



The Town of Fenwick Island

800 Coastal Highway, Fenwick Island, DE 19944-4409

302-539-3011 ~ 302-539-1305 fax

www.fenwickisland.delaware.gov

RESIDENTIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MEETING

July 7, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

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

Other Participants: Bev Lang (Zoom), Ann Riley (Zoom), Colleen Wilson, Megan Noe Fellows

Staff: Kathy Grab

Flag Salute & Call to Order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Approval of the June 2, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve June 2, 2025 meeting minutes on a Rose Mary Hoy/Sharon Harris motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and Possible Action.

- a. Megan Noe Fellows, Inland Bays Director of Estuary Science and Restoration, Will Discuss the Opportunity to Participate in the Grant Application Process Regarding How to Develop Pocket Forests and How to Start to Rebuild Green Space.
 - Janice Bortner introduced Megan Noe Fellows. Megan Noe Fellows has supported Fenwick's green infrastructure efforts, including Phase 1 of the Okey Preserve and the development of a pocket forest. Thanks to her work, a Chesapeake Bay Fund grant was awarded, and today she will share how it will support local green space and FEMA community efforts.
 - Megan Noe Fellows shared news of a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant for 10 mini forest sites. Fenwick is invited to participate. The grant covers training, plants, fencing, signage, and a bench. Invasives must be removed. She highlighted benefits like runoff reduction and wildlife support.

- Stu Rubenstein asked for the definition of pocket forest and examples of invasive species. Megan Noe Fellows explained that even small forests (15' x 33') can function like full forests—supporting wildlife, improving soil, intercepting water, and sequestering carbon. She stressed using native plants over invasives like autumn olive, bamboo, tree of heaven, and Bradford pear.
 - Stu Rubenstein asked if the dune line would qualify as a forest, Megan Noe Fellows stated dune lines can include short, forested areas like maritime forests. She suggested the Route One area with invasive seedlings as a possible pocket forest site to serve as an educational demonstration, similar to the existing rain garden.
 - Deborah Cowell noted that an area near Route One with invasive Bradford pear seedlings is a potential site for a native pocket forest. The goal is to create an educational space, like the rain garden, to show how residents can use native plants. The proposal, now backed by grant funding, will go to the Environmental Committee for review.
 - Janice Bortner emphasized the importance of native plants for supporting birds and noted the value of learning from experts to guide planting and avoid invasive species.
- b. Deborah Cowell, Green Infrastructure Working Group Update on Fenwick Nurtures Nature Event July 17th.
- Event on July 17th will begin at 1:00 p.m.
 - Deborah Cowell thanked the Green Infrastructure Working Group for organizing the event without additional funding.
 - Speakers include experts on gardening, forestry, rain gardens, and the Master Naturalist program. Presentations are timed and will include raffles between speakers. Promotion was done via Facebook, flyers, and community outreach.
 - She expressed excitement for the event and appreciated everyone's support. The committee has really worked together to make the event successful.
- c. Rose Mary Hoy, DarkSky Committee Request for Help on the August 5th Event.
- Janice Bortner advised The bonfire table drew strong interest in dark sky efforts, including from experts. This was the second "Fenwick Nurtures Nature" event. Thanks to George

Stone for flying in and engaging attendees, and to Rose Mary Hoy for the great basket. Lots of enthusiasm overall.

- Rose Mary Hoy stated bonfire event drew strong interest and meaningful conversations, from basic questions to expert-level discussions. Many residents learned about the town's light ordinance and how to address lighting concerns.
- Rose Mary Hoy advised they are hosting a DarkSky Webinar on Tuesday, August 5 in the morning, with the CEO of DarkSky International as keynote speaker, thanks to George Stone. Local hardware stores are invited to share tips on responsible lighting, and we will have a lamp display, handouts, and a raffle.
- Flyers are in development, with outreach planned through social media and local businesses. We have decided to focus on the morning event rather than add an evening program this year.

d. Discussion and Evaluation of the RCC Vision and Mission Going Forward.

- Janice Bortner thanked RCC members and highlighted the committee's role in giving residents a voice. She emphasized the mission: advocate for Fenwick's quiet, family-oriented character. The successes: DarkSky, Green Infrastructure, parking, welcome packets, resident concerns. And the next Steps: Seek feedback, increase visibility, tech upgrades.
- George Stone emphasized the committee needs better visibility (web/Facebook).
- Janice Bortner advises Lucy Wilder, the new council member, has technology background and hopes she can help with this.
- Geri Verlaque agreed that residents prefer personal interaction.
- Rose Mary Hoy Noted that residents can find information through the town website or by contacting Town Hall, which routes inquiries appropriately. New residents also receive a welcome packet.
- Sharon Harris stated the committee ensures residents are heard.
- Stu Rubenstein advised that it is intimidating to speak to the town and council.
- Geri Verlaque agreed that going to Janice Bortner is more comforting than speaking to the town.
- Janice Bortner felt that the committee helped hold the town accountable.

3. Old Business.

a. Bicycle Patrolman

- Resident asked if officer was on duty and she was advised yes.

b. Crosswalk at Oyster Bay.

- Concern raised; Janice Bortner will discuss with Chief Morrissey.

c. Ordinance about People Sleeping in Public Places.

- Deborah Cowell reported Ann Riley found an ordinance about sleeping places and suggested adding a few words. Deborah Cowell will follow up with Ann Riley.

d. Bayard Street Beach Ramp

- Noted a resident concern about the handicap ramp on Bayard St., which appeared non-compliant with ADA standards.
- Ann Riley confirmed the ramp is DNREC's responsibility. After extensive review, DNREC admitted it was poorly engineered and cannot be reliably maintained due to natural conditions.

4. New Business.

a. Resident requests that the Town Manager position be brought back.

- Janice Bortner advised on resident interest in revisiting the position of Town Manager.
- Rose Mary Hoy said she has not experienced issues, and suggested staff would be better positioned to assess the impact.
- Stu Rubenstein noted no decline in service. Suggest adding related question in the upcoming survey.

5. Public Participation

a. None

6. Date of Next Meeting

a. August 4, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn.

a. Motion to adjourn at 11:12 a.m. on a Rose Mary Hoy/ Stu Rubenstein motion.

Motion passed unanimously.