads of different agencies will now be reporting to the governor. Closer watch on what each agency is doing, Geri Verlaque feels we need to continue involvement with the agencies. She spoke with Rachel Filos, she stated there are a lot of different things that we can attend such as coastal trainings on how to create flood ready communities. She has her email if the group would like it. Overall, there is no real answer for Fenwick Island.
- Natalie Magdeburger discussed the importance of Sussex County and Fenwick Island to stay ahead of the list.
- Tim Leahy stated RASCAL Group has an advisory group that we were asked to be on by Jennifer Pongratz from DNREC. Susan Brennan will do some more research on history and will report back at the next meeting on the RASCAL.
- Susan Brennan stated that this was just phase one, phase two will be coming out winter of 2024-2025.
- Jon Miller stated that he saw on the calendar that the climate action plan will be going out in the fall of 2025, will it be a draft coming out for comment and Susan Brennan stated that was a good question and she would look into it.

#### DNREC Climate Action Plan Schedule:

- Fall/Winter 2024 (Phase 1).  
Initial Information Gathering.
  - Sector-based Meetings.
  - Public Workshops.
  - Community Meetings.
- Winter 2024/25 (Phase 2).  
Modeling Emissions and Compiling Feedback into Potential Strategies.
  - Model Potential Emissions Reductions.
  - Compile Initial Information Received.
  - Develop List of Potential Strategies.
- Spring/Summer 2025 (Phase 3).  
Stakeholder Feedback on Emissions Modeling Results and Potential Strategies.
  - Additional Sector-based Meetings.
  - Public Workshops.
  - Community Meetings.
- Fall 2025.  
Release of 2025 Climate Action Plan.

## 5. Update from Mike Locke

### a. Tides, Flooding, Back Flow Preventer Updates, Mitigation Updates - W. Georgetown, Bora Bora, W. S Carolina.

- Tides have been low in the last few weeks.
- Back flow preventors are starting to come in. Waiting on six more.
- Public Works have been diligently working on Georgetown, have made some updates, and are continuing to monitor and make adjustments.
- Public works found another 4" pipe in the basin @ Georgetown St. which runs from the basin through a private residence's property and discharges into the canal. The pipe on the canal side is not visible due to a boat dock covering the opening.
- This morning the tide was high and there was no flooding in the road.
- Susan Brennan asked if the town is providing backflow preventors to those who have their own private drainage? Mike Locke stated that about a year and a half ago the Town sent out letters requesting temporary easements to those residents on the bay side that wanted the Town to install no smaller than 6" backflow preventors on privately owned pipes that were discharging into the canal. There were approximately 8 signed out of 15. The Town purchased and installed them, as it directly affects the town when the overflow from them comes into the streets. There are a lot of homeowners with drainage that do not have backflow preventors which does affect everyone. Susan Brennan asked the average cost of backflow preventors. Mike Locke stated that 12" are about \$1500-\$1700 and the price goes down based on size. He explained a bit of history on the backflow preventors, including a maintenance and repair schedule.
- Jon Miller asked about the quantity and sizes that are currently the contributing factor. Mike Locke indicated there are probably two or so pipes that run through yards to the canal that they have found and believe are causing some issues.
- Susan Brennan wants to understand the costs that are going into these. ~~And~~ Natalie Magdeburger stated that with those in the private easements it did not indicate we were going to take full responsibility for maintenance. We may need to go back and request easements on properties with the small (less than 6") questionable pipes.

### b. Street Surface Maintenance for 2024-25.

- Mike Locke reported that based on the meeting with Paul Caldwell, the contractor of the engineering office, they have kicked off the process and are waiting to hear from them with a contract. They are to start the roads in early spring.

- Susan Brennan stated that the company will work in one location at a time as more gets done that way. Mike Locke added that the contractor was asked to reevaluate the streets that the town had proposed needing maintenance. It has been over a year since the report originally came out and things could have changed.
- Natalie Magdeburger asked if the contract reviewing will still be the same agreed upon pricing. Mike Locke stated yes, it is more about the roads and what work is being done. Natalie Magdeburger would like to review the contract first.
- Mike Locke stated that the reason for the change was that the original person that the contract started with retired, the one replacing him had an hourly wage less than the original, documents had to be changed for the company's sake.
- Geri Verlaque asked if all the roads are getting all the same repairs or what each individual road needs. Mike Locke clarified that the roads will be getting what is needed.
- Susan Brennan stated that it is a 10-year road maintenance and service plan.

## 6. Old Business

- None

## 7. New Business

- a. Susan Brennan received an email from the Mayor of South Bethany, they are putting together a resiliency meeting with several coastal towns.
  - Neither Tim Leahy nor she can make it but responded to them with the path that Fenwick Island is making. She is hoping to get feedback from the meeting.
  - Jon Miller asked about DELDOT and Route 1, what is happening about monitoring that and where they are in the process. Natalie Magdeburger stated that the man from DELDOT that was heading the project retired, she feels with new people in government, there will be changes. Discussion took place, consensus was with the climate action plan, we need to pay attention to it, and we may be seen or heard through that and keeping in front of DNREC and DELDOT.
  - Natalie Magdeburger stated she and Susan Brennan went to a meeting where they were stating that there was a project with Army Corp of Engineers and DNREC regarding flooding, and shortly thereafter that project was cancelled.
  - Susan Brennan will look into the "Back Bay Study" and get back to the committee next month.
  - Susan Brennan stated the planning commission each year must update the state on how they implemented their plan. We received our form in June. The first time she received the questions, it was related to low-income housing. This last year's

questions were related to flooding and resiliency. This seems to indicate specific interest and funding trends for the State.

8. Public Participation

a. None

9. Next Meeting

a. December 10, 2024, at 10 a.m.

10. Adjournment

**a. Motion to adjourn at 11 a.m. on a Susan Brennan/Nuvan Seneviratne Motion.**

***Motion passed unanimously.***