

Minutes from Dewey Beach, Delaware, Infrastructure Committee Meeting
Life Saving Station, Dewey Beach, DE 19971
April 7, 2012, 2:00 p.m.

Mike Harmer, Acting Chair of the Infrastructure Committee, opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken. Present were Mike Harmer, Albert Genemans and Don Gritti. Mike noted that a quorum was present and announced the resignation of Infrastructure Committee member Mark Nordquist.

The committee adopted the agenda, which had been published and posted on the Town's website, as required, in advance of the meeting.

Don moved to approve minutes from the January 27 meeting. The motion was seconded by Albert Genemans. The minutes were unanimously approved.

1. Discussion and formulation of capital improvement plan

Mike Harmer presented a spreadsheet containing a draft list of projects to consider for Dewey Beach's capital improvement plan. He explained that among the information required on a capital plan are names, costs, justifications, schedules, and information about each of the projects. Mike stated that once a project list is developed, such as painting lines, fixing streets, adding on to Town Hall, etc., it is clear what needs to be planned for in the next five-ten years. Mike went on to say that the Infrastructure Committee's goal is to come up with the list, estimated costs, a schedule over the next year or two and even up to ten years or so and give that to the Budget and Finance Committee with a recommendation that they begin to look at funding mechanisms and then funding recommendations for the Commissioners to consider and identify projects that may or may not go forward. Don Gritti noted that David King, chair of the Town's Budget and Finance Committee, had been asked to attend the Infrastructure Committee meeting and was present in the audience.

Mike said that he would go over the capital prioritization system and ask David King to determine if the drafted format is in the range that would be helpful to the Budget and Finance Committee. He said that the process would require filling in the blanks over the next year or probably within the next three-six months. Mike pointed out draft items on the list including road repairs, road overlays, park improvements, Sunset Park, storm water, Read Avenue touchups, bathrooms, renovating the lifeguard station, median work, and HVAC systems. Mike suggested to the committee members that giving the Budget and Finance Committee the projected costs, schedule, and justification would be a good start. The key is coming up with a prioritization system. What Mike drafted for Dewey is a modification of a utility system and stressed the importance of getting DELDOT's or the State's prioritization system. Mike suggested that using a ranking system like the State's would likely help the Town more easily qualify for grants. He said that some research has been done, but more will be required to obtain their prioritization system. Assuming the State has one, the Infrastructure Committee would find it and add it to the agenda for the next meeting. At that time, the Infrastructure

Committee could evaluate it and will see if it's recommendable to the Budget and Finance Committee and the Commissioners.

Albert suggested that addressing bay flooding that happens two or three times a year or more, should be a top priority; Albert stated that that it's going to get worse. He said that Read Street is a problem and that the Lions Club had already started some cleaning out of the area. Following additional discussion, "flood mitigation" was added to the draft capital list with two sub-bullets: "from Duffield Study" and "Lions Club coordination."

Public comment: David Thomas suggested that life-cycle projections might be a constructive starting point, similar to what condominium associations would do. He went on to say that he and Commissioners Anna Legates and Jim Laird, among others, attended the 50th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday Storm presentation in Rehoboth. There was considerable discussion about what places like Bowers Beach and the local area are facing in the long term. Mr. Thomas reported that an official from DNREC stated that the key to beach erosion bayside is what he called sediment management. There are some ideas about how to mitigate the effects of this, but nothing is available in DNREC's budget for this program in the next few years because of economic factors. Mr. Thomas called to the Committee's attention the experience of Portsmouth, Virginia, with the flooding issue. Mr. Thomas referenced a large document on the Web that references FEMA terminology and plans. The section on Dewey that includes Bethany and several other towns is shorter. Mr. Thomas said the website contained a discussion of a remediation of a section of road that was similar to Dewey's Bayard Avenue. He said there are now 16 or 19 areas of Portsmouth that, over the next 50 years, will need to be addressed. Mr. Thomas said that some things to consider, once you identify the other at-risk areas, would be the approach to take re soil sediment management and how to pay for it, as well as what to do if there were unlimited funding resources.

Mike acknowledged that these potential future needs are what the capital improvement plan is trying to address. Mike committed the Committee to looking into the Portsmouth issue and asked Don Gritti to do some Web research on Portsmouth, VA.

Albert questioned how much money is in the Infrastructure account. David King replied that there is currently a little more than \$266,000 in the Infrastructure account available for a spectrum of projects, from grants preparation all the way through actual construction activities for things related to the public safety, health and welfare regarding roadways. It could include drainage, lighting, signage, parking, and meter systems.

David King suggested that a lot of the bayside flooding could represent a propensity for flooding associated with tidal movement: leap tides, spring tides, full moons at apogee. He suggested a review of when there are flood events, i.e. when do these occur during the year? Acknowledging that there are extended periods of time when there is nobody in Dewey Beach, David questioned that, if it became clear that the flooding is largely during a time when there is no one in Dewey Beach, perhaps the resources could be better spent elsewhere. Albert commented that regardless of whether the area is inhabited, property damage still occurs. Mike responded that this information would be entered into the prioritization system.

Mike agreed to put a list together that includes a first attempt at associating costs with projects. He committed to posting it before the next Infrastructure Committee meeting and making it an agenda item for the next meeting when chairman Rick Judge returns. The Committee will look at the draft capital improvement plan prioritization list and at the State's prioritization system. These would be discussed publicly and then determined what is recommendable for advancing to the next step. Mike also said he'd worked with the new town manager before and looks forward to the benefit of his experience and input.

2. Discuss lighting project and vote on possible recommendations

Mike noted that the Quality of Life Committee is working on lighting also, and the Infrastructure Committee is coordinating with that committee. Mike asked Don Gritti to lead the current discussion.

Don Gritti stated that there are two potential projects for lighting. One is to add lighting on existing Delmarva poles for improvement of the quality of life around the Town. The intent is to discourage vandalism at night after people leave the local establishments. Don reported that Delmarva has been asked to give the Town a design indicating where they recommend adding lighting fixtures and also a cost per unit to the Town. Don's understanding is that Delmarva is working on a plan that is neither completed nor available at this time.

Don explained that the second potential project is to replace the existing lighting fixtures on the median poles along Highway One. He said that Remington, Vernick and Beech engineering firm has done extensive work on this with him. Don related that the Town has in place \$55,000 remaining from an existing grant that will expire June 30 and cannot be used after that. Because it's an "energy efficiency" grant, what has emerged is the idea to replace the lights on the highway with lights that are more efficient, thus reducing Dewey's electric bills, while at the same time providing acceptable lighting. The cost of replacing all the light fixtures with LEDs is expected to be in the range of \$70-\$80,000. Remington Vernick has been developing a bid package to seek quotations on having the work done. The concept of replacing the lights with LEDs has been approved by DELDOT. The aim is to get something done for the Town, using existing grant money before its availability expires.

Mike asked Don if he was looking for a recommendation to the Commissioners. Don replied that he was. Discussion followed about using the existing grant money to partially replace light fixtures and completing the project when more funding became available. From the audience, Dave Thomas asked about the structural integrity of the poles (citing the collapse of one lamp following Hurricane Irene) and the liability risk to the Town. He also asked if we'd get a credit on our electrical assessment. Don reported that Bill Mears and Alvin Huffman have determined that the poles are repairable and have hired a local company to weld cracks when they are discovered. Bill's determination was the town would probably not need new poles, that the bases can probably be fixed.

Mike moved to recommend to the Town Council that the remaining funding from the energy grant (the grant for the solar panels) be used for replacing all Route 1 light fixtures (around 38) or a portion of them depending on pricing. Also, to request that the engineering firm Remington,

Vernick and Beech Inc. , write the bid for labor and materials for all light fixtures and to see if they can add wording to allow a possible piecemeal approval for fixtures (depending on bids and funding). The motion was seconded by Don Gritti and was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

In response to Albert Geneman's question about what would happen if no action were taken as well as Mr. Thomas's question about reduced electricity charges, Don replied that the Town would lose the grant money. He went on to say that the current lights are not energy efficient and are costly to the Town. The Town would request a reduction in Delmarva's electricity assessment charges based on the new energy efficient lighting, which would result in lower electricity costs to the town.

David King stated that it is important for people in town to understand how the lighting in the town could change and that it's important to know whether the light would be harsher or even viewed as light pollution. He stressed that the commissioners must have information about the quality of the lighting, level of intensity, and distribution of the lighting.

Commissioner Howell asked about the color and brightness of the lights -- blue or yellow? Don replied that they would be white. Commissioner Legates stated that the property owners will want to know exactly what the new lights would look like -- that something for people to look at is needed.

Mike asked Don how that could be accomplished by the following Saturday. Don directed the Committee's and public's attention to two new light fixtures at the point where the museum is at Lewes, which he said are similar but have fewer points of light than the Dewey replacements would have. Don said the manufacturer is Cooper Lighting and the model name "Ventus." Don went on to say that he is hesitant to be more specific on what the appearance would be because there are different possibilities on this one manufacturer's fixture, particularly the quantity of the points of light that would make up the fixture.

Mike suggested that people take a look at the identified fixtures in Lewes. He also asked Don to contact the Remington engineering firm and find out specifically what model and model number the firm is specifying for Dewey and to email that information to the Commissioners by next Saturday's Town meeting. The Committee clarified for the attendees that these lights are those being discussed for Route 1 -- not side streets.

A vote on the motion was taken, and it passed unanimously for presentation at the next Town meeting on April 14.

David King expressed reservations about having Delmarva develop a lighting plan for side streets in the Town, citing his concern that they could give the Town what he called an "urban light plan." He went on to say that while he understands there are reasons for it, a lot of people are dead set against side-street lighting. David said it would ruin Dewey Beach if there is too much upcast light.

Mike said he would defer the topic of side-street lighting, but add it to the capital list, titling the project "side street lighting," Mike went on to say that such a project would have to go through a

long public process and the prioritization process and might never even be listed as a priority. He stressed that this and any project would have to go through a lot of public scrutiny and discussion prior to going forward. Mike asked Don Gritti to contact the Town's Quality of Life Committee to coordinate on actions, if any, related to side-street lighting.

Jim Tyler asked whether the international building code gets into such things as the side street lighting currently under discussion. Don replied that he was not aware of that, that the code is generally limited to structures. In response to a question, Don stressed that DELDOT would not be involved in such a plan; it is Delmarva who the Town would be working with because Delmarva leases lights to towns.

Mike closed the discussion on side-street lights by noting that it would be put on the capital improvement list. He committed the Infrastructure Committee to coordinate with the Quality of Life Committee so that the Commissioners would know exactly what is happening.

3. Discuss priorities for projects

Mike committed to getting the State of Delaware's prioritization system for the next Infrastructure Committee meeting.

4. Discuss infrastructure projects list

Mike noted that this item was already covered in item 1 above.

5. Discuss available grants and vote on possible recommendations

Mike asked if there were any other grants besides the energy efficiency grant already addressed to discuss. There were none.

6. General infrastructure discussion, planning/budget/funding issues and inspections of streets

The Committee agreed to defer this item until Infrastructure Committee Chair Rick Judge returns to preside over its next meeting.

Albert commented that he would like to see the Infrastructure Committee get a budget to hire some expertise. Mike responded that the Infrastructure Committee does have an avenue for that, via the projects to be identified via the publicly vetted capital improvement plan process. Mike noted that there is \$266,000 available to the Infrastructure Committee that would not be spent until the plan is developed. Further discussion was deferred until Chair Rick Judge returns to preside.

Public Comment

Jim Tyler brought to the Committee's attention a meeting to be held the next Tuesday (April 10) at the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center regarding the \$34 million waste water treatment project in Rehoboth. It's a presentation on the environmental impact statement on the outflow going out 6,000 feet in the ocean. The concern is that the individual sewage rates reportedly would double. Commissioner Legates added that the Rehoboth Mayor told her that he is telling

Rehoboth property owners that their water and sewer bills would go up approximately 110 percent. Commissioner Legates recommended that someone attend to represent Dewey. She said the meeting is about the project and the money. Commissioner Legates said she would go if she is in town and suggested checking into whether the new Dewey town manager could attend.

Commissioner Legates went on to say that we pay water and sewer based on Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs). Commissioner Legates cautioned that if this project is done, the Town must ensure that Dewey's EDU count is exactly what it should be. Properties from the "forgotten mile" could be picked up, and the Town might not even know its EDU count is being impacted.

One member of the public commented that he is concerned that this kind of project could jeopardize Dewey's beach's five-star rating. Commissioner Legates recommended Chris Bason of the Center for the Inland Bays for more information about this. Commissioner Legates suggested that anyone who wants to attend Tuesday's meeting should check the website for exact time and location.

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.