



The Town of Fenwick Island

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RESIDENTIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MEETING

April 14, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Janice Bortner, Deborah Cowell, Stu Rubenstein (Zoom), George Stone (Zoom), Rose Mary Hoy (Zoom), Sharon Harris, Geri Verlaque (Zoom)

Other Participants: Natalie Magdeburger

Staff: Kathy Grab

Flag Salute & Call to Order at 2:01 p.m.

1. Approval of the March 21, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve March 21, 2025 meeting minutes on a Stu Rubenstein/Sharon Harris motion. Rose Mary Hoy abstained.

Motion passed.

2. Discussion and Possible Action.

- a. Green Infrastructure Working Group.

- Okie Property Funding and Report on the Agenda for the Green Infrastructure Working Group and dedication ceremony.
 - ~ Full funding approval from Town Council.
 - ~ Next meeting is April 15th at 9:00 a.m.
 - ~ On-site meetings this week, including with Brothers Nature's Landscaping/Trip (clearing) and Tom Riley (wooden signs).
 - ~ Reaching out to University of Delaware through the Forestry Service.
 - ~ Fundraising ideas and Earth Day participation (rain barrel) to be discussed.
 - ~ Discussion planned on rain garden and dedication date for the Preserve.
 - ~ Andrew Kleinstuber (native plant farmer in Dagsboro) plant material donation made contact and offered to provide plants. Deb Cowell responded but he has not replied to her. Natalie Magdeburger also replied, and he has not responded to her either. Will wait for reply from him. It was a nice offer and hopefully he will reply again.

- ~ Brothers Nature Landscaping/Trip will begin clearing and chipping brush piles this week. Deb Cowell thanked Natalie Magdeburger, Colleen and Paul Wilson, and Susan Brennan for initial clearing work.
- ~ Rain garden timeline depends on the soil samples. Soil samples have been sent. Target date is Memorial Day.
- ~ Volunteers needed (residents and/or IRHS students). Natalie Magdeburger said she would place volunteer request on website and Facebook if they picked a date needed for the work. Deb will discuss a date with the working group.
- ~ Bronze sign timeline to be confirmed. Sharon Harris made contact with a group who was familiar. Natalie Magdeburger said she would ask Bryan Reed to see who the State uses as the sign which Mr. Okie is interested in having at the Preserve looks like one that the State uses at other historical sites.
- ~ Natalie Magdeburger to publish Mr. Okie's story on Facebook as soon as Brothers Nature/Trip gets cleaning of the trash pit completed.

b. Yearly Fenwick Nurtures Nature Event with Speakers to Educate the Community.

- Proposal to make it an annual educational event.
- Last year's event was well received. This year's focus: DarkSky and Green Infrastructure.
- Include expert speakers and possibly hold online.
- DarkSky Committee Supports the idea, possibly to collaborate with national organizations.
- Janice Bortner suggested July 17th as the date.

c. Ad Hoc DarkSky Committee Request for Help with Their Efforts.

- A resignation from the committee due to work commitments. They are looking for volunteers to join them.
- Rose Mary Hoy stated volunteers are welcome for summer events even without full meeting participation.

3. Old Business

a. Committee Update to the Planning Commission

- Janice Bortner shared the Residential Concerns Committee's Report to the Planning Commission including DarkSky and Green Infrastructure Working Group's efforts.
- ~ The highlights of the year: advocacy, education, and tree maintenance.
- ~ DarkSky updates in the future will come from the new committee.

b. Welcome Packet Update.

- Janice Bortner will wait to hear from the Business Committee.

c. Town Communication Update with Stu Rubenstein and George Stone.

- Stu Rubenstein asked who manages the Facebook and was told Natalie Magdeburger and town staff. There are over 6,700 followers on Facebook.
- Jancie Bortner suggested emailing meeting agendas to the residents to improve awareness. Natalie Magdeburger advised this is something she would need to bring to Council. We do not want to overwhelm people and sending weekly emails would be overwhelming for the Staff. Plus, residents can sign up on the website for updates for items as published.
- George Stone asked how many people follow updates on Facebook and if any analysis has been done to find the best, most cost-effective way to reach residents, Natalie Magdeburger replied that engagement on Facebook varies by topic—popular issues get more reactions. The town also uses its website, mayor’s messages, phone calls, Town electronic message board, postings on Town Hall, media interviews and Council members to share information to residents. There are about 6,700 followers on Facebook.
- Website changes are limited due to State of Delaware hosting. Kathy Grab offered that there is a lot of tools on the website. Natalie Magdeburger asked Janice Bortner if she used either the website or Facebook and Janice Bortner said she does not use Facebook and only uses the website on a limited basis. Natalie Magdeburger explained that there are tools available on both Facebook and the website and the residents who are interested in being engaged can use the technology that is available to do so. At some point, it is dependent on the resident on how involved and engaged that they wish to be.
- Janice Bortner suggested educating residents, especially older ones, on using the town website.
- Janice also suggested making a survey question for residents on how they wish to be notified.
- There are many outlets used to convey information for residents, not just the website or Facebook, the town uses local media, the Chamber, electronic message board and the Message from the Mayor.
- Stu Rubenstein stated that the town has really been doing good with social media and events but educating the residents where to look for the information is the key.
- Sharon Harris asked if the town staff could or would be willing to teach residents how to navigate the website and Facebook page. Natalie Magdeburger stated yes, they will help anyone that needs it. She also advised that going to the Town Council meeting is a good way to find information as all of the committees report each month on what they are doing.
- Stu Rubenstein suggested that the committee could help residents with the Facebook page and the website.

4. New Business

a. Outreach to Indian River High School AP Program for Support of Both DarkSky and Green

- Janice Bortner proposed inviting IRHS AP students to participate in DarkSky and Green Infrastructure efforts.
- Natalie Magdeburger supports local volunteer help but cautioned against outreach beyond town limits due to resolution guidelines which stated that the education should focus on Town residents. She also shared that the school system had limited school involvement on the windfarm issue. Natalie Magdeburger suggested that the committee focus on educating Fenwick residents and engage Fenwick residents.
- George Stone sending open event invitations to science teachers—agreed to help coordinate once the projects were set. Rose Mary Hoy and Deb Cowell support the idea.
- Natalie Magdeburger is willing to sign any student’s community service hours if they wish to volunteer on Town events.

5. Public Participation
 - a. None
6. Future Meeting.
 - a. May 5, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
7. Adjourn.
 - a. **Motion to adjourn at 3:15 p.m. on a Sharon Harris/Deb Cowell motion.**

Motion passed unanimously.