



## **The Town of Fenwick Island**

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### **REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Friday, April 25, 2025**

### **MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

### **MINUTES**

#### **In Attendance**

Town Council Members:

Mayor Magdeburger, Treasurer Rymer, Council Member Brennan, Council Member Wilson, Council Member Bortner, Secretary Napolitano (via Zoom), Council Member Zanelotti (via Zoom)

#### **Staff in Attendance:**

Town Clerk Ellinger, Beach Patrol Captain Rykaczewski (via Zoom), Finance Manager Gary, Building Official Locke, Administrative Assistant Grab

#### **Others in Attendance:**

Along with the Town Council and Staff, there were an additional 11 on Zoom and 7 in-person participants.

#### **Call to order and flag salute at 1:04 PM.**

#### **1. President's Report - Mayor Magdeburger**

##### **Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Magdeburger announced that Finance Manager Dean Gary will be retiring at the end of June. A job posting for his replacement will be published next week. She asked that anyone with potential candidates to please reach out and extended her gratitude to Dean for his many years of dedicated service to the Town.

##### **Offshore Wind Update:**

Mayor Magdeburger provided an update regarding offshore wind projects. Secretary Burgum recently issued an order halting the Empire Wind Project, which was planned off the New York coastline. The order cited concerns that the Biden Administration expedited the process without sufficient scientific analysis or adequate consultation with relevant agencies. As a result, all offshore wind projects are currently under review. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) acknowledged in a report that the recreational and commercial fishing industries would be severely negatively impacted. Additionally, a recent report confirmed that the Department of Defense has concerns about offshore wind interfering with radar and sonar operations. LaGuardia International Airport has also raised alarms regarding the potential impact on commercial flight operations. Mayor Magdeburger referenced previous discussions noting European concerns, including a statement from a Finnish general that offshore wind installations could compromise the Patriot Missile defense system by affecting missile tracking and interception. Further information from the Trump Administration

is anticipated within the next 90–120 days. Mayor Magdeburger encouraged residents to continue voicing their opinions on the matter.

Administrative Professionals Appreciation Day:

In recognition of Administrative Professionals Appreciation Day on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Mayor Magdeburger presented flowers to the administrative staff. A staff luncheon was also held in their honor.

**2. Approval of Minutes of April 4, 2025, Regular Town Council Meeting**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of April 4, 2025, Regular Town Council meeting.**

**Moved by: Bill Rymer**

**Seconded by: Susan Brennan**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

**3. For Discussion and Possible Action:**

**a. Action Form 2025 – 002 – Earth Day Bay to Beach Cleanup**

**Motion: To approve the purchase of \$125 for refreshments.**

**Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Seconded by: Bill Rymer**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

The event begins at 8:30 am. Participants will meet at Town Hall.

**b. Action Form 2025 – 003 – Ad Hoc DarkSky T-shirts**

Rose Mary Hoy proposed creating a t-shirt to help communicate the committee's goals. The estimated cost is approximately \$8 per shirt, with a plan to purchase around 40 shirts for volunteers, staff, and Council members, for a maximum total cost of \$400. DarkSky International is assisting with the design. Mayor Magdeburger recommended using Red Sun, the vendor currently under contract with the town. Jacque Napolitano noted that the town's contract with Red Sun is set to expire soon.

**Motion: To approve the purchase of 40 shirts.**

**Moved by: Janice Bortner**

**Seconded by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Result: Mayor Magdeburger tabled this request pending Rose Mary coming back with more information and plan for an event.**

Discussion:

Rose Mary explained that the t-shirts are intended to promote the concept, support overall education on the topic, and help initiate discussions. Committee members will wear the shirts while participating in several already scheduled town events, as well as during a planned "Fenwick Nurtures Nature" event.

Colleen Wilson expressed concern that providing t-shirts for this committee could prompt similar requests from other committees.

Janice Bortner noted that the shirts are not tied to a single event and believes they will help generate broader community interest.

Bill Rymer agreed that other committees might seek similar requests and suggested ordering a smaller quantity limited to committee experts. Rose Mary added that the committee does not want to compete with t-shirt sales at the Bonfire event.

The mayor commented that selling the shirts would be more appropriate at a DarkSky-specific event and recommended that the Green Infrastructure initiative host a separate event.

Mayor Magdeburger raised concerns about the wording on the proposed t-shirt, cautioning that it could imply that Fenwick officially identifies as a “dark sky community.” She suggested obtaining a quote for the shirts and developing a formal event plan before moving forward.

Council agreed to table the request.

c. **Hourly and daily parking rates for summer 2025**

Bill Rymer reported that during the recent Budget & Finance Committee meeting, the committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Town Council approve an increase in the hourly parking rate from \$3 to \$4. This proposed rate is consistent with, and possibly slightly less than, those of neighboring beach communities. The committee believes the increase will help offset the rising costs of street maintenance. The daily and weekly parking rates will remain unchanged at \$25 and \$150, respectively.

**Motion: To increase the hourly parking rate to \$4 per hour.**

**Motion by: Bill Rymer**

**Seconded by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor Magdeburger added that the rate increase will also help cover the costs associated with the parking officer and general wear and tear on town infrastructure. Chief Morrissey will address and correct inconsistencies with the ParkMobile signage throughout town.

d. **Nominations and vote for Board of Election and Planning Commission**

**Motion: To nominate Liz Lear as Borad of Elections Committee chair and Lucy Wilder and Stu Rubenstein as members of the Elections Committee.**

**Nominated and Moved by: Mayor Natalie Magdeburger**

**Seconded by: Colleen Wilson**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Jacque Napolitano – in favor as these individuals are familiar with elections and have done a nice job.**

**Janice Bortner – in favor for same reasons.**

**Colleen Wilson – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Natalie Magdeburger – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Susan Brennan – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Bill Rymer – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Result: Nomination confirmed unanimously.**

Mayor Magdeburger will find an alternate and report back at the next meeting.

**Nomination and Motion: To nominate Julie Lee for a 5-year term on the Planning Commission.**

**Nominated and Moved by: Mayor Natalie Magdeburger**

**Seconded by: Susan Brennan**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Bill Rymer – in favor; Julie has done a great job with the Comprehensive Plan and deserves to continue in the role.**

**Susan Brennan – in favor for same reasons.**

**Natalie Magdeburger – in favor for same reasons.**

**Colleen Wilson – in favor for same reasons.**

**Janice Bortner – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Jacque Napolitano – in favor for the same reasons.**

**Result: Nomination and Motion confirmed unanimously.**

- e. **Infrastructure Committee – Engineering Study re: Resilience Plan, given BRIC grant status including option to use approved funds for ongoing concept design and ordinance updates or discussion of other alternatives**

Susan Brennan reported that on April 8<sup>th</sup>, the Town was notified that the BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) grant through FEMA had been eliminated. As a result, the committee is reevaluating its approach, as there is currently no alternative plan in place. They are reviewing all town priorities moving forward.

Mayor Magdeburger emphasized that bayside flooding remains the town's top concern and stressed the importance of maintaining momentum. She recommended moving forward with preliminary work and advised the committee to reengage with the engineers who

completed the original RFP to reassess and prioritize necessary projects. She noted that funding is available through the Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) fund and the Municipal Street Fund. Additionally, berm construction on Farmington Street could be completed in-house. Mayor Magdeburger stressed the urgency of starting work and noted that updated engineer analysis will be necessary when ordinance changes are proposed.

**Motion: To engage with engineers to give an encompassing plan in with budget in keeping with the original plan of creating a community wide resiliency plan.**

**Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Seconded by: Jacque Napolitano**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

f. **Beach & Bay Cottage Tour – request to be granted Special Events status to use shuttle and to waive fee for same**

Colleen Wilson announced that this year marks the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Beach & Bay Cottage Tour, featuring 10 homes from Bethany Beach to Fenwick Island, hosted by the South Coastal Library. The event, which raises funds for the library, will take place on July 23 and 24. Three of the homes are located in Fenwick Island. A Jolly Trolley will be used to transport attendees between the sites, and the parking committee has been in communication with the police chief to coordinate logistics. The parking lot at St. Matthews by the Sea will be utilized, and there will be volunteer parking attendants and police officers present to assist.

**Motion: To approve the special event permit, waive the permit fee, and allow the operation of two shuttles within town limits.**

**Motion by: Colleen Wilson**

**Seconded by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

g. **Removal of Kris Keisling from the Beach Committee due to request by Ms. Keisling who could no longer commit to the time required due to personal reasons.**

**Motion: To remove Kris Keisling from the Beach Committee**

**Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger**

**Seconded by: Jacque Napolitano**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

h. **Update Faucett Okie Family Nature Preserve including additional signage needed**

Carol Austra-Anderson, a landscape architect, presented the first rendering of the initial phase of the landscaping plan. She highlighted

existing drainage issues on the site and proposed the creation of a rain garden to address this. Carol explained that the site is considered a maritime forest, meaning the plants must be able to survive in a coastal environment, which differs from a typical forest setting. She noted that plant identification is currently underway.

Carol said that invasive bamboo species are encroaching on other trees and she recommends that they be contained. She proposed that the entrance to the site feature colorful and interesting elements to attract visitors, and native plants to provide privacy without being invasive. The working group has been working with the Forestry Department and the Center for Inland Bays. The project will also serve as a demonstration for property owners on how to construct their own rain gardens.

Deb Cowell reported that trash has been removed from the pit area. A water drainage test was conducted, confirming that water naturally flows to this location, making it an ideal spot for a rain garden. The next steps include adding sand and mushroom soil, followed by the installation of stones and plants. A date for the project will be set soon.

Mayor Magdeburger offered to have the town post on social media to recruit volunteers for the project. She also mentioned that residents have expressed a desire to preserve as much bamboo as possible as that was an important privacy buffer for both of the neighboring properties.

Deb praised Tripp, the owner of Brother Nature Landscaping, for being a tremendous partner on the project.

The mayor noted that she has located the source for creating the signs and mentioned that Mr. Okie expressed interest in attending the dedication ceremony. The Okie family's story has been shared on the town's Facebook page.

Janice Bortner shared that the Nason family would like to contribute towards the cost of the sign. Carol encouraged community members to provide any ideas or input they may have for the project.

i. **Key fob discussion from Business Concerns Committee**

Jim Simpson of the Business Concerns Committee presented a QR code linked to a PDF file containing a list of local businesses, which he created. The list includes addresses, phone numbers, and websites, and it also features some businesses outside of town limits. Jim said he will manage the list, which will require minimal effort. Kurt Zanelotti mentioned that the only cost would be for the purchase of key fobs, and window decals are also under consideration. The QR code would be posted on the town's website.

Mayor Magdeburger inquired about content control, to which Jim responded that he would maintain the list as a PDF. He said the list will be categorized by business type and is a basic model to start with.

Jacque Napolitano asked if this list would include all businesses in Fenwick, and the mayor inquired if the Chamber of Commerce offers a similar resource. Jim suggested distributing the fob to residents when they pick up their parking passes. Jacque confirmed that a similar resource is available on the Chamber of Commerce's website, and there is also a comparable concept in the Quiet Resorts Guide, which links to the Chamber's site.

Janice Bortner mentioned the Hometown Press option as a potential way to share the information with residents. Jim explained that the initiative is primarily aimed at raising awareness of local businesses for visitors.

Susan Brennan suggested gauging interest from local businesses and noted that having a QR code on business windows would be beneficial. She questioned whether \$500 would cover the cost of 500 key chains.

Bill Rymer proposed that the town administration staff should manage the project and that only licensed businesses within town limits should be listed. He agreed that the town's website should feature a dedicated business page and Jim offered to share the spreadsheet with the staff. The discussion was tabled pending further review and discussion.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Bill Rymer reported the Town's overall cash balance as of March 31 was \$4.33 million which was a \$40,000 increase from February. The unexpected increase was due to a very large month of building permits being issued. For the month, \$187,000 of building permit revenues were recorded which is the largest single month in a very long time. RTT revenues total \$515,000 for this fiscal year as compared to the annual budget of only \$350,000. We continue to maintain overall operating expenses consistent with the annual budget. Based on the first eight months of results, we now forecast that the town will beat the combined operating budget and RTT revenue budget by more than \$500,000.

## **7. Committee Reports - Audit, Beach & Recreation, Budget & Finance, Commercial Planning & Building Review, Business Concerns, C&O, Dredging, Emergency Mgmt., Environmental, Planning Commission, Residential Concerns**

**Ad Hoc DarkSky** – Rose Mary Hoy reported the next meeting will be May 7<sup>th</sup>. National DarkSky week is April 21 - 28. The committee will have a table at both the Earth Day Cleanup and the Cruisin' Together in Fenwick events. They are currently planning two more events: stargazing during National Night Out and Fenwick Nurtures Nature. They have recently discovered several resources to support their efforts.

**Audit – No report**

**Beach** – Jacque Napolitano said the Town Bonfire will be July 5<sup>th</sup> with the rain date on July 6<sup>th</sup> from 7 – 10 p.m. The event will feature a bonfire, glowsticks, silent auction, 50/50 raffle, games with lifeguards and commemorative T-shirts for sale.

The Fenwick Flicks movies on the beach will be on the following dates, all with a rain date being the following day.

- June 20 – Monsters Inc.
- July 18 – Moana 2
- August 15 – Up

Next meeting will be held May 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

**Budget & Finance** – Bill Rymer said yesterday, the Finance committee reviewed the first pass of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. Two large open items remain and relate to final salary decisions and an estimate for funding levels for the town's Resiliency efforts. During the meeting, we compared the FY26 draft budget to the FY25 Budget and updated FY25 Forecast. The initial FY26 Budgeted revenues are very much inline with the FY25 Budget. The initial draft does not include a property tax increase. Overall expenses are projected to increase \$80,000 primarily due to the need to maintain competitive salaries for our police department. The budget does reflect significant cost savings since this council has decided to continue to operate without a town manager. This decision results in savings in excess of \$100,000. The preliminary budget also forecasted reserve levels for July 2026 to be more than 10 times the average monthly operating expenses which far exceeds our goals of 6 months of reserves. The committee will meet again once the remaining open items are resolved. Our goal is to bring forth a proposed budget for council approval by the June council meeting.

**Business Concerns**– Kurt Zanelotti reported that the committee discussed the parking issue and decided not to move forward with the proposed half-price parking spaces. Instead, they plan to explore the "Business Helping Business" plan. Additionally, the committee is working on the upcoming "Cruisin' Together in Fenwick" event and the "Shop Fenwick" initiative. The next committee meeting is scheduled for May 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Mayor Magdeburger added that participation in the event is not limited to biking. There will be activities at the Town Hall, making it a great community event to promote local businesses. The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**C&O** – Mayor Magdeburger announced that the May meeting will focus on the "Business Helping Business" parking proposal, noting that the current code does not permit the transfer of funds between businesses. The committee will explore issues such as the wear and tear of parking lots and the need for liability riders. Additionally, the meeting will address a proposed charter amendment to change the election date from the middle of summer and will discuss the qualification requirements for candidates residing within a 50-mile radius.



**Dredging** – Bill Rymer said we continue to wait on formal approval from DNREC on our application to install new Channel Markers. We were told three weeks ago that our application was “in the que” but uncertain as to when we will obtain approval. On a positive note, the DNREC waterway management team provided us the signs and reflective material for the markers free of charge. Next week, we will receive the PVC pipes to be used for each channel marker which we purchased from DNREC’s supplier. Unfortunately, DNREC’s public bid process to find a single firm to perform all significant waterway management projects failed to receive any bids so they are going back to the drawing board. We were hoping to piggyback their bid to identify a firm for our project. We have two firms that had expressed some interest in the project but have no commitment yet. Unfortunately, we are still fighting to get the application approved and trying to find a firm to do the actual work.

**Emergency Management** – Chief Morrissey reported the committee recently met to discuss the construction of the Emergency Operations Center. He has acquired a smart board, laptop, iPad, and keyboard, which were purchased through a criminal justice grant totaling \$5,500. The next meeting will be May 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

**Environmental** – Colleen Wilson announced that Earth Day Beach is Saturday with a Beach to Bay Cleanup. The event aims to clean the town and bring the community together. Educational displays will be set up at Town Hall, and participants can choose their cleanup assignments. Supplies and refreshments provided by Surf Bagel, will be available.

Mayor Magdeburger added that the pollinator park is in full bloom and looking beautiful.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

**Infrastructure** – Susan Brennan reported that she will attend a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) seminar and a SCAT dinner on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The presentation at the SCAT dinner will focus on federal and state grant opportunities.

The Farmington Street end project will be the first to be completed. Public Works is currently constructing a living shoreline at the site, which will help determine a timeline for moving forward with improvements to other street ends.

The committee is also planning a resiliency presentation in August to help educate the community about climate resiliency.

Mike Locke shared a map outlining the road maintenance plan. The 2024 roadwork project is scheduled for completion in spring 2025 and will include crack sealing, patching, and milling. This map and related information will be posted on the town website.

The following roads will receive specific improvements:

Milling and repaving: Bay Street, McWilliams Street, Wright Street, and South Schulz Road

Crack sealing: West Houston Street, West Essex Street, and Bunting Avenue

Roads in the worst condition are being prioritized, with South Schulz Road noted as being in particularly poor shape. North Schulz Road was crack sealed last year. To maintain access during construction, traffic control will be in place, and only one side of each road will be worked on at a time.

Janice Bortner questioned why North Schulz Street was not being repaved. It was explained that a portion of North Schulz was done last year and the most northern part did not warrant repairs or repaving. Janice Bortner questioned why it would not be completed when the equipment was already on site.

**Planning Commission** – Susan Brennan reported they are collaborating with the Business Committee, Police Department, and town staff to organize the "Cruisin' Together in Fenwick" event scheduled for May 31<sup>st</sup>. She noted this is a great opportunity for public engagement.

The commission is now transitioning into preparing reports, reviewing last year's implementation efforts, and completing the annual report.

**Residential Concerns** – Janice Bortner wished everyone a happy Arbor Day and thanked Deb Cowell for her outstanding advocacy for the initiative. She reported that the Green Infrastructure Working Group has been collaborating on the Faucett-Okie Family Nature Preserve project. Both groups agreed it would be valuable to hold a follow-up event highlighting these efforts. Janice noted that the town is benefiting greatly from the expertise contributed to these projects and mentioned that the groups may shift their focus to resiliency issues next year.

Janice also read Carol Austra-Anderson's accomplishments.

The upcoming event will be held at Town Hall, with the hope of offering a virtual attendance option as well. The tentative date for the event is July 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and will be a joint session with the Green Infrastructure Working Group.

## **8. Department Highlights**

**Public Works** – Mike Locke reported that all Mobi mats have been installed. Spring planting is currently underway, and beach street name animal signage will be installed soon.

**Police Department** – Chief Morrissey expressed gratitude to Corporal Chris Story for coordinating the donation of 700 backpacks to Mariner’s Bethel for J-1 students, as well as to the Laurel School District and the Delaware Department of Social Services. Additionally, bread was donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

**Administration** – Erin Ellinger reported that the administrative staff attended 24 meetings during the month of March. Weekly Quickbase development meetings are ongoing, and the project is nearing its go-live stage. All forms are currently being updated, digitized, and integrated into the Quickbase system.

Resident parking permits are now available for pickup at the Police Department.

Voter registration and Power of Attorney forms are being submitted—residents are reminded to update their Power of Attorney if necessary.

The staff is working with its IT provider on a grant through DEMA to replace five computers. Advertising efforts are underway for a variety of upcoming spring and summer events.

**9. Old Business**

None

**10. New Business**

Mayor Magdeburger encouraged everyone to regularly check the Town’s website and Facebook page for updates on upcoming events and meetings. She also highlighted that the website has a feature that can be used to get automatic notifications of upcoming events as they are posted and encouraged people to use the feature.

Mayor Magdeburger also reminded folks that the Memorial Day ceremony, which will take place on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, will follow the next Town Council meeting.

**11. Upcoming Events and Meetings:**

April 22	Bayside Flood Working Group	1:00 pm
April 23	Administrative Professionals Appreciation Day	ALL DAY
April 24	Budget & Finance Committee	2:00 pm
April 26	Earth Day Bay to Beach Cleanup	8:30 am
May 1	Green Infrastructure Working Group	9:00 am
May 5	Residential Concerns Committee	10:00 am
May 6	Business Concerns Committee	9:00 am
May 7	Ad Hoc DarkSky Committee	9:00 am
May 8	Planning Commission	9:00 am
May 9	Beach Committee	9:30 am
May 12	Emergency Management Committee	10:00 am

May 13	Infrastructure Committee	10:00 am
May 13	Sidewalk Project Public Meeting	1:00 pm
May 14	Environmental Committee	9:00 am
May 15	Green Infrastructure Working Group	9:00 am
May 19	Public Works Appreciation Week	ALL WEEK
May 23	Town Council Executive Session	11:00 am
May 23	Town Council Regular Meeting	1:00 pm
May 23	Memorial Day Ceremony	5:30 pm

**12. Public Participation**

None

**13. Adjournment**

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m.**

**Moved by: Colleen Wilson**

**Seconded by: Janice Bortner**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**