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Meeting Minutes

Dewey Beach Comprehensive Development Plan Meeting

April 13, 2017

Meeting Location: Dewey Beach Lifesaving Station,
1 Dagsworthy Street, Dewey Beach, DE

The meeting was convened to order at 9:00 AM. Roll call was then taken. In attendance were Elaine Bole (Chair), Dave Davis, Julie Johnson, Steve Judge, Bill Lower (by phone), Jimmy O'Connor, TJ Redefer, and Mark Richardson. In the audience were Gary Persinger, Mayor Dale Cooke, Jim Tyler and Paul Roessel. A quorum was declared. Christopher J. Fazio was in attendance on behalf of Remington, Vernick & Beach Engineers.

A brief discussion ensued regarding voting and structure in this group. It was stated that everyone has a voice and vote in this meeting. Official member composition was reviewed.

The process for this group is to review the Plan today, make comments or changes and then determine if there are any further meetings necessary. Comments were taken from the various committee members as describe below.

TJ Redefer comments:

1. Stormwater management and flooding concerns are in the draft. While the section are clearly found in the document, he wished that it could also be located in other areas as these two issues are very important. Satisfied that all major areas of concern are addressed. Tone and content is properly addressed, but could be in a different order. In safety area, there are 5 bullet points that seem to be out of order. Public safety was at the bottom.
Commenter Attribution by CJF: the draft was changed to reflect the re-ordering of the five bullet points as discussed by Mr. Redefer and agreed to by the overall committee.

Jimmy O'Connor comments:

1. Page 26—Predictable revenue source: what is it? (#3 under Planning Objectives). This should be defined in subsequent drafts of the plan. All agreed this is a critical issue.

Bill Lower comments (via phone):

1. Definition section on page 12, add other definitions for state agencies and all state acronyms (i.e. DNREC, DeIDOT, etc.)
2. Current Executive Summary does not state how great the Town is in its essence. It should be augmented to describe the vibrancy of the Town first, then discuss the challenges moving forward. Note that Mr. Lower did send emailed comments that were received by Ms. Bole and Mr. Fazio.

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Mark Richardson comments:

1. The risk of sea rise and flooding, and not addressing it, make all other areas of the Plan irrelevant. This is the primary issue leading other concerns. Mr. Richardson expressed his opinion that we are on leased land, and the value of the Town will decrease over time as the sea level rises. We are not addressing this issue seriously enough. We have not called upon knowledgeable resources and experts to assist the Town with this concern.
2. We have done an ok job in bringing the different constituencies in the Town together, but could do much more. This draft is not something that we just check off when completed. Mr. Fazio stated that to both of Mark's concerns, implementation of the draft takes place after it is adopted. Mark's concerns are a matter of implementation, and that will come later. Mr. Richardson understood, but could not stress enough the importance of putting strong language and requirements in the plan to address these issues.

Dave Davis comments:

1. General sense of this document is that this revised draft is different than the previous one. This is a broad, passive picture of what the Town should be at the end of 10 years. There were more specific time frames of objectives in the previous draft. This draft should reflect more specifics in timing of achieving objectives. Mr. Fazio stated that putting time frames in the Plan could potentially put the Commissioners in a situation where they would be required by law to implement that plan requirements on a timeframe that they may not be in either a financial or administrative position to accomplish. Mr. Fazio also stated not to use the word "must" as it generally leads to mandates which could put the Town in potential legal trouble. Dave replied that it is a fake argument. Mr. Fazio stated that he is here precisely because this exact situation occurred before, from a previous Comprehensive Plan in Dewey Beach. Dave thinks there is still a way to get priorities across to the Board without losing an essence of time frames. Mark Richardson echoed his agreement and suggested that the "must" be tied into the process, not the solution. Dave agreed.
2. Executive Summary addresses four issues should have more emphasis. Make them "Critical" issues. Add revenue sources to the list of critical issues as a fifth item.
3. Page 30—last objective on affordable housing is lean on substance. If it is in the report, put more "meat on the bones." Mr. Fazio stated that every Comprehensive Plan has to address affordable housing in some way. He was also careful to craft the language to not require affordable housing, but to suggest a path to finding opportunities in the future.
4. Page 33—Objective should include something on shoulder season. Page 35—3.9.2. Map 7, not Map 6. *Commenter Attribution by CJF: the draft was changed to reflect the map number change as discussed by Mr. Davis and agreed to by the overall committee.*

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5. Page 36—Expansion of boundaries. This is “under-treated” in this section. 3.10 second paragraph—autonomous?
6. Page 55—This issue needs to be enhanced. Add this to the Executive Summary.
7. Page 61—This should be developed more.
8. We need to improve the image of the Town. This is not simply a “Drunk and Disorderly” town. Mr. O’Conor stated that the image of the Town has improved over the last few years, others said it can still be improved. The discussion in the plan should include taking credit for the image improving and to continue to improve it over time.

Julie Johnson comments:

1. Change language from “must” to “advise.” This will give the Plan more teeth without being bound to legal constrictions.
2. Page 52—We do not have to pursue accreditation. We are accredited, do not need funding for it.
Commenter Attribution by CJF: the draft was changed to reflect the re-wording by Ms. Johnson and was agreed to by the overall committee.

Steve Judge comments:

1. Regarding overcrowding, transportation, and pedestrians, the Secretary of DelDOT said that the Town needs to work with them to narrow the roads in order to expand the bike lanes and sidewalks. This issue does need a time frame attached to it. Apparently, the Town is already moving forward, but more assertive language should be added.
2. Town Center—Page 35, Future Land Use; page 37, pages 64-65. Is there a push to create a Town Center? It does not seem to be the case. Elaine asked those present what their opinions were on having a Town Center. There was no consensus, as both positive and negative opinions were expressed. Elaine would like to have this as a bullet point in the Comp Plan to draw attention to it. Chris suggested that he rewrite the second paragraph on page 35, 3.9.2 once more direction is provided regarding the Town Center concept.

Jim Tyler comments:

1. Page 45—in paragraph beginning “In 2013...” 3rd sentence from the end should read: “...and engaged a contractor to replace the current duck bills with check valves.” Last sentence then should read, “The check valves helped to some extent...”
Commenter Attribution by CJF: the draft was changed to reflect the re-wording by Mr. Tyler and was agreed to by the overall committee.

Paul Roessel comments:

1. We are concerned with stormwater management, and the Plan should reflect that concern. This issue is broader than sea level rise and should be expanded upon with more language.

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2. Opportunities – discuss new opportunities including the shoulder season.

Elaine Bole comments:

1. Elaine is grateful for everyone's comments, and has nothing to add to them. She would like to "pass this on" the Plan to the Commissioners at this point. She asked the group if they were ready to take this action? Dave is still looking for feedback from the Board on the Plan and their thoughts before sending it. **The draft will be given to the Board with these comments as an addendum, with the request for feedback on the comments. Motion was passed to that effect.** Mayor Dale Cooke spoke affirmatively that this group has worked long and hard and this Comprehensive Plan, with comments, will not be ignored by the Board. It will be addressed.