



# The Town of Fenwick Island

800 Coastal Highway, Fenwick Island, DE 19944-4409

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

[www.fenwickisland.delaware.gov](http://www.fenwickisland.delaware.gov)

## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

June 4, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

Town Hall

Minutes

Members Present in Person: Winnie Lewis

Members Present via Zoom: Susan Brennan, Stuart Rubenstein, Natalie Magdeburger, Ann Riley

Members Absent: Julie Lee, Lois Twilley both excused

Others Present: Erin Ellinger

Call to Order and Flag Salute

### **1. Discuss/approve minutes from meeting held January 8, 2026.**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 8, 2026, meeting.**

**Moved by: Ann Riley**

**Seconded by: Stuart Rubenstein**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

### **2. Discuss DNREC's notice to coastal and bay beach communities regarding the Shoreline Public Access**

The Commission discussed DNREC's Shoreline Public Access initiative and reviewed the community-specific public access considerations identified for Fenwick Island.

Chair Susan Brennan noted that the primary concerns identified by DNREC included:

- Residency restrictions on parking near public beach crossovers;
- Public parking that may not be clearly identified in some areas; and
- Restrictions affecting public transportation and mass transit access.

Prior to discussing specific concerns, Ann Riley asked whether declining future beach replenishment projects was a realistic option for the Town. Mayor Magdeburger stated that no decision had been made and noted that the Town would likely need to participate in the process and submit a response or plan regardless.

## **Beach-End Parking**



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The Commission discussed resident-only beach-end parking and how it may be viewed by DNREC.

Mayor Magdeburger explained that similar issues have been litigated in New Jersey, where municipalities attempted to limit beach access through parking restrictions. She noted that courts generally favored broader public access and indicated that this issue could become a significant challenge for Delaware beach communities.

The discussion focused on the Town's existing parking inventory and public access accommodations. Chair Brennan reported that a recent parking inventory identified:

- Approximately 83 beach-end parking spaces; and including 4 handicapped
- Approximately 275 total parking spaces throughout Town.

Members observed that Fenwick Island provides a substantial amount of parking relative to its size.

The Commission discussed the fact that beach-end parking is not exclusively used by year-round residents. Stu Rubenstein noted that hang tags are also utilized by:

- Guests of property owners;
- Short-term renters;
- Visitors staying in Town accommodations; and
- Hotel guests.
- Fenwick Island Business owners

Members agreed that this information should be included in the Town's response because access is not limited solely to permanent residents.

### **Accessibility and Public Amenities**

Mayor Magdeburger emphasized that Fenwick Island provides accessibility accommodations that exceed those available in many neighboring beach communities, including:

- Mobi mats;
- Beach wheelchairs;
- Assistance transporting individuals with mobility challenges across the dunes; and
- Designated handicap parking areas.

During the discussion, staff provided information indicating that the Town currently maintains four handicap parking spaces at beach-end locations.



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Members agreed that the Town's accessibility efforts should be prominently highlighted in any response submitted to DNREC.

### **Public Transportation and State Facilities**

The Commission discussed DNREC's references to public transportation access.

Mayor Magdeburger noted that Fenwick Island's narrow streets, lack of sidewalks especially throughout the entire beach block of Bunting Avenue, and pedestrian-oriented character make expanded transit operations dangerous. She also observed that the Town has not modified existing bus stops or infrastructure to discourage public transportation on US Route 1, but simply lacks the capacity to support seasonal larger transit operations or shuttle systems on Town-owned roads.

The Commission discussed the significant role played by nearby state-owned facilities, including:

- Fenwick Island State Park;
- State-owned beach access areas south of Town; and
- Existing state restroom facilities.

Members noted that state facilities provide substantial public beach access opportunities and that the Town's response should acknowledge these resources when evaluating overall public access in the Fenwick Island area.

Ann reported that Fenwick Island State Park is estimated to have approximately 350 to 400 parking spaces.

Mayor Magdeburger suggested that the Town's response should emphasize the combined availability of access opportunities within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of Fenwick Island, as well as the State Park facilities.

### **Proposed Response to DNREC**

The Commission agreed that a draft response should be prepared highlighting:

- Existing public parking availability;
- Accessibility accommodations;
- Hotel and rental guest access;
- Public beach access provided through Town facilities;
- State Park parking and restroom facilities; and
- The unique relationship between incorporated Fenwick Island, unincorporated Fenwick Island, and State-owned beach areas.



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Susan agreed to prepare a first draft response and circulate it to members for review.

### **3. Discuss Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plan Annual Report**

The Commission reviewed preparation of the annual Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plan report and associated implementation matrix.

Susan explained that members had previously been assigned sections of the matrix for review and update.

Discussion included:

- Progress made by various Town committees during the past year;
- Updating committee accomplishments and implementation activities;
- The transition of the Dark Sky Committee from an ad hoc committee to a standing committee;
- Budget-related items within the implementation matrix; and
- Maintaining accurate historical records for future Planning Commission members.

Members agreed to review assigned sections and provide updates covering activities occurring between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Susan requested that comments and updates be returned by Monday to allow preparation of a revised draft for discussion at the next meeting.

### **Resiliency and Future Planning**

The Commission also discussed resiliency planning initiatives that are included within the State reporting process.

Susan noted that recent annual reports have focused heavily on resiliency issues and suggested including discussion of future funding needs associated with municipal infrastructure.

Mayor Magdeburger recommended that the report specifically reference flooding concerns at street ends as well and ongoing resiliency efforts related to those areas.

The Commission agreed that resiliency planning and street-end flooding concerns should be incorporated into the annual report.

### **State Property Near the Lighthouse**



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During discussion of future planning topics, members discussed the recent sale of property adjacent to the lighthouse.

Winnie reported that:

- The property has been sold to the State;
- Settlement is not expected until October;
- Portions of the property will involve both Parks and Recreation and Cultural Affairs; and
- Future plans may include additional parking opportunities, although no final plans have been announced.

Members agreed to continue monitoring developments associated with the property.

### **Old Business**

No Old Business was discussed.

### **New Business**

No New Business was discussed.

### **Public Participation**

Chair Susan Brennan opened the floor for public participation. No comments were offered.

### **Meeting Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:39 AM.**

**Moved by: Ann Riley**

**Seconded by: Stuart Rubenstein**

**Result: Motion passed unanimously.**

**Next meetings: June 11 and June 25 at 9:00 AM**