



# The Town of Fenwick Island

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## INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

July 8, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Town Hall

MINUTES

**Members Present:** Tim Bergin, Jay Ryan, Tim Leahy, Jon Miller (Zoom), Susan Brennan (Zoom), Geri Verlaque (Zoom), Jack Armstrong (Zoom), Nuvan Seneviratne (Zoom)

**Others Present:** Natalie Magdeburger (Zoom), Ann Riley (Zoom), Janice Bortner (Zoom),

**Staff Present:** Kathy Grab

Flag salute and call to order at 10:02 a.m.

1. Approval of prior minutes from June 10, 2025

**Motion to approve June 10, 2025 minutes on a Tim Leahy/Jay Ryan motion.**

***Motion passed unanimously.***

2. Update on Straughan Environmental RFP.

- a. Contract with Straughan Approved: Town Council approved moving forward with a 1-year contract with Straughan at the end of June.
- The contract includes 7–8 tasks, starting with a 5-Year Master Plan. The goal is to have at least two projects ready for bid by this time next year.
- The plan was designed to expedite design efforts post-BRIC grant, enabling on-the-ground action sooner.
- Straughan submitted the contract, which is under review by Natalie Magdeburger and the Town Solicitor. No serious issues identified; aim to finalize this week.
- Once signed, a kickoff meeting will be scheduled—open to anyone interested.
- Next Steps, Monthly status meetings will be held. Straughan will present at the August meeting. Kickoff meeting to be scheduled for early next week. First deliverable (5-Year Master Plan) expected in 4–6 weeks.
- Jon Miller asked if the scope document could be shared; Tim Leahy confirmed it had been previously shared and is unchanged.

- Discussion emphasized the need for a clear project selection process; Tim noted a decision matrix is included in the deliverables.
- The contract allows flexibility—no fixed end date, work continues until deliverables are complete.
- Natalie Magdeburger asked if the plan is to go back to Straughan and negotiate the language, to provide clarity to the issues.
- Tim Leahy will revise the Statement of Work to clarify that the master plan covers the entire bayside and to better define the decision matrix and project narrowing process (from townwide to 8, then 4, then 2 projects). He will confirm with Straughan that these updates do not affect the cost estimate.
- Natalie Magdeburger will conduct an initial contract review before forwarding it to the town solicitor, aiming for completion next week.
- Tim Leahy shared the draft of the Comp Plan Progress Report and discussed where the committee is currently.

### 3. Update on Infrastructure Committee's Presentation Slated for Thursday August 21, 2025.

- Tim Leahy shared the Infrastructure Committee's draft Workshop Agenda for August.
- Each speaker will have roughly 20 minutes each.
- Jon Miller suggested having a break due to the length.
- Tim Bergin expressed concern over the tight speaker time slots, suggesting presenters may need more flexibility. Tim Leahy clarified each speaker will have 20 minutes total, including discussion, encouraging interactive presentations (15 min talk + 5 min Q&A). Presenters will be informed of this format.
- Jon Miller asked if attendees stay for the full event; Susan Brennan confirmed they do.
- Susan Brennan felt the we didn't need to be strict on the speaker's time.
- Tim Leahy proposed using the wrap-up to address next steps and introduce the idea of a Resiliency Fund.
- Tim Bergin emphasized the need to communicate both the town's role and the responsibilities of individual property owners.
- Agreed to highlight the shift away from grant funding and suggest event messaging: "What is the town doing?" and "What can you do?"
- Susan Brennan suggested tweaking the title to include the message that is being presented. Tim Bergin advised it needs to emphasize clear messaging: what the town is

doing vs. what homeowners must do. Promote the event as a chance to hear from experts and learn actionable steps. Highlight past studies as groundwork—now is the time to get involved.

- Natalie Magdeburger proposed the theme: “Resiliency—what the town is doing and what you can do,” noting most actions will fall to homeowners.
- Susan Brennan suggested Fenwick, and You, Our Shared Responsibility and Resiliency.
- Jon Miller wonders if the presentation is about the whole town or the bayside but it was advised it is really the whole town.
- Ideas need to be sent to Susan Brennan by Thursday, and she will send them out to the committee.
- Tim Leahy noted upcoming outreach tools (story map, 3D renderings) and ongoing drainage work; Farmington Street project delayed to fall.
- Regional efforts and beach replenishment continue; Natalie is leading on the latter.
- Tim Leahy reviewed 12 years of reports, highlighting useful scientific data, especially from the DelDOT Route 1 study—summary to come next meeting.
- Jon Miller requested a milestone for town decision-making on project selection; Tim will add it.
- Natalie Magdeburger advised Council involvement may be needed for funding.
- Resiliency funding and code updates remain in early discussion.

#### 4. Old Business.

- a. Jay Ryan clarified that on Farmington Street, the Artesian Water valve is on the east side.
  - Susan Brennan advised the project timeline allows time to finalize details, as work is scheduled for fall.

#### 5. New Business.

- a. Jennifer Egan, University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center.
  - Susan Brennan shared an opportunity from the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center to participate in a Climate Adaptation Project, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project would support resilience planning and preliminary engineering for coastal communities, including Fenwick Island.
  - Susan recommended expressing interest—minimal risk, potential benefits include training, peer exchange, and grant funding. The project is slated to begin mid-2026 if funded.

- The committee agreed to move forward and explore participation.
  - b. Fenwick Nurtures Nature will be held on July 17<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall from 1-3.
    - Janice Bortner encouraged attending the July 17th event on engaging residents in flood mitigation through green infrastructure. Experts will present, with time for questions related to committee work. She noted past success with collaboration, including a grant-supported pocket park, and emphasized the event as a chance to build connections and involve more residents.
  - c. Handicap Access to Beach
    - Geri Verlaque brought beach replenishment and concerns about the poorly maintained handicapped ramp, which is DNREC's responsibility and is it beyond Fenwick's capacity to manage. Susan Brennan advised this was an ongoing issue of DNREC's.
  - d. Status of Resiliency Fund
    - Jon Miller asked the status of the resiliency fund. Susan Brennan shared that she asked Andrew Emerson to lead the effort in March, but after repeated follow-ups with no response, they are now exploring a Plan B. She emphasized the need for a separate group to take this on, as she cannot manage another task. The next step is to determine if the town is interested in establishing a resiliency fund and what that would entail. Jon Miller suggested this could be included in the town survey, and Susan agreed.
6. Public Participation.
- a. None.
7. Date of Next Meeting.
- a. August 12, 2025 at 10:00 A.M.
8. Adjournment.

**Motion to adjourn at 11:22 a.m. on a Geri Verlaque/Tim Bergin motion.**

***Motion passed unanimously.***