**DRAFT Minutes**

Comprehensive Development Plan Working Group

February 27, 2016 Meeting

Dewey Beach Life Saving Museum

1 Dagsworthy Ave, Dewey Beach, DE 19971

**10:00 am – Open and get settled in**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair David King, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Self-introductions by the members of the Working Group served as a roll call. This is a group of Dewey Beach stakeholders with strong professional credentials and who represent a wide diversity of interests. Present were members Elaine Bole, Jim Dedes, Dave Ferry, Julie Johnson. Steve Judge, Jimmy O’Conor, Gary Persinger, TJ Redefer, Mark Richardson, Paul Roessel, Larry Silver, and Phil Winkler; present were Ad Hoc members Town Planner Chris Fazio[[1]](#footnote-1), Rob Marshall, and Jim Tyler; participating by teleconference were Dave Davis, Dan Forman, and Bill Lower[[2]](#footnote-2); also present were Mayor Diane Hanson, and Town Commissioners Dale Cooke and Mike Dunmyer, and some 10 members of the public who signed in.

Chair King discussed the approach he was going to be taking for the development of the Town’s 2017 Comprehensive Development Plan (“comp plan” or “plan”) and the Working Group’s primary goals and objectives. The three main objectives defining the Working Group’s charter include:

1) review of the Town’s 2007 Comprehensive Development Plan;

2) establishment of a shared vision of Dewey Beach 2035. A shared vision is critical since it is clear from the Town’s past failures and the comp plans of neighboring towns, that neither the town nor any one stakeholder group will be able to achieve any worthwhile future-vision on its own;

3) development of an updated Plan that will engage all of the Town’s diverse stakeholders to work together to move the Town forward toward that vision.

Despite the State of Delaware requirement for a planning horizon of 10 years, the choice of a vision for “Dewey 2035” was to ensure continuity between the 2017 Plan and any future updates or revisions – this design will lead to a plan that drives through the 2027 10-year planning horizon and provide continuity for guiding growth and development a good part of the way along to the next 10-year mark, 2037. This decision was based in shortcomings of the Town’s 2007 plan which stopped at time horizon of 2017 and thereby failed to provide any continuity or guidance regarding current critical issues, such as the intense redevelopment in Rehoboth-By-The-Sea and the increasing threats of sea-level rise and flood severity. The March meeting will include election of a pair of co-Vice Chairs to help coordinate the operations and recommendations from the many “tiger teams”/task groups that will be launched from the larger working group to attack/address specific critical issues. Interested members should let King know of their interest prior to the March meeting.

A set of meeting norms were tacitly agreed upon, including:

* respect for other working group members and the public, and their contributions;
* commitment to what is best for the community, i.e., the greatest good and not what is “best for me”;
* engagement of the broader community early and often by e-blasts and short e-questionnaires (here, all Town stakeholders were encouraged to sign up on the Town’s web site to be pushed information relevant to the workings of the comp plan working group). Efforts will also leverage the email lists of past Town Commissioner candidates, current Town Commissioners, and the many special interest groups in Town to reach out to all stakeholder groups when there are issues ready for public review and critique;
* foundational approvals, i.e., once group consensus is achieved on an issue the working group will not go back and revisit unless new and compelling information is introduced;
* encouragement of blue sky thinking that might lead to creative paths forward toward vision Dewey Beach 2035;
* that all members come prepared and share their work product early (80/20 rule);
* that all members have pride in our work product(s), and I will seek to have everyone on this group sign the cover of the final document; and
* that we operate in a “paperless” manner (i.e., information will be provided in a timely manner on the Town web site and members and the public can review, load onto their preferred electronic device and/or print and bring to the meeting for referral).

The planned schedule of meetings was presented, basically including the last Saturday of each month between and including February through October. Starting in June there will be two meetings per month, the second meeting being held two weeks prior to the “last Saturday of the month” meeting.

A draft Gantt Chart was presented showing milestones for some key tasks, including obtaining input data on key elements of the plan as required by the State; establishment of the vision for Dewey 2035; identifying and addressing critical issues and meta-issues; establishing a structure for how information is presented within the plan; and finalizing the plan. Dewey’s updated plan is due to the State in June 2017. When developing the Town’s 2007 comp plan, the prior working group spent about 2 years working toward a final draft they presented to the Town Commissioners at the November 2006 Town Meeting. As such, the current Working Group is starting some 18 months behind its predecessor – at least if it is to forward its recommendation to the Town Commissioners in November 2016 so as to keep Dewey on track for State approval and adoption of its comp plan in June 2017. To meet this very aggressive goal will require the Working Group to parallel process a lot of information to “make up” those lost 18 months. Imbedded in the draft Gantt Chart are two administrative goals:

1) a simplified first draft that includes all required data, the plan vision, and proposed action(s) on all critical issues – but not necessarily all the related narrative – that is completed by mid-August. This will be mailed out to all Town residents, property owners and owners of in-town businesses, and should provide topics for debate during the fall 2016 elections; and

2) a final draft – approved by the Working Group – to be passed on to the Town Commissioners at the November 2016 Town Meeting.

Finally, King discussed his plans for planning for the plan. As with any strategic plan, it is critical to understand the customer(s), the end points (the current and future-desired situations), and the forces at play (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and competitive advantage). In this case there are two distinct customers for which needs have to be addressed. Town Planner Fazio will ensure that the needs of the State are met (e.g., information on population growth and infrastructure that the State needs to prioritize its spending plans), and will provide legal review to the final document. The comp plans of our regional neighbors – and Dewey’s 2007 Plan – do not significantly go beyond consideration of the needs of the State as customer. King sees his role to ensure that the finished plan addresses the needs of the Town of Dewey Beach and its various stakeholder groups as the primary customer, and in doing so creates a consensus path forward to a shared vision for the Town’s future. As with development of any strategic plan, once relevant end points and forces are characterized, the Working Group will work backward from the desired future to the current situation with emphasis on the plan’s critical path, i.e., elucidating what has to happen and when, who is responsible, and how each milestone will be achieved. Concluding his remarks, King said his vision of the Group’s final product is not what he wants for the future, nor what any single stakeholder group might think is the best future, but rather what there is consensus upon as the “best achievable future” – there needs to be compromise on the part of all stakeholders.

**10:33 am – Presentation by Town Planner Chris Fazio on comprehensive development plans and the planning process**

Chris Fazio presented a brief overview of the comp plan process that he and Stuart Wiser, a Certified Land Planner (both of whom have worked with the Town in the past), will lead the Town through. 22 Delaware Code Section 702 requires Delaware municipal governments to develop and regularly update land-use plans. Simply put, the State defines a comp plan as “a document in text and maps, containing at a minimum, a municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction's position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues.”

The minimum State requirements include the Town’s:

* History and position on Population Growth;
* Position on Housing Growth, which drives school and infrastructure requirements at the State level;
* Position on Expansion of Boundaries (i.e., annexation);
* Position on Development of Adjacent Areas (including public and private investments, such as investments to address flooding);
* Position on Redevelopment Potential;
* Position on Community Character (what does the Town want to be known for? Need to strike a balance as to what the Town’s stakeholders want for the Town’s future);
* Position on the General Use of Land (e.g., parcel rezoning and zoning code updates);
* Position on Critical Community Development Issues (e.g., for residential prosperity and continued/increased tourism);
* Position on Key Infrastructure Issues;
* Demonstrate coordination with State, County and other municipalities. Public outreach is critical. RVE will help to obtain buy-in from surrounding communities;
* Ensure municipal boundaries are accurately depicted on maps and recorded with the County (RVE maintains the Town’s current maps).

A big part of the plan involves mapping as a visual representation of, e.g., current and proposed-future land uses. Public participation is critical, and needs to be accurately captured in the final plan; at least one Public Hearing is required prior to any recommendation being forwarded to the Town Commissioners – often this will take the form of a chirrette—to provide opportunity for the public to come and review the working groups work and get one-on-one time with individual members of the Working Group and the Town Planner, to ask questions and provide additional input. (The Working Group’s draft timeline puts this meeting on Saturday September 24, 2016, a weekend when many Town stakeholders are in Town). While RVE professionals will provide guidance and advice, it is the Town’s plan, and the stakeholders of the Town are responsible for providing direction and key inputs. Once in their court, the Town Commissioners will have an opportunity to review and comment, and subsequently forward a Town-approved plan to the Delaware State Office of Planning Coordination. OPC will convene a Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) review of the Town-approved plan. The PLUS review will include elements like, transportation, environmental including flood plain management and environmental controls, etc. At end the State gives the Town a list of recommendations of things to address, in a very proactive manner. VRE will be with us during this process. Following any amendments made to address issues raised in the PLUS review, the Town and State give final approvals and the new plan is live. (The Rehoboth Beach plan we are reviewing has the letter to Rehoboth that came out of its PLUS review.)

Follow up questions to Fazio:

* Q: Is Dewey’s plan required to meet the State’s requirements for towns larger than 2,000 residents in light of the fact that our summertime population swells to levels significantly above 2,000? A: The simple answer was no, but one should not feel constrained to only address the State’s minimum requirements.
* Q: Some of the plans we are reviewing talk about the plan having the “force of law”, while others don’t. How important is this aspect of the comp plan? A: This issue is extremely important; once passed the language in the plan does have the force of law and a developer can come in and say, in essence, “as I interpret your plan I have the right by law to do ‘x, y and z’.” It is important for the language in your plan to be very clear and specific. Language and word-smithing are very important to make sure that there is no ambiguity in the wording or unintended loop holes. VRE is experienced in this area and will provide experienced legal review before the plan is finalized. The State also views this as an important issue, and has started taking tighter looks at comp plans over the last 10-plus years due to increasing court battles over included language and meaning.
* Q: How do you feel about the use of a citizen survey? A: Surveys are helpful; however, one wants them to be simple (to encourage people to respond) and generic in nature.
* Q: How does one recognize and account for potential (negative) impacts on the Town from surrounding, incorporated areas? A: You are allowed to identify adjoining areas as areas that you would like to annex in your plan. While you can’t make these areas join the town, you can use your plan to establish the business case for them to join the Town, and to start the conversation. From the perspective of the State, you cannot annex anything not shown in your current plan as an annexation target. Any potential annexation target must agree to be annexed – it is not sufficient for you to say it is important to you. Identifying adjacent lands as areas of interest provides the Town an opportunity to enter into memoranda of agreement with the County to be involved in discussions and decision making regarding developments in those areas. It is a long time since the prior plan was enacted, and it would be a reasonable time now to review the pros and cons of annexation.
* Q: (Follow up) The question was more about cooperation than annexation. For example in the case of sea-level rise resulting in breaching of the dunes in the areas to the South of Dewey, which ultimately might have negative impacts on Dewey. A: You can include the desire to have an outreach program with that abutting community in your plan, or to create a relationship with the owner(s) of such adjoining lands as a goal of your plan under the topic area of “annexation”. You can also include an environmental component in your plan where you discuss the potential negative impact(s) of sea-level rise if some level of cooperation is not achieved and identify potential funding sources for its mitigation, like DNREC.
* Q: Does one only include those things that one wants to change in the plan? A: No, you need to include everything; what you want to retain as well as see changed.
* Q: Is there an analysis of what objectives of the current plan have been met and/or are still active? A: The Planning Commission does an annual analysis of what has been achieved and what is on-going, and forwards this report to the Town Commissioners, who then forward it on to the State so the State can evaluate overall progress state-wide. It is time again for this update, and this will be part of the work undertaken by the Working Group over the next couple of months.
* Q: Where does the Town’s authority end related to environmental issues like beach reclamation and flooding? A: The simple answer is that the Town is at the mercy of DNREC, an autonomous agency of the State, which puts mandates and requirements on the Town, but also has the requirement to provide assistance to the Town to help the Town maintain its environmental goals. Flooding is a big issue, and will require too much money for the Town to solve on its own. The State has a requirement to provide assistance to the Town to help it maintain its environmental goals; to identify and create appropriate funding for efforts like beach nourishment and storm water management along SR1. Your plan needs to fully describe the nature of the issue(s), the desire to have them fixed/resolved, and the desire to have funding from the State to enable the Town to continue to grow and move forward towards the goals set forth in its plan – including resolution of such flooding issues.

**11:07 am – Review of Dewey Beach, Rehoboth Beach, Bethany Beach, S. Bethany Beach, Fenwick Island and Lewes Comp Plans**

Individual members read Dewey’s 2007 plan and two or more plans from neighboring communities, with instructions to focus on issues and presentation methods that they liked or did not like, so as to provide direct comparisons, e.g., of South Bethany Beach’s plan to those of Bethany Beach, Fenwick Island, and Dewey Beach. One member summed this exercise up, as being very helpful to see what other towns have considered and included in their plans and providing context as to what we might want to consider in ours.

**Rehoboth Beach**

* Good discussions of storm water management
* Good use of an Executive Summary
* Too wordy and not very communicative
* Table of contents includes good variety of issues

**Bethany Beach**

* Vision (retain statu quo) is unique and well presented
* Goals are clear, with strong focus on flood control, land use & recreation, and keeping development from exceeding the capacity of its eco-system
* Good discussion of critical areas of concern, e.g., water and drainage
* Focus on technology (eGov) & government of the future is good
* Presents a strong sense of the town’s identity, including discussion of homes worth saving and why
* Lousy maps – maps need to be clear and accurate

**S. Bethany Beach**

* Vision is unique and well presented, and very different from that of Bethany
* Laid out in a manner that is an easy read
* Relied heavily on citizen survey to define top 5 or 6 issues of concern
* Couched in generalities; raises issue of force of law and how “force of law” can emerge from something so vague
* Want underground electricity (beautification & safety)
* Protection of night sky
* Survey was too detailed – people probably got bogged down
* Interesting annexation section including pros and cons of providing services beyond town boundaries (Dewey does provide certain cervices to neighboring areas, and this service could be the beginning of discussion re: annexation)
* Well written, good description of current situation
* Format unique perhaps due to the singular residential character of this town

**Fenwick Island**

* Similar to Dewey re: bisected by SR1, did not do a good job in addressing pedestrian issues; Dewey’s plan will have to be better
* Lots of detail in executive summary on process; need to focus on recommendations & key content
* Good use of short/medium/long range objectives and discussion of who might be partners and points of contact
* Too detailed, too wordy
* Good use of issues/goals & objectives format
* Good focus on historic and existing structures
* Along with Lewes and S. Bethany, provides good discussion of the annexation question, especially in terms of identification of areas of concern (resulting in strategic advantage through MOU with County to get a chair at table when neighboring communities consider developmental plans)
* With Lewes & Rehoboth, provides a comprehensive analysis of a fundamental weaknesses: traffic congestion (however, unlike Dewey is not dealing with SR1)
* With Lewes, provides a good analysis of a potential opportunity: intergovernmental cooperation. Discussion includes identification of the issues, the major players, and appropriate timescale(s)

**Lewes (2005)**

* Boring – repetitive. Needs to be concise, precise and informative. Avoid flowery language
* Lewes is much different from Dewey; many aspects addressed in the Lewes plan are not germane to Dewey Beach. Lists out 6 major issues (meta-issues).
* Looks at some of the recommendations that need to be embodied in law to finalize full implementation of the plan
* Includes a statement of core values: uniqueness of community and how it promotes that in marketing
* Framed in context of changing population and use (along with Rehoboth), leading to a notion of the need to balance needs from traditional residential & business uses versus pressure from increasing tourism and seasonal business & residential requirements. Rehoboth talks about a “town within a town”, with two very different sets of stakeholders). Both raise questions regarding spending priorities (who is going to pay) and who is going to benefit
* The town admits that it can’t move this plan forward on its own, and that there is a need for a cooperative effort from all stakeholders, and therefore the need for shared goals and vision
* Identifies 382,000 pass through vehicle trips to ferry as a threat – to put in context, Dewey has some 5 million vehicle pass through trips up & down SR1
* Only 4% involved in plan – is that a lot of input or very little?

**Dewey Beach**

* Pedestrian plan needs work (will require funding from DelDOT)
* Action items are tactical in nature/approach; do not include vision for future of town
* Much more aspirational than, e.g., Bethany & Rehoboth
* Lack of real-estate tax revenue limits what the town can do – not really recognized in 2007 plan
* Main goals: peace and order – only town with this primary focus.
* Needs to deal with how to drive business and types of business, and sources of revenue
* Town has failed to address most of the critical issues incorporated in its 2007 plan including SR1 safety and annexation reviews,
* Although town had plan for improve of pedestrian/bike traffic on SR1 and made pedestrian & bike safety critical, high priority issues, nothing has been done in last 10 years to change situation
* Doesn’t create a compelling vision; none of the main recommendations move the town forward in a comprehensive manner, none of goals/objectives are driven by any SWOT consideration;
* Town Council has done little that was called for in the plan over prior year
* Little done in strategic or tactical manner – some things just happened
* No shared vision, resulting in conflict between stakeholder groups rather than cooperation – not a “strategic” plan
* Written for the state requirements and not for any Dewy-centric use

**Possible meta-issues identified for consideration in Dewey’s 2017 plan:**

* Sea-level rise and flooding
* Parking
* Working with government agencies like DNREC and DelDOT
* Providing for the needs of the police and life guards
* Code enforcement
* Promotion of tourism
* Year round activities
* Trash management
* Infrastructure
* Expansion of Town Hall

**General comments:**

* Dewey is unique vis a vis its (non-existent real-estate tax base), need to deal with what we want to do and how to pay for it
* All of these townships have unique visions for their future; visions that are very different one from the others. Dewey’s plan does not establish what is unique about our town
* If we do a citizen survey, the Working Group should spend a few meetings to work through our top 5 or 6 meta-issues and then go out to the public with specific questions related to them. If too vague it is unlikely to get any useful input
* Plan must be accessible – needs a good executive summary
* Need to avoid buzz words (perhaps include list of definitions/glossary at end)
* Need to consider use of mixed media to bring to life/make more accessible
* Force-of-law issue is incredibly important; must have a roadmap to embed goals & objectives into Town code
* No one really deals with funding – without funding, nothing will happen
* Cooperation between visions of different communities needs to be leveraged & made comprehensive moving all forward (e.g., rising sea level)
* Painful to read – there are some nuggets in the narrative, but overall very grim; need better vehicle to communicate
* Need to engage “Millennials” who are the future of Dewey. In 2035 most of the boomers – the dominant segment of property ownership – will be gone and property ownership will be in the hands of gen-xers and millennials
* What does it mean for Dewey Beach in the future to have this narrow strip of land surrounded on both sides by water
* Need to make sure the final document has life & legs
* Basically, if you read one, you have read them all – last page of Bethany & Rehoboth only place that any of them mentions capital improvement funding requirements; Dewey has no mention of cap improvement needs and has no fixed tax base – seemingly a fatal flaw
* Need to go beyond our coastal DE neighbors and compare to other, landmark resort communities, e.g., Key West
* Need to address “scuds”, i.e., what can derail us from the plan
* Need to address summer swell from 300 to 30,000, and high winter season business- and residential-vacancy rates
* Need to realize that differences in the communities (e.g., built and natural environments) drive the clear differences in the neighboring townships’ plans
* Most other plans focused on greening of town, bikes and pedestrian rather than maintaining peace and order
* Building on Bethany plan, Dewey needs to focus on 3 objectives: coordination with DelDot, environmental protection goals, and continued progress toward making Dewey a year round town
* All plans are losers – Dewey focuses on its built environment and largely ignores its unique natural resources, largely ignores the special and cultural events that make this community special, was written by outside contractors
* None of “as is” descriptions motivate any interest in investing in the community (either as resident or business)
* Need to go beyond state minimum – major goal of neighbors is to retain status quo of built environment in the face of vague threats of development
* Fail to presents threats & opportunities; strengths & weaknesses
* Lack of connective tissue to take reader from as is situation to some set of priorities and recommendations related to a shared vision
* Don’t understand driving forces from A to B; nor really what point B is ilke, other than the same as point A
* Nothing in the plan that would galvanize various stakeholders to work together
* The fact that one cannot go from North to South part of town without being on SR1 is unique to Dewey – not an issue for any other neighboring community
* Dewey is unique – two blocks wide split by SR1 with 5 million non-productive vehicle trips annually
* Need to address issues like how to fund infrastructure development in the face of population growth projections in town and county wide; this will place a burden on town infrastructure, facilities & services – especially as related to the need for public restrooms
* So much of the individual plans are boiler plate; driven by the State requirements needed to meet State needs; not an internal document – not useful for the town’s needs (none of them)
* Fails as a marketing tool for the town re: tourists and people & businesses moving to the area who will be making future investments, and as a communication tool to adjacent neighborhoods re: annexation possibilities
* Working Group members do not want to be a party to developing the same old same old this time around – needs to be a stronger, inspiring product; not a check off the list item.
* Need to include Millennials in various task groups (where essentially all the work will be done)
* If there is any desire to change the streetscape on SR1, it must be introduced in the plan along with proposed funding sources, or any such changes will likely not be permitted by the State (or funded)
* Bethany & Rehoboth have public spaces as public meeting points; Dewey Beach has bonfires, and movies on its beach-as-public-space; what about other spaces to promote other community events?

**12:30 pm Discussion of “Fundamental Questions**

King introduced the issue of “fundamental questions” – as a critical step in addressing a future vision – and provided several examples that have repeatedly arisen in Town Meetings year over year:

* ***Prioritization of stakeholder groups?*** Lots of prior discussion of “stakeholder groups”, but no real hard classification that all agree upon. Are the needs and wants of one group more or less important than any other group(s)?
* ***Is purpose of the town to support its business or of the businesses to support the residents?*** Need to address the dynamic between these two groups and find common ground.
* ***Who pays?*** In the absence of a real estate property tax, the Town has limited resources. We have a $1.5 million year round police force and a $ 350,000 seasonal life guard force – who should pay for these?
* ***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 does this mean? Should the Town become more “year round” versus more events on weekends in shoulder season?
* ***Quality of life?*** What does this mean; how do we ensure/protect/improve?
* ***Are “property values” relevant in discussions on “growth” and “development”?*** How does anyone know how anything will affect their property value? Is it my property value or everyone’s property values that are important?
* Vision of Dewey 2035? In 2035 Dewey will be a Township of gen-x, millennial, and post-millennial generations. Where are they in this process?

In the ensuing discussion the working group members discussed related fundamental questions and, in an attempt at full disclosure, described their association with various stakeholder groups.

Members self-identified as a member of one or more of the following stakeholder groups:

* Owner of mixed use property rented out as money maker
* Resident in neighboring community outside of Dewey
* Lifetime of coming to Dewey; as a dependent, as a user of residential rental properties, and of owner occupied/non-rental properties
* Summer vacation for children and grandchildren
* Large condos – a community within a community
* Started coming over 30 years ago as member of a group house, now a property owner and part-time resident
* Officer in condo associations and member/past member of various Town committees
* Owner/rental agent of small properties
* Officers in various citizen groups
* Part-time resident with family
* Employee for an owner of commercial rental property
* Introduced to Dewey by parents who came here summers as renters and owners
* Full time resident
* Ton of friends who are weekend warriors; also who have gotten married here
* Real estate broker in area
* Director of Rehoboth-By-The-Sea Realty (200’ish properties)
* Inherited residence from grandfather
* Developer/owner of investment property
* Recent purchaser of lifelong “dream house”
* Motel owner/operator
* Parents with young children (formerly) living in Town (now living just outside Town)
* Owner of multiple properties (one for the family and others for the income from rentals)
* Parents with young, and with grown children, and with young grandchildren
* Long-time participant in a group house
* Restaurant owner/operator

Issues Identified:

* Need for all stakeholder groups to compromise to achieve an optimum balance of interests
* Absentee landlords who are not really involved in the Town at all (other than the money)
* Weekend warriors that bring money into the business sector but impair the QOL in Town
* Lack of respect for others exemplified by trash on the streets
* Inappropriate public behavior
* Noise
* Flooding
* Balancing interests between those with a financial stake in the town and those with no financial interest
* Town infrastructure to support future development County wide
* Preservation of what we have while providing for growth
* Preservation versus improvement
* Threats from population growth and development traffic in next 20 years, including Forgotten Mile shopping center and development landward South of us and in the wetlands North of us (examples being Bethany when Sea Colony and Bay Colony were developed, and what is now being discussed in Lewes); no one wants to live in Ocean City anymore
* Common denominators that benefit all stakeholders: Triangle defined by Environmental (uniqueness of nestled between bay & ocean and sea-level rise) – return on investment (whether business or residential use) – and moving from a winter-deserted town to something more year round (people like activity; ties into ROI)
* “Keep Dewey Dewey”, whatever that means
* Music events are special; how to keep/control; should Town be involved in coordination?
* Many of the larger condos provide private, on-site police, trash pick-up and maintenance; schedule geared toward needs; is this a model that the Town could replicate?
* What defines or drives property values
* Safe place for young kids to have fun
* Nightmare in summer (noise, trash, parking, inappropriate behavior); desolate in winter
* People in North end identify more with Rehoboth than Dewey
* Corporate residential structures – hotel-like operations and hosts for corporate retreats in residential neighborhoods
* Aggressive enforcement of parking
* Balance of things we all love, and that drive us all crazy (culture of drunkenness) – need to find better balance that is family friendly
* Family friendly – Are we? What does that mean?
* Balance; how to make Dewey a better place for all – need a mission statement to build a starting point for developing common ground
* Make Dewey better for those who spend time here, rather than just those who are here for the money or passing through
* Change reputation for better
* Need to harmonizing stakeholder interests in a way that doesn’t result in wholesale change, into an Ocean City, MD or a S. Bethany residential-only 3 month/year enclave
* Noise and crime are better than in 1980s, need to keep pushing on this trend; need to deal with the bad apples (who come here for the same reasons we all come here); possibly noise, etc is not so much worse than 10 years ago but we are older
* Dewey people are extremely loyal
* Capitalize on not needing to move one’s car from Friday evening to Monday morning
* Lots of young people in Town – more so than any of the other towns in coastal DE; if around young people one will stay young
* Increased crowdedness giving rise to more disrespect
* How to protect property values in “north end” and manage growth in this area to benefit the entire Town
* No property tax as fixed revenue source; is a shared-vision future possible under this situation?
* How to leverage the unique community of each individual block in Town to improve the character of the entire Town
* Late night problems in Dewey are not a unique problem to Dewey, but are issues with many/most resort communities – need to investigate how they deal with it to maintain balance
* How to get businesses and residential rentals and owners of non-rental residential properties to seek a workable balance
* How to maintain evolution of young beach goers to contributing property owners – proud and loyal to Dewey Beach
* Flooding and sea-level rise
* How to retain family friendly culture
* Need to maintain infrastructure (sidewalks and storm sewers), faded signage, town vehicles, etc. – affects property values; how can we pay for this?
* Fixed and determinable sources of income other than parking fees & fines and the accommodation tax
* How to deal with tail end of the boomer-effect; fewer people coming along/decrease in the current Town property-owner demographic
* Balance of summer crowds (serving business needs and tourists) and winter events (serving property owners)
* How to attract other businesses to increase diversity in the business community offerings (needed for “year round”)
* How to end bickering and conflict/incivility within various factions on Town Council
* Simplification of zoning issues such as FAR (Floor Area Ratio) to retain neighborhood character of the existing Neighborhood Residential district
* How to solve all the problems without sacrificing the music

**March 26 Draft Meeting Agenda**

Includes continuation of discussion of fundamental questions, discussion of State data requirements (e.g., housing and population demographics), discuss the business case for the Town and its future (including SWOT and Competitive Advantage analyses), and critical issues and meta-issues.

**2:05 pm – Homework assignments**

***Phil Winkler*** volunteered to prepare a white paper to recommend an appropriate approach to version control and communication strategies, including Drop Box for file sharing.

***Paul Roessel*** volunteered to prepare a draft SWOT and lead that discussion at the March 26 meeting.

***Dave Davis*** volunteered to prepare a working draft mission statement.

***TJ Redefer*** volunteered to prepare a draft white paper related to what drives property values in Dewey.

All members were asked to:

* Review the Dewey 2007 plan focused on data requirements and what is needed to update the plan for 2017
* Be prepared to discuss what makes Dewey special, i.e., that makes Dewey Dewey
* Be prepared to close discussions of pros and cons of Dewey’s plan and those of the other municipalities
* Be prepared to conclude the framing of the fundamental questions we will want to answer within this working group – send your input to David King by 3/12, who will aggregate and re-distribute for discussion purposes for the 3/26 meeting
* Prepare your own SWOT and competitive analyses, and submit your thoughts to Paul Roessel by 3/12
* Come prepared to discuss a model community or aspects of a model community that we would do well to adopt, e.g., business-community relationships
* Prepare your list of critical issues, send to David King by 3/12, who will aggregate and distribute to the working group members for discussion at the next meeting
* Submit to David King short summaries/5-6 bullet points of your individual inputs re: pros and cons of current plans as discussed at this meeting, to be incorporated into the record.

**2:17 pm Closing**

There was a motion to adjourn, seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote.

1. Chris is a Professional Engineer working with Remington Vernick & Beach Engineers (RVE), which provides planning and engineering services to many Delaware municipalities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The working group members include lifetime Dewey residents and new residents, owners of residential and business properties, owners of properties in the Northern/Southern and bayside/Oceanside areas of Town, and people who have lived in many different parts of Town, owners of properties used as summer family homes/residential rentals/group rentals, owners in several large condominium associations (e.g., Marina View, The Cove and Sea Gate), smaller condominium associations and single-family detached homes, and owners of hotel and restaurant businesses in Town; include active professionals and retirees with experience in the law, finance, large corporations, architecture and construction, software and IT, small businesses, environmental engineering and legislation, technology consulting and high-tech business development; include people who have volunteered on Town committees (Town Manager Search Committee, Budget and Finance, Infrastructure, Marketing, Town Newsletter, 2007 Comp Plan working Group, and Planning Commission), and past and present officers or members in the Lions Club, Civic League, Chamber of Commerce, Rehoboth-By-The-Sea Realty, Dewey Business Partnership, Friends of Dewey, Citizens to Preserve Dewey, State Tourism Office and Governor’s Tourism Board; members of the baby boom and gen-X generations. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)