**Input re: Post-February 27, 2016 responses regarding pros and cons of current**

**comp plans; critical & meta-issues; and fundamental questions**

**Larry Silver**

All address issues such as land and water concerns given Dewey’s geographical situation this is a very key issue.

I was extremely disappointed at the RB and BB plans in that they seem to praise being founded by Christian groups yet the histories were totally void of the signs outside Rehoboth when my parents tried to enjoy a Delaware beach but were met by signs that precluded certain religions, races and four legged animals.

I am someone who has been in going to Dewey and /or the Delaware beaches for 6 decades. When we decided to purchase in Dewey as opposed to the other DE beach towns we knew that we were buying a residence “ at the end of the runway” and therefore might be precluded about complaining about the noise from the airplanes. We all knew this…..please let’s do our best to maintain Dewey’s unique character yet at the same time do our best to have all constituencies respect each other.

**Larry Silver**

With regard to Dewey’s critical issues:

* Climate change/ sea level given Dewey’s geography
* Building a significant capital improvements fund. The Town , in my opinion, lacks any kind of vision.
* Create a fixed and determinable source of income  (i.e. a property tax)
* Create harmony amongst the various constituents. ( permanent residents, business owners , restaurant/bar business owners, vacationers ( families and non- families),  renters, etc.
* Public safety ( beach safety and public safety)
* Clean beaches

**Jimmy O’Conor**

Fundamental questions:

* How will Dewey achieve a sustainable revenue source in the future?
* Is the goal for the future of Dewey Beach to be a year round town?
* Infrastructure needs, after the sustainable revenue source is realized how will the town expenses and resources be shared by the stakeholders and visitors?

Critical issues:

* Sea level rise
* Public safety
* Building codes and enforcement
* Future of town hall & police station

David, I did read Dewey Beach Comp plan and like the layout, the information, the town to encourage economic development for more year round retail businesses and I'm not sure if the town has implemented or is working on some of the Plan Recommendation in the current CP.  I feel 80% of the information is common sense and obvious information that the data and date is most places can just be changed. I look forward to discussing new fundamental questions facing the town today and in the future.

**Steve Judge**

   You offer a solid review of the overall notes and collected data concerning everyone’s general input on the pros and cons of surrounding Comp plans as well as Dewey’s in your Draft Minutes pages 6, 7 & 8.  I will add some comments on a few sections of Dewey’s current Comp Plan that I believe will warrant some further discussion….some bullet points.

 1.      Public Safety

On page 28 in our current Comp Plan, there are only four sentences concerning public safety and the police department. The last sentence reads “ no increase in police services is anticipated in the immediate future “.  At our 2/27 meeting there seemed to be a lot of discussion concerning “public safety” and “poor behavior”.  Perhaps an increase in police services needs more attention or discussion. I don’t believe setting police policy falls under Comp Plan jurisdiction, but I think continued conversation concerning enforcement and public safety is worthwhile as we go forward.

 2.     Financial Management / Revenue

The current Comp Plan on page 38 offers very little on current revenue, future needs or future solutions and / or vision. I think here too is an area worthy of continued discussion.

* Where does our income come from.
* Is a property tax on the horizon.
* What will our future vision cost the town.
* Will an increase in fines, fees, services and enforcement, be enough to sustain us.

 3.      Public Transportation

The current Comp Plan on page 24 touches lightly on this topic, primarily a general description of the Jolley Trolley and DART.  Today, during our summer season we have an extremely busy collection and assortment of public transportation. Along with the established Jolley Trolley services, we now have numerous services consisting of limos, cabs, Uber, Lift and more internet transportation sure to come. I know this is an on-going discussion currently with Town Council, but is all this public transportation a pro or con.

* Reduces drinking and driving.
* Public Safety
* Increased income for businesses.
* Increased volume of people in town.
* City appearance / eyesore
* Income for town – fees

 Looking forward to see where all the bullet points take us.

**Rob Marshall**

Some “Fundamental Questions”

* Prioritization of stakeholder groups?
* Is purpose of the town to support its business or of the businesses to support the residents?
* Who pays?
* Is it time for the town to grow up, and what does that entail?
* Relationships with neighboring towns, county, state vis a vis wants/needs/financing?
* Year round?
* Quality of life?

My Fundamental Questions:

* Is a property tax necessary in your future of Dewey?
* What level of commitment do you have to infrastructure improvements?
  + Petition others (state, federal, grant opportunities) for funding
  + No concern
  + Raise funds through new municipal means (tax, special assessment, bond)
  + Voluntary donations or fund raisers
* Do you want to see an increase or decrease in visitation? Is this dependent upon season?
* Should our town manager position be the dominant force in the daily operation of the town? (The alternate being a town that relies on the TM requiring commissioner approval for many decisions)
* Are you willing to be flexible on the maximum building height in the face of changing flood regulations?

**Gary Persinger**

I think I’m up to date on my homework except perhaps for the list of issues/meta-issues.  I sent the SWOT input to Paul Roessel yesterday.

 Regarding the issues, I think the list in the minutes is a pretty good start. I would add the following:

1. Communications regarding important town issues and actions. The Council meetings are usually sparsely attended, and the framing of discussions and the eventual decisions made about important issues are probably unknown to most property owners.  The online broadcast of the meetings don’t work, the audio is difficult to go through, the minutes are available months after the meetings, and the Cape Gazette rarely if ever reports the results of a given meeting in a single article. Better communication of town activities and actions seems worthy of discussion.
2. Economic development. Although this is a required CDP element for larger towns, it seems useful to consider if we are discussing year-round potential, the need for the town to grow up, and issues related to who pays and for what. The types and numbers of businesses that the town might encourage or attract would be a part of the discussion.
3. Changes in the nature and volume of rental activity.  This perhaps could be subsumed under economic development, but perhaps it deserves separate attention considering the impact on families vs. singles in town during the summer season. Are there fewer seasonal rentals over time, and is that likely to change? As the north end of town undergoes more redevelopment because of land lease expirations, is there an effect on seasonal and weekly rentals and thus the types of visitors in town?

You may already be familiar with the attached article from the August 2014 Washington City Paper, but I just ran across it last week.  I don’t regularly read this paper and was surprised at such a lengthy article on Dewey Beach. So, I thought I would pass it along. It captures a lot of the Dewey issues and some of the Dewey personalities, not always in a flattering way.

**David Ferry**

David : some very important work and family commitments make it difficult for me to give you a detailed response to these issues by today. I have thought about this and have some preliminary comments that I will  try to supplement as soon as I can. I think the 3 critical issues to address in Dewey are :

1. finding a regular and reliable source of revenue to support the Town and pay for what is needed and what will be recommended by our Development Plan Committee. This means something in addition to the  license  fees, the transfer taxes, the beach taxes , the rental  taxes  and parking revenues. It appears the Town needs a real estate tax .
2. addressing the sea rise and flooding issues ASAP. The Town will be literally under water if steps are not taken now.
3. addressing the Town political power struggles that reflect poorly on our community. We need to change the annual voting arrangement  and clearly define and / or change  the roles of the Mayor, the council members and the  Town manager .

I will be providing more on Fundamental questions, a list of pros and cons of existing plans for Dewey and its neighbors and a SWOT assessment for Paul .

**Dan Forman**

Dave,

Pasted below are my fundamental questions and SWOT assessment (which I will also send to Paul).  I think the critical issues piece is redundant given the SWOT and fundamental question assignments, so please refer back.  As to critique of the other plans, you have captured my thoughts on Bethany and Rehoboth (my homework assignments) in your minutes from the last meeting.  In terms of the upcoming meeting, I will be in Italy with my family for spring break and will not be able to attend.

**A.                Fundamental Questions**

* How best to balance promoting a family friendly destination versus drinking/party culture?
* How best to promote and attract new and diverse local businesses.
* Whether to annex all or portions of the areas North of town (Forgotten Mile)
* How to increase revenue generation for the Town.
* What role should the town play in influencing development of areas subject to soon-to-expire ground leases.
* Whether to encourage more activity/events during the off-season.

**B.                 SWOT Assessment**

**1.                  Strengths**

* Geography, particularly access to water.
* Small town feel / “way of life” culture
* Live music/entertainment/nightlife
* Proximity to State seashore and prime surfing area (North Inlet)
* Proximity to major metropolitan areas (DC, Philadelphia, Baltimore)
* Weekly beach family events during season (movie night and bonfire)
* Opportunity for walkability

**2.                  Weaknesses**

* Inadequate revenue generation
* Limited town investment in beautification/quality of life due to lack of operating budget/interest
* Reputation as a destination for excessive alcohol consumption
* Public intoxication / Over-serving of drunk patrons
* Disproportionate percentage of rental units versus owner occupied/second homes
* Lack of single central common space for community gatherings (ie, no bandstand)
* Narrow sidewalks
* Lack of fine dining options
* No place in town to buy groceries and even basic household provisions
* Lack of cultural/ethnic diversity

**3.                  Opportunities**

* Increase revenue generation to enhance operating budget for project funding
* Speed cameras on Rt. 1; increase beach tax; increase tax on rentals; increase bonfire fees
* Room to grow through annexation
* Attract new businesses, including fine dining establishments and grocery store
* Smart development of land upon expiration of ground leases
* More family friendly activities
* Create central gathering place with construction of bandstand either on property next to Life Guard station or near sunset park
* Improvements/beautification of public spaces

**4.                  Threats**

* Environmental issues (flooding, beach erosion)
* Potential spike in flood insurance could drive down property values
* Inability to increase revenue generation due to push back from community
* Lack of consensus regarding direction of the Town’s future
* Continuing levels of public intoxication during season
* Impact of seasonal lull on ability to add new businesses
* Poor planning/development of areas subject to ground leases
* Weekend/weekly renters in season who disrespect property/community

**Jim Dedes**

Fundamental Questions

* Do we really want a year round Dewey Beach? Exactly what does that mean?
* What do we expect the Town to do regarding sea level rise? What direction should the Town take? Special taxing districts to
* address flooding?
* Tax base, fee base or mix for financials? Should we just stay the same?
* Will the Town every address the drunk and disorderly behavior that occurs on weekends and summer holidays?
* How to address the massive crowds and traffic in the summer?

Critical Issues

* Protecting our environment
* Balancing needs of residents and businesses
* Stable and secure funding stream for Town Government
* Creating zoning districts to that limit FAR
* Beautification of the entire town.
* Addressing run down properties
* Flooding and expectation of property owners

**Gary Persinger**

Review of Comprehensive Plans for Other Municipalities

* Include an Executive Summary focused on key elements and recommendations in the plan and include clear directions on how to get more detail in the body of the plan. Executive Summary should briefly describe the process for developing the plan but should avoid the lengthy discussion of process in the Fenwick Island Executive Summary.
* New draft Lewes plan emphasizes importance of how to interpret the plan and the distinguishes between those elements of the plan that need to be pursued by law versus those that are optional or of a suggestive nature.
* Identify short, medium, and long-term actions as in the Fenwick Island plan and who has primary responsibility for pursuing necessary actions and the likely partners to involve.
* Emphasize that once formally adopted the plan has the force of law. Seek ways throughout the report to reinforce this point. The legal status of comprehensive development plans seems to have be of increasing emphasis within the state.
* Plan should be accessible to a broad audience. Avoid use of technical terms or terms of art that are meaningful to those who specialize in community development but are not readily interpretable by a general audience. When use of technical terms is unavoidable, explanations should be included with the use of the term. Consider inclusion of a glossary as in the Fenwick Island plan.

**Suggestions on “Fundamental Questions”**

* What are the stakeholder groups, should they be prioritized, and if so, how?
* What are the roles of businesses, residents, and other property owners in sustaining and enhancing the purpose of the town?
* What revenue sources can the town draw upon and what changes, if any are needed?
* Is it time for the town to grow up, and what does that entail?
* Relationships with neighboring towns, county, state vis a vis wants/needs/financing?
* Year round?
* What do we mean by “Quality of Life” and for whom?
* Are “property values” relevant in discussions on “growth” and “development”

**SWOT Input**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strengths   * Ocean beach and bayside activities in walking distance * Family activities * Businesses that attract millennial population * Plentiful rental opportunities for visitors at a range of prices * Active town government | Weaknesses   * Flooding potential from bay or ocean side * Millennial visitors’ behavior potentially inconsistent with family visitors and activities * Large proportion of rentals are vacant for most of year hampering “year round” potential * Difficult to communicate town government activities to large non-resident population * Perceived inability of town to work with businesses and residential property owners on shared goals |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **Opportunities**   * Continue and enhance engagement of businesses in expanding family activities * Improve Dewey’s image with better communications about activities that balance the interests of families and young singles * Encourage more variety in new businesses | **Threats**   * Short-term – Storm surge flooding * Long-term – sea level rise * Contiguous areas on northwest side of town that have substantial rentals but not subject to town regulations * Lingering perceptions about Dewey’s freewheeling, “lawless” atmosphere |

**Bill Lower**

Here are my comments on nearby town Comp Plans; I’ll be thinking about the other assignment, e.g., what is special about Dewey Beach.  One thing for the team to be aware of:  Mayor Hanson and the commissioners recently drafted a Vision for the Town; this work should be reviewed/integrated as we consider “what is special about Dewey” and an attendant 2035 Vision.  I don’t recall if the Town Council vision is already on the website or not; Marc would certainly have it.

South Bethany’s format did not align with the Dewey Comp plan; moreover, the overwhelming residential composition of this town makes it mostly unworkable relative to Dewey Beach.  To its credit, the Town of South Bethany did invest heavily in its pre-Comp Plan questionnaire of residents.

Town of Bethany Beach:

* + - Maps were satisfactory but we must strive to have the best possible maps that withstand the test of time.
    - The planning goal to improve e-government is worthwhile and should be emulated as Dewey continues to accelerate its e-government efforts.
    - The environmental protection goals were admirable, including a Green Vision statement
    - The Dewey Comp Plan should invest more time and effort to define seasonal vs. year-round destination, and the implications thereof, including of course the likelihood of a new/remodeled Town Hall, the acceleration of year-round retirements in Dewey Beach, and more businesses remaining open year-round.

**Mark Richardson**

First...great first meeting! ...I think this group should be the driving influence for the future of Dewey. I was wondering what other voices were missing ??? ...I mentioned the younger perspective ?...Alex P?...Monty ? others?...no call to action on this but just a thought/question...

Does it make sense to decouple the “state required comp plan “ and the inspirational/vision work ? ...again , just a thought...

Nuggets from the Bethany plan

1)      I like making the history/preservation part of the document.

2)      I like a clear statement about a commitment to technology or a tech centric government.

3)      I think Bethany is very different demographically and geographically so we need to be careful not to draw too many parallels

Nuggets from Fenwick Island

1)      I like the element focused on “character“ ...this forces dialog when there is so much diversity in Dewey

2)      The short/medium/long term element is also interesting and needed...I think we need a vision and destination but the short/medium journey and milestones are very important too.

Prioritization

I believe the three buckets that touch all or most of the stakeholders are...these do overlap and can be articulated slightly different but we need to have a consistent way to discuss priorities.

1)      The environment/place

A)     sea change

B)      traffic

C)      landscape

D)     sea/bay dynamic

E)      annexation

F)      utilities

G)     etc.

2)      The economics

a)      Home appreciation

b)      Business profits

c)       Balanced taxation

d)      Business growth

e)      Funding for development

f)       etc.

3)      Year Round ( vs just a seasonal town)

a)      Be a magnet for activities off season

b)      Attract retail businesses to exist year round

c)       Find the right balance zoning to make Dewey more year round friendly

d)      Create incentives for businesses/residents to make Dewey more permanent home

e)      etc.

SWOT for Dewey Beach

Strengths

1)      amazing and unique bay/sea dynamic

2)      citizen involvement

3)      pet friendly

4)      excellence distance from dc/philly/Baltimore

5)      good music screen

6)      good government structure

7)      proximity to Rehoboth/Bethany

8)      great people who passionately care

9)      party town ???

10)   active place ( walk/bike/kayak)

11)   beach activities

Weaknesses

1)      excess drinking/noise ???

2)      sea risks / flooding

3)      architectural x factor

4)      deserted in the winter

5)      no town center / hang out ? / public bath

6)      investment funding ?

7)      party reputation ???

8)      Rt 1 ...traffic congestions

9)      No a charming center/main street

Opportunities

1)      To be a great $ investment / good ROI

2)      Wild idea/opportunity??? ...Use the bay for small sea planes to avoid community and eliminate cars

3)      To be a model of heathy citizen / business collaboration

4)      To be a protected island from sea changes...Dewey is small enough to really protect itself???

5)      Retirement

6)      To address the weaknesses

Threats

1)      Sea change/flooding

2)      Legal issues with business/citizens

3)      Greater Congestion

4)      Political ( state / local)

5)      Gambling ???

6)      Demographic changes ( overuse/busing in people to use the beach )

7)      Complacency

8)      Over development or not controlled

**Dave Davis**

Here are my suggestions vis-a-vis the plans I read for Lewes and Fenwick.

* Like others, I concur that an Executive Summary section is desirable
* Not enough attention is focused on summer season population of town, and both Lewes and Fenwick address this far more than Dewey does
* Also, both of the others had more of a series of core value and vision/goals for the town, and their recommendations were tied neatly to these.  Clearly we need more of this type of vision in the Dewey plan.

A minor note -- hoping that the 2010 census data will be available for us to use and update in the population, housing, and socioeconomic factors.

David King

Business Case – Dewey Beach 2035

**Strengths**

Natural Environment: nowhere more than a few blocks from Rehoboth Bay, bay wetlands, Atlantic Ocean, and habitats that vary from those of a barrier island to transitional headlands (Little bits of Heaven)

The music: nightly offerings and festivals drive tourism and sense of place (Don’t let the music die)

Way of life: relaxed, children-friendly, dog-friendly, anachronistic beach town with enough to do that one can come in on Friday evening and not get back in a car until Monday morning (Eat, drink and be merry)

**Weaknesses**

Tribal warfare: lack of common goals leads to constant hostilities and non-productive conflict (The enemy of my enemy)

Failed Government Model: Town Commissioners believe in a strong central government but lack critical governing skills, are not strategic thinkers, and seldom act in a manner that is in the Town’s best interest (who’s on first)

Financially unsustainable: Economy based largely on discretionary expenditures and “bad behavior” (New twist for dear old Ponzi)

Lack of respect: Across all stakeholder groups, including culture of drunkenness (weekend warriors) and ignorance of town code (trash and cheating “the system”) (Rome in flames)

**Opportunities**

Commonality of threat assessment: all our neighboring coastal Delaware communities, from Lewes to Fenwick, recognize congestion and sea-level rise as serious threats to their continued way of life and that they are unable to resolve these issues n their own (All for one)

Generational transitions: today almost all property in Dewey Beach is owned by Baby Boomers; in 20 years this will shift to a situation where property ownership is dominated by Gen-Xers and the weekend warrior millennial emerges to defend the interests of families with young children (Succession planning)

Teaching moments: use canvas that is the environmental backbone of Dewey to educate future generations of lovers of beach, bay and water-based activities (Why, Mommy?)

Environmentally friendly technology: new technologies hold the promise of environmental sustainability, including energy independence and protection of the bay watershed (Greening of Dewey)

**Threats**

Congestion: vehicular traffic along SR1 imperils pedestrian, scooter, skateboard & bicycle users and emergency vehicles and first responder (children dying)

Greed: owners of typical businesses and residential rentals care more about their personal profits than about sustaining a healthy, vibrant Dewey (Golden egg syndrome)

Sea-Level Rise: at some point Dewey will be forced to abandon its Bay-side infrastructure (Venice meets Denmark)

**Competitive Advantages**

Smallness: should ease bringing all Deweyans together around core issues (Brother’s keeper), and provide unique “resort-like” experience to visitors (Our town)

Unfettered access: to bay and ocean water sports and ecosystems (Dewey U)

End of the World: nowhere to go, nothing to see or do, end of the line; just sit and enjoy life, family and friends (Rest, relax and recharge)

**TJ Redefer**

Not Cons, but issues to work on:

* Money – What is the plan for money in the future
* Enforcement – Laws are only good if they can be enforced. Because of our current town facilities enforcement of drunk and disorderly laws are difficult at best to enforce.
* Curb Appeal – Tattered banners still fly from light posts from long forgotten improvement plans
* Parking – Not evenly enforced from a zoning perspective.
* Power lines – obstruct views in all directions/plan for new power lines that are underground
* Winter Blues – Lack of year round residents leads to few winter business options

Plus

* Dogs on the Beach – A big plus for our town
* Clean Beach – We have been blessed for many years with an awesome beach
* Music and nightlife
* Diversity – In housing, culture, dining… and on and on
* Heritage & History
* Our People – The pride of those that consider themselves a part of this community is very powerful

Next,  I have a problem.

Travel plans will make it impossible for me to make the next meeting. However, understanding of the market conditions, and the impact on our town is critical to the plan. That is why I need to request that my presentation be moved to our April meeting.

Finally, in the news we learned  that the State has rejected Henlopen Acres/Rehoboth Comp Plan. This news is important for the group to consider as we move forward. The paper indicated that proper zoning was the area of concern for the State and I am sure this will  an area of debate for the Dewey Beach plan as well.  My concern in this area is the need for a plan that goes beyond the term that the State has required. As one of the younger (54 years old) members of our group, I find it difficult to assume that we can effectively plan for the needs of the stakeholders beyond the 10 year mark. It is my hope that we great job making a 10 year plan, and not tie the hands of those that will come after us.

**Jim Tyler**

In response to your message I submit the following:

1. Fundamental Questions- I have nothing to add to the existing list.

2. Sent to Paul.

3. Infrastructure including flooding, storm water discharge, sea level rise and side street lighting.

4. Fenwick Island Pro: Issue, Goal, Objectives format.

                          Con: Long, Wordy, Mono-color maps

South Bethany Pro: Concise. Well Written, Straight forward presentation of town's situation and vision.

                        Con: Attachments and supporting data print too small.

                                Mono-color Maps.

Dewey Beach: Pro: Readable, Right to the point, Excellent maps.

                      Con: Data section long.

**Bill Lower**

Slept on this for a few nights and identified the following concepts:

          Walkable resort

          Becoming more year-round, especially shoulder season activities:  summer fun + winter haven for relaxation + everything in-between

          Something for all ages, and makes older people feel younger

          World class mile-long beach featuring award-winning ocean water quality – the Town is a DESTINATION b/c of the beach

          Both Atlantic Ocean and Rehoboth Bay at fingertips = unique recreational diversity

          Among the best, world-renowned lifeguards in the United States

          Array of dining and nightspot choices

          Good financial investment

          Remains “a way of life” even as Town has grown/evolved over last 100 years