



The Town of Fenwick Island

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AD HOC DARKSKY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 12, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Janice Bortner (Zoom), Rose Mary Hoy (Zoom), George Stone (Zoom)

Others Present: None

Staff Present: Kathy Grab

Flag salute and call to order at 8:33 a.m.

1. New Members.
 - a. Janice Bortner will add to the next Residential Concerns Committee agenda to make a motion to the Town Council to add Megan Staczek and Kate Norman to the Ad Hoc DarkSky Committee.
2. Educational Session on Why We Have an Ad Hoc Committee.
 - a. Janice Bortner gave a brief explanation of why we formed an Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Rose Mary Hoy stated that whatever the right process is for the group to make progress she will be happy to do so.
 - George Stone asked if it is standard operating procedure if a group or initiative wants to bring forward concerns or such to incorporate into the comprehensive plan? Janice Bortner stated that the comprehensive plan has already incorporated it. These committees are brought forth due to their being a focus group.
3. Progress we Made in the Last Two Years in the RCC on DarkSky Initiatives.

a. Rose Mary Hoy explained how she started with DarkSky.

- A couple of years ago, regarding her own personal home having bright lights shining into her home and many others on the bay surrounding S Schulz Road. She met with the HOA president of the condominiums about the lighting, and they made some helpful improvements. That's when she started to educate herself more about lighting.
- She mentioned these issues and discussed them with the Residential Concerns Committee, and with the help of Janice Bortner, she has since met with other people and groups. There are not a lot of laws about lighting.
- Route 54 bridge is being renovated, currently there are no lights, but the designs had a lot of lighting options. They have done an educational campaign and a written campaign requesting the design with the least amount of lights which was adopted.
- The committee has created good relationships with DarkSky, thanks to George Stone assisting with this and opening many doors.
- Articles on DarkSky have been placed in local newspapers and FISH newsletters educating residents and we are making connections with other beach communities such as Lewes.
- There were two streetlights on one of our roads that were too bright affecting habitat as well as people living there. With support from our Mayor and staff at Town Hall, we were able to remove the obtrusive lamp posts completely.
- The Fenwick Island ordinance was written in 1996 and needs updating to comply with current technology and guidance.
- Education will continue to be a great need and needs to be ongoing.
- Rose Mary Hoy has sent out slides regarding DarkSky for everyone's review.
- Janice Bortner would like to have this information on the website. Rose Mary Hoy agreed and stated she would gather some information in a paragraph format. George Stone agreed there needs to be some narrative. George Stone stated the DarkSky International encourages people to use their information to educate others. IDA has some great tools as well.
- Rose Mary Hoy thought about doing a once a month posting, but questions about how much traffic the website actually gets from the community. Janice Bortner stated the town is getting people engaged to go to the website.
- Rose Mary Hoy stated that the average age of the homeowners in Fenwick Island is older and questions their likelihood of routinely going to the website for town information. Can we push the information out as well as post it?
- Rose Mary Hoy will connect with Natalie Magdeburger to see about routinely adding a blurb on DarkSky topics to the Mayor's newsletters.

4. Review Mission Statement from the Mayor

- a. Janice Bortner read the Draft Mission Statement from the Mayor (Supplemental Motion):
- The committee as formed be given a mission statement to create educational opportunities for residents, to create a plan to survey direct community interest in the DarkSky initiative and to analyze and review our current ordinances looking toward where we can make improvements and make a recommendation to Town Council by the end of the year for any modifications which may be applicable.
 - George Stone and Rose Mary Hoy requested a copy of the mission statement.
 - The committee requested more insight into the planned survey (objectives, timing, topics, etc.).
 - The committee also questioned the timing of the request to make recommended changes to the lighting ordinance by "end of year." Is this 2024 (not practical) or 2025 (more practical given process of working with outside consultants and C&O Committee).

5. Discussion of Priorities and Next Step Assignments

- a. Mission statement and request new lighting ordinance.
- A formal request will not be ready by the end of the year. Rose Mary Hoy would like to see the details of the survey, and in the meantime the committee can revisit the action plan, find out about the survey plan, and make a new timeline. A consultant would likely need to be hired. Janice Bortner stated the committee takes the recommendation to the council and then they will appoint someone from C&O to work with us. We will need to do the leg work and provide the documentation to the council with our request. This could be a good educational opportunity. We are supposed to collaborate with other committees such as C&O and the Environmental Committee.
 - Rose Mary Hoy proposed reaching out to people to ask for guidance and George Stone agreed, stating that most of these groups are very willing.
 - Rose Mary Hoy thought about having a joint meeting with Lewes, those who are like-minded, it may generate more interest.
 - Discussion regarding reaching out to Rick to see what his thoughts are on our current point and if we are ready to move forward or if we need more time.
 - Rose Mary Hoy stated that as Natalie Magdeburger states, we need to build a case.
 - Rose Mary Hoy suggested that the first events we plan would be the health issues for outdoor and indoor lighting, having an expert come in and talk about the negative impacts of them.
 - Rose Mary Hoy will be meeting with Sue Ellen for lunch and will run this by her for her thoughts of having a joint session with Lewes.

- George Stone questioned whether there are a numerous number of municipalities, do we have an idea of their status on whether they fit into the initiative? Rose Mary Hoy stated that the Association of Coastal Towns would be a good place to start. The Mayor can advise us on ACT engagement. Also, the Caesar Rodney Institute who does a lot of work in the environmental field, may be helpful.
- Long term goal is to produce a forum for springtime or summer.

6. Old Business

- a. None

7. New Business

- a. None

8. Public Participation

- a. None

9. Future Meeting to be Announced.

- a. To be determined.

- Please provide Janice Bortner with dates and or times that work best for future committee meetings.
- At the Residential Concerns Committee meeting in December, Janice Bortner will make a motion to add new committee members to Ad Hoc DarkSky and bring them to the council.

10. Adjournment

- a. **Motion to adjourn at 9:33 a.m. on a Janice Bortner/Rose Mary Hoy Motion**

Motion passed unanimously.