The Town of Fenwick Island
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Beach Committee Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2026, at 9:30 AM | Town Hall & via Zoom

Members Present at Town Hall: Kurt Zanelotti, Anne Hodges, Beth Chapman, Suzanne Smith, Sharon Harris

Members Present via Zoom: Melissa Rufo, Jim Simpson, Natalie Olbers

Others Present: Erin Ellinger, Chief Morrissey and two members from the Chamber of Commerce, Emily and Alyssa (via Zoom).

Flag Salute and Call to Order

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Zanelotti welcomed returning and new committee members, and members introduced themselves.

1. Chairman's Message

Chair Zanelotti welcomed members' ideas and participation and explained that the committee meets monthly. He announced that a Bank of Ocean City check presentation in support of the lifeguards was scheduled for 11:30 AM following the meeting and invited members to attend. He thanked the bank for its continued support.

2. Approval of May, June, July, and August 2026, Meeting Minutes.

Motion: To approve the minutes of May, June, July, August 2026 meeting minutes.
Moved by: Anne Hodges
Seconded by: Sharon Harris
Result: Motion passed, with four new members, Beth Chapman, Suzanne Smith, Natalie Olbers and Melissa Rufo abstaining.

3. Old Business

Chamber of Commerce Fire and Ice Festival

Chair Zanelotti moved the Chamber presentation to the first item under Old Business. He noted that participation had been discussed the previous year, but the request had been received too late to allow sufficient planning.

Chamber representatives described the Fire and Ice Festival as a winter event that supports local businesses during the slower season. The upcoming festival will mark its tenth anniversary. They proposed partnering with Fenwick Shores to host a family-friendly beach campfire or bonfire with s'mores on Friday, January 29, 2027. The event would be open to hotel guests and the public. A start time of approximately 5:00 or 6:00 PM was discussed, with the ending time to be coordinated with the Police Chief.

The Chamber would organize the event, coordinate vendors and volunteers, provide insurance, and work with local first responders on fire supervision and logistics. The Chamber requested permission to hold the event and did not request Town funding or sponsorship. Additional participation, such as ice sculptures or sponsorship, could be discussed if the Town expressed interest.

Chief Morrissey expressed support for the event, citing its benefit to local businesses and his positive experience attending past festivals. He indicated that an ending time around 8:00 or 9:00 PM would be reasonable. The Chamber explained that other festival activities would take place in neighboring communities that evening, helping distribute attendance.

Motion: To forward the Chamber of Commerce's Fire and Ice event request to Town Council for consideration.
Moved by: Sharon Harris
Seconded by: Anne Hodges
Result: Motion passed unanimously.

The request would be placed on the October 23, 2026, Town Council agenda. The Chamber offered to submit a formal request letter. Chair Zanelotti encouraged a representative to attend the Council meeting to answer questions and discuss event details.

Committee Activities and Beach Patrol Support

Chair Zanelotti reviewed the committee's primary activities: the New Year's Day Fenwick Freeze, the summer bonfire and silent auction, and Fenwick Flicks. He explained that fundraising supports Beach Patrol needs beyond its budget, including equipment and expenses related to lifeguard competitions. Members also discussed providing occasional refreshments and other support throughout the season.

Members expressed concern about lifeguards' sun exposure and umbrella use. Natalie Olbers explained that umbrella availability, the ability to secure umbrellas to certain stands, and the need to maintain visibility along the beach could affect their use. Chair Zanelotti agreed to consult Captain Ryk about umbrella needs and compatibility with the stands and request his input at the next meeting. Members suggested seeking sunscreen donations or sponsorships and preparing supply bags for lifeguards at the start of the season. No funding commitment was made.

Bonfire, Silent Auction, and Event Publicity

Chair Zanelotti outlined the work involved in collecting donations, assembling auction baskets, and staffing the bonfire. Donations are generally collected approximately two weeks before the event, and baskets are assembled the following week. Members discussed unreliable internet service that affected credit card transactions at the beach and the possibility of establishing a Town Venmo account. Chair Zanelotti reported that he had used his personal account for some transactions at the previous event and subsequently paid the Town. No payment arrangement was approved.

Members discussed ways to increase awareness of the silent auction and other events among residents, renters, and visitors. Current publicity includes the Town website, Facebook, the Mayor's message, newspapers, and flyers displayed in local businesses. Suggestions included signs at beach access points, reusable yard signs with replaceable event details, Nextdoor, and an Instagram account linked to Facebook. Members supported further consideration of beach access signage; no purchase was authorized.

Members discussed returning the bonfire to the Fourth of July weekend. Chair Zanelotti estimated that the previous silent auction generated more than $7,000 in revenue and approximately $6,000 after expenses. These figures were informal

estimates. He also reported that he had hand-delivered handwritten thank-you cards to donating businesses. Members suggested including fundraising results in future donor acknowledgments.

Fenwick Freeze—Review and T-Shirt Selection

Planning began for the January 1, 2027, Fenwick Freeze. Chair Zanelotti described the event as a brief New Year's Day plunge with coffee and hot chocolate. Members reviewed several long-sleeve shirt designs, including designs from Red Sun and other concepts.

By consensus, members selected a wave design with snowflake details for the back of the shirt and a smaller coordinating design for the front. The event date would be included on the back. Members favored light gray and denim blue shirts and preferred a simple design without overly busy graphics. Updated color proofs or a sample were suggested before placing the order.

Chair Zanelotti planned to review the previous year's Fenwick Freeze shirt order and order a similar quantity, as little inventory remained. Members discussed adult and youth sizes, the need for larger adult sizes, and reducing quantities of sizes left over from the summer event. The order was expected to be placed around November. Members noted that the Freeze is primarily a community event, with a goal of covering its costs.

Beach Toy Box

Chair Zanelotti reviewed a proposal to place a beach toy box at a beach access point, allowing visitors to leave toys for others to reuse. Members discussed limited space at Bayard Street and whether visitors using other access points would make use of a single box. In light of Public Works' storm recovery workload, including dune-related work, the committee agreed to place the proposal on hold.

Fenwick Flicks

Chair Zanelotti explained that movie selections would be considered when Swank's licensing list becomes available, expected around February. Members discussed offering films suitable for older children and continuing a classic movie offering following a favorable turnout. The rental company provides and operates

the screen, and Beach Patrol assists with moving equipment across the dune. Committee volunteers distribute glow sticks.

Members reviewed the previously selected 2027 movie dates of June 18, July 16, August 13, and August 27, noting that the July and August dates had been planned around the full moon. Movies must begin after sunset to ensure the screen is visible. No new movie selections or scheduling decisions were made.

4. New Business

No additional new business was introduced.

5. Public Participation

No additional public comments were offered.

6. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2026, at 9:30 AM.

7. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.
Moved by: Jim Simpson
Seconded by: Sharon Harris
Result: Motion passed unanimously.