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DRAFT Minutes
Comprehensive Development Plan Working Group
May 28, 2016 Meeting
Lions Club
115 McKinley Ave, Dewey Beach, DE 19971

7 **10:00 am – Open**

8 The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair David King, followed by the Pledge of
9 Allegiance. Present were members Elaine Bole, Dave Davis (by telecom), Jim Dedes, Dave
10 Ferry, Steve Judge and Beth Caruso, Jimmy O’Conor, Gary Persinger, TJ Redefeer, Mark
11 Richardson, Paul Roessel, Larry Silver, and Kay Sullivan, and Ad Hoc member Jim Tyler. Also
12 present were Town Commissioners Dale Cooke and Mike Dunmyer, and member of the public
13 Eleanor Tyler.

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David King noted that Working Group and/or Committee members Tim Arnold, Clinton Bunting, Dan Forman, and Phil Winkler have dropped out – largely due to family health- or work-related reasons. And that Dan Forman and James Jay Parker had indicated an interest in serving in an ad hoc capacity.

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Approval of April 30, 2016 Draft Minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes with minor editorial amendments (including factual corrections in regard to Gary Persinger’s presentation) . After some discussion, this motion was revised to include deletion of references in the minutes to statements made in TJ Redefeer’s presentation regarding “little houses” and “RBTS Realty’s financials” due to them being either incorrectly captured in the minutes and/or not relevant to the focus of the discussion. There was no further discussion and this amended motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

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Approval of the Agenda. In discussing the logistics of the breakout groups, there was a consensus to move away from the original notion of breakout groups and to have discussions amongst the full Working Group membership – to get input from everybody early on and to keep everyone informed of where these efforts are going.

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10:16 am Discussion of draft objectives and goals for the 2017 Dewey Beach Comprehensive Development Plan. Background material included in the document: “Draft Objectives and Goals for May 28, 2016 CDPWG Meeting”.

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David King led the discussion, beginning with a brief background; that this document grew out of an earlier list of fundamental questions that he thought needed to be addressed by the Working Group to either align the group’s thinking or point out areas of fundamental differences of opinion, and included input from Dave Davis and Jimmy O’Conor.

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Following an extended discussion of terminology, there was consensus to use the term “Objective” for the desired future state (the statements in bold in the draft document under discussion), and “Milestone” for the steps along the critical path (bulleted statements) moving

1 the Town from point A (its present state) to point B (the desired future state). As such,
2 milestones should have clearly defined metrics and associated timing.

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4 10:24 am Financial Sustainability (under Economic Development)

5 **Obj: Financial sustainability based on stable and predictable revenue sources and**
6 **reasonable and predictable expenditures.** There was broad discussion regarding adding the
7 concept of “fixed and determinable” revenues –not necessarily a property tax but offering the
8 Town a fixed source of income like most other municipalities have. The concern being that most
9 of the Town’s current revenue sources are related to seasonal activities and closely tied to the
10 National Economy, and that this may not suffice for a financially sustainable future. There was
11 consensus to leave the Objective as written, with “stable and predictable”, and deal with the
12 process to getting to a sustainable future state in the milestones, including considerations of fees
13 and taxes.

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15 Some comments while discussing this objective:

- 16 • this is not about what we have today; rather is focused on financial sustainability in the
17 future
- 18 • all governments operate on a combination of fixed (e.g., property tax) and variable (e.g.,
19 fees) revenue sources
- 20 • stable implies stability, based on a blend of revenue streams
- 21 • the Town’s finances are those of a resort community with cyclical revenues and
22 expenditures tied to the seasonal cycle
- 23 • a large part of the Town’s revenue comes from real estate related income and is
24 dependent on the overall economy; is this where we want to be in the future?
- 25 • stable revenue is the objective, increasing the fixed portion of the Town’s overall revenue
26 stream is a milestone to achieving future financial sustainability; need buy-in from all
27 stakeholder groups
- 28 • want more income from fixed income sources as the Town’s non-rental population grows
29 and/or the Town becomes more year round
- 30 • Overall, there was a reluctance to implicitly put a “property tax” into this Objective
31 (which would tie the hands of future Town Commissioners) and a consensus to leave this
32 Objective as written

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34 Comments made while discussing the related bulleted points (i.e., milestones) included:

- 35 • Capital expenditure plan.
 - 36 ○ Town current has no firm capitol budgeting process or goals; does have an
37 informal process to set aside excess revenue for self-defined uses, like road and
38 infrastructure maintenance
 - 39 ○ Many of us flagged the existence of a capital improvement plan as a strong
40 positive in the comp plans of neighboring municipalities
- 41 • Equitability of fee, tax and fine schedules across all stakeholder groups
 - 42 ○ Strong consensus for equitability
 - 43 ○ First comprehensive review – and possible rebalancing – within 3 years; yearly
44 updates are too frequent while 10 years is probably too long to wait for a

- 1 subsequent review (Ed. Note: the last revision of fees and fines for fairness was
2 approx. 8 years ago; general changes in fee, fine, and tax structures do not
3 consider fairness across stakeholder groups but have dealt with raising more
4 revenue and/or punitive goals)
- 5 ○ Businesses want fixed and predictable fee and tax schedules that they can build
6 into their planning – stability
 - 7 ○ If not mandated it is likely to fall through the cracks; does not preclude changes in
8 fee, fine and/or tax schedules on a more frequent basis as required
 - 9 ○ Strong support to include the establishment of a bay beach/shoreline
10 protection/preservation fund in the plan
- 11 • Constraining year-over-year increases in expenditures
 - 12 ○ Not supported as a standalone milestone; too restrictive and not typically in other
13 comp plans
 - 14 ○ Intent should be to require a rigorous budgetary process that is responsible to the
15 people
 - 16 ○ This might possibly be counter-productive in regard to the establishment of a
17 capital improvement plan and also in regard to the Town evolving into more year
18 round operations
 - 19 • Rainy day funds established and funded
 - 20 ○ Have 5 different self-committed funds (e.g., Infrastructure) and one permanently-
21 committed fund (e.g., Beach Preservation fund), is the intent to have these funds
22 “self-committed” which can be changed by majority vote in Town Council, or
23 “permanently committed” which cannot be changed without a referendum vote?
 - 24 ○ A reserve of one year’s operating funds is a lot, most towns only have a 3 or 4
25 month rainy day fund (Ed. Note. A large reserve benefitted the Town when it
26 experienced a \$750,000 shortfall in revenue in the aftermath of a major economic
27 crisis, and again a few years later when funding a \$1,000,000 infrastructure
28 project)
 - 29 ○ Consensus support for such a restricted fund or funds; the ultimate amount and
30 time frame to be determined
 - 31 • Sea-level rise war chest
 - 32 ○ Strong support for a “sea-level-rise war chest”
 - 33 ○ Have a partial fund, dedicated only to the ocean beach preservation
 - 34 ○ Need something useful for beach, bay and drainage
 - 35 ○ Beach replenishment tax today is about \$185,000 a year – about \$100 per
36 property per year
 - 37 ○ Adding a bay and drainage component at the same rate as the beach tax would
38 result in the generation of \$360,000/year
 - 39 ○ Recognized that the big question is what is the right number each year
 - 40 ○ Need to address what to do when ½ the Town disappears under water, not
41 incremental nourishment
 - 42 ○ It is likely that \$50 million will be spent to protect the Town over the next 50
43 years to protect from the results of SLR
 - 44 ○ The beach tax today can only be spent on the ocean beach, not on the bay
45 beaches, wetlands or shorelines and not on bay-side drainage issues

- 1 ○ A suggestion was made to work to get legal authorization to allocate monies in
- 2 the existing beach fund to pressing bay-side sea-level rise issues
- 3 ○ Much of this sea-level rise issue might better be removed from Financial
- 4 Sustainability/Economic Development and moved to Natural Environment.
- 5 • Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
- 6 ○ Lack of interest in/doubt of the feasibility of providing services to neighboring
- 7 communities under a formal contract
- 8 ○ Might make sense to do an MOU with the County to reimburse Dewey when, for
- 9 example Dewey Police respond to a 911 call from such communities (which goes
- 10 to the State Police) when the State Police are unable to respond,
- 11 ○ Transfer tax provides “State fund” support (Ed. Note. At a rate of \$600,000 to
- 12 \$700,000 per year) to Dewey.
- 13 ○ We provide clean streets and open areas for the pleasure of residents and guests of
- 14 these communities
- 15 ○ Concern that the County would either not give up this money or that trying to get
- 16 it might backfire since we are in a burden already on the State Police and EMT
- 17 services
- 18 ○ Consensus to raise as an issue to explore
- 19 • Walk-ins
- 20 ○ As an indicator of the magnitude of the issue, 7 buses were seen dropping off
- 21 people along SR-1 around 8:30 am this morning (Saturday May 28); maybe 300 –
- 22 500 people
- 23 ○ If they are patronizing Dewey businesses, that would be fine; if not there is no
- 24 benefit to the Town
- 25 ○ Town may not have the infrastructure (e.g., public toilets, public safety) to deal
- 26 with this magnitude of visitors in addition to the existing tourists that traditionally
- 27 visit the town.
- 28 ○ If the buses have a Town business license (\$309) that would reimburse the Town,
- 29 but is this business license set at an appropriate level given the level of impact
- 30 from this type of business?
- 31 ○ This goes back to financial sustainability. At some point the Town is full; it used
- 32 to be when all the parking spots were full
- 33 ○ Locally and nationally, towns are prohibiting large buses from coming in and
- 34 dropping of people
- 35 ○ The Indian River State Park is set up for large buses
- 36 ○ An important point to include in the comp plan

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39 Should consider including language encouraging research into external financial resources, e.g.,
40 grants, that the Town can leverage for various projects.

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42 Relationship between financial sustainability and how the Town is used. There should be an
43 objective/milestone regarding the creation of a financial model that can guide the evolution from
44 a seasonal town to a year round town. Strong consensus on this concept.

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2 **Obj. The Town operates with adequate resources, investing in itself and being recognized**
3 **as a gem of a Mid-Atlantic small beach town; clean, beautiful and vibrant.**

4 This is about the Town having a high level of pride in place; often in the past has skimmed on
5 spending on itself. Driving force should be the Town investing in itself with an objective of
6 being recognized as a “five star resort town for all” just like its beach is recognized as a “five star
7 beach.

- 8
 - Respect for the built and natural environments.
 - Consensus on this item.
 - Minimum standards for housing maintenance
 - Current code permits derelict housing to remain without any penalty or premeditative action by the Town
 - Consensus on addressing in the code some standards on the upkeep of property, consistent with the about objective – “high quality and/or attractive

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16 These issues need to be included in the overall Mission statement.

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18 Prioritization of Stakeholder Needs

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 - **Obj. All stakeholder groups contribute to Dewey’s vibrancy, and share in the costs and benefits of the Town’s culture and commerce in a balanced way.**

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22 Strong consensus in balancing the needs and wants of all stakeholder groups rather than
23 prioritizing one group’s needs/wants over those of any other; change the objective to replace
24 “prioritization” with “balance”.

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27 Year Round Town

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 - **Obj. Year Round Town**
 - Still do not define “year round town” – nothing in these milestones that speaks to year round (milestones are focused on extended shoulder seasons)
 - Why would we not want a year round town? Should be yearning/working toward a year round town. Extended weekends in the shoulder seasons is one step toward being a year round town; it is a process
 - Many do not want 52 weeks that looks like the middle of July
 - Need to look at what it is that is keeping Dewey from being a year round town (don’t have a resident population in Dewey; people in adjacent communities go somewhere else)
 - Town does not actively encourage year round residency
 - In next ten years the Town might have close to 1,000 year round residents. While there was disagreement on what this number might be in 2027, there was consensus that there is a trend for owners of residential property taking their properties out of the rental market and using year round as second homes or relocating full time to Dewey. (Ed. Note: Since the needs of owners of year round second homes and of residents are similar, we might want to expand the discussion of “residents” to “residents and year round second homes”.)

- 1 ○ Up side of a major increase in the number of “year round residents” is a
- 2 corresponding decrease in rentals; the Town should encourage the year round use
- 3 of some properties by their owners because that will reduce the burden of
- 4 overpopulation in the summer time. This will also create a whole different culture
- 5 ○ Maybe the focus/language should not be “resident” but “family use”; taking
- 6 residential properties out of rental use and reserving as a second home for year
- 7 round family weekends at the shore will achieve the same ends
- 8 ○ Business also will need to change business models because their clientele will be
- 9 different summer versus winter at first; maybe year round later
- 10 ○ Businesses are doing things to extend shoulder season activities, and are targeting
- 11 these activities to families; many are alcohol free
- 12 ○ Different dynamic: year round residents will be older and with families, will
- 13 encourage businesses and activities that cater to them
- 14 ○ Town businesses need to provide some set of basic services that winter visitors
- 15 can walk to (e.g., bread & cough medicine)
- 16 ○ The Town needs to commit to spend money to market the Town to investors as a
- 17 year round town for them to move to, and to visitors to help provide the critical
- 18 mass of potential patrons to justify businesses staying open year round; all of the
- 19 infrastructure will have to be kept open (Since many services, such as emergency
- 20 clinics and local bus routes, are provided by the County and others, the Town will
- 21 have to work with the cognizant agencies to ensure these services are available to
- 22 a growing year round population in Dewey)
- 23 ○ Many like the changes of season and attendant changes in levels and types of
- 24 activities. People come in the summer come for the sun and warm water, and to
- 25 blow off steam; people coming in the winter will be coming for different
- 26 purposes, which should still provide seasonal change
- 27 ○ If you want a more year round town, the town needs resources in place to deal
- 28 with the related issues
- 29 ○ To be a year round town, will need changes in infrastructure, e.g., electric poles
- 30 removed from the center of sidewalks and some way to move throughout town in
- 31 a wheel chair, (Ed. Note: There is already a consensus that these issues need to be
- 32 addressed in the short- to mid-term, long before the town grows to the 1,000
- 33 resident benchmark)
- 34 ○ Don't want year round to mean extended 52 warrior weekends

36 There was consensus 1) to change the objective to “More-year-round town”; 2) the trend is that
37 the Town will move in the direction of becoming more year round, and that this is good thing.
38 However there were various opinions about how hard the Town should try to push this in a comp
39 plan and whether this evolution will be lead by the business community or by the residential
40 community.

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43 Public Safety (11:43 am)

1 **Obj. The Town provides for the security and safety of all stakeholders within Town limits,**
2 **including on its beaches and ocean and bay areas, in residential and commercial areas, and**
3 **along Coastal Highway (SR-1).**

- 4 • Not here is the “jail” – the perception some (but not all) have is that a lot of problems in
5 our town are the result of not having a holding cell/jail. A simple fine does not send the
6 right signals to stop all of the bad behavior. To make an arrest, requires taking the suspect
7 to Georgetown for processing, a process that takes two officers out of the town for about
8 3 hours per occurrence. If we don’t plan for a jail, we will never have a jail, i.e., a place
9 to hold drunks until they sober up. Now is the time with the new town space to move
10 forward on such an initiative. There were other comments that indicated having a jail and
11 arresting people might result in increased bad behavior and that running a jail is a
12 complicated and expensive operation.
- 13 • Major concern over “drunk and disorderly” behavior. Nowhere else in Delaware do
14 people come and totally ignore the rules, because we don’t/can’t enforce the rules.
- 15 • Enforcement is key. The Town needs to stop the culture of “anything goes in Dewey”.
16 Four years ago at a town emergency meeting the State (Department of Drug and Alcohol
17 Enforcement) came in to talk to us with us; they said they would come in and bring it on
18 but the Town never followed up on the offer.
- 19 • Attacking “over-serving” is not going to solve the problem, nor are the bars totally
20 responsible. The town police need to be better trained and take a more proactive approach
21 to enforcing our laws, especially in the area of public intoxication, drunk and disorderly
- 22 • A holding facility at Town Hall will be expensive (but maybe staffing could be
23 outsourced)
- 24 • On any weekend day during the summer you can see the weekend warriors walking
25 around the street with a drink in their hand.
- 26 • Need to better train the police on how to handle trouble-making drunks.
- 27 • Town needs to take this issue seriously, in a comprehensive manner and get the message
28 out that drunk and disorderly behavior will be punished
- 29 • Civil fines for bad behavior bring in about \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year, whereas the
30 police department budget is in the \$1,500,000 range.
- 31 • The one draft milestone related to long-term reduction in nuisance code violations seems
32 too high/unobtainable; if there is no goal/metric it is likely nothing will get done; this was
33 a placeholder to get the discussion going (what is the right number?)

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35 Governance (11:58 am)

36 **Obj. Town operations and governance recognized as efficient and effective in meeting the**
37 **needs of this vibrant and evolving community**

- 38 • While some of these bullets might be inappropriate there was consensus that government
39 operations be efficiently and effectively carried out.
- 40 • The terms of service and roles/responsibilities of Town officials should be reviewed and
41 revised as warranted; possibly compensating the Mayor for his/her service and increase in
42 terms of Town Commissioners and holding elections every other year (certainly will have
43 to change at some point if the Town grows to 1,000 residents) – has to be in sync with the

1 future vision of the Town (so doing would likely require a Charter change). What is so
2 unique about Dewey that this type of issue would be addressed in its comp plan?

- 3 • Consensus for including an e-governance paradigm To be defined in future meetings) in
4 the comp plan future vision
- 5 • External reviews? Like the idea but who pays, how much? (David King will look into
6 costs.) Such a review(s) critical for optimal design and use of the new town hall space.
- 7 • UDEL DCCP has a set of tools, including one for the increasing public engagement –
8 support for better public awareness and engagement with what is going on in Town
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11 Annexation

12 **Obj. Annex strategic areas of neighboring lands and communities to improve the long-term**
13 **viability of the area and to protect the surrounding natural resources.**

14 (Spent time on this at a prior meeting, skipped over)
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17 Built Environment (12:06 pm)

18 **Obj. The existing small-town character of the Town and diversity of its surrounding**
19 **natural resources are protected in perpetuity by appropriate municipal code and effective**
20 **Town governance.**

- 21 • “Existing small town character”? Is this the objective, to retain the existing character?
22 Across the town there are a lot of different types of houses and housing. There are a lot
23 of small cottages in town; many of them can never be anything else within the constraints
24 of the Town’s zoning. Do we want to preserve these cute little cottages next to large
25 single family and multi-family housing?
- 26 • Need to think about something broader than “existing small town”, like a first class beach
27 town – what is the ideal. Most would not say that the existing architecture across Dewey
28 is not ideal; is not even good.
- 29 • Need to think about population density as well as structures
- 30 • Support for the concept of a type of architectural review board (ARB) to ensure that
31 future housing is consistent with the town’s future vision.
- 32 • Is it the character of the structures that we want to preserve, or the character of the
33 ongoing inter-personal relationships that make Dewey such a special place? This would
34 go beyond the purview of the Planning Commission, and keep Dewey from becoming a
35 mini-Ocean City – this might be a good reason to have an ARB
- 36 • Each street has its own character – not based on built environment but the inter-personal
37 interactions.
- 38 • Do we keep the same zoning district boundaries and/or zoning code based around desired
39 inter-personal relationships
- 40 • What zoning requirements might encourage the retaining of existing inter-personal
41 relationships? Possibly relaxation of floor area restrictions for front porches and reducing
42 front yard setbacks to get the porch closer to the street
- 43 • The housing in Dewey is a hodgepodge. The Dewey Beach of the 1950s and 1960s is
44 gone. Would like to see more single family than duplexes and large condos

- 1 • Want more quality than less; more order than chaos; need to find a balance than saying it
- 2 needs to be this or that; what is a holistic vision of the center of Dewey?
- 3 • Looking back at the town from the end of the pier gives a very different picture of the
- 4 center of Dewey
- 5 • Bring in a small town/beach town planner to take a look at the town and make some
- 6 recommendations
- 7 • Look at the zoning; could it be simplified
- 8 • Most of the non-conforming properties are pretty much stuck in their current
- 9 configurations due to zoning and flood zone regulations
- 10 • Need to think ahead in regard to sea-level rise in terms of structures in regard to zoning

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12 David King was asked to make a presentation on the zoning code.

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15 **12:35 pm Comments, Homework Assignments, and Closing**

16 David King will take the input from this meeting and re-synthesize relevant objectives and
17 milestones; deleting some & adding comments to others.

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19 At the next meeting – Saturday June 11th, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Town Hall Annex on
20 Coastal Highway – we will 1) finish the review of this draft objectives and goals document,
21 focusing on the Natural Environment and Balance; 2) start an in-depth discussion of the Built
22 Environment. To prepare for that discussion, TJ Redefer asked that everyone walk the Town –
23 the entire Town.

24
25 With no further comments there was a motion to adjourn and a second. There was no further
26 discussion, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote. (12:38 pm)

27