



**Economic, Environment and Resiliency
Commission (EERC)
Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 3:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall
Regular Meeting
AGENDA**

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A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL & ANNOUNCEMENTS:	
B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:	
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C. UPDATE FROM THE MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE	
D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:	
E. NEW BUSINESS:	
1. Presentation by Delaware Sea Grant's Danielle Swallow and Lewes Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Betsy Reamer on resiliency training seminar for Lewes's businesses on Monday, September 14 at the UD's Sharp campus. Business Resiliency Training Flyer	9
2. Presentation by Brent Jett, GMB, on coastal resiliency, presented at the 50th Association of State Floodplain Managers Conference. Building Resiliency in the First Town in the First State - Brent Jett	11 - 30
3. Discussion regarding organizational changes of the Economic, Environment, and Resiliency Commission.	
F. PUBLIC COMMENT:	
G. ADJOURNMENT:	
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84865124707?pwd=YXEUaHurOAKWu0d3OaQqsNiNOkbORW.1	
Join via audio:	
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Webinar ID: 848 6512 4707	
Passcode: 667131	

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City Hall Council Chambers is located at 114 E. Third St., Lewes DE

Posted: 06/03/2026 Posted by: BJ

City of Lewes
Economic, Environment and Resiliency Commission (EERC)
Wednesday, May 13, 2026
MINUTES

The Economic, Environment and Resiliency Commission (EERC) met on **Wednesday, May 13, 2026 in Council Chambers at Lewes City Hall**, in accordance with proper notification, with the following members present: Chairperson Khalil Saliba, and Commissioners Tracy Hancock, Rich Innes, and Marylou Wellbrock-Reeves (attending virtually). Also in attendance were Ex-Officio Preston Lee, Ex-Officio Brent Jett (GMB), and Deputy City Manager Janet Reeves.

A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Khalil Saliba called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, in Council Chambers, City Hall, Lewes, DE.

Announcements

Board of Public Works Update (Ex-Officio Preston Lee): *Mr. Lee reported that the Board of Public Works has signed an agreement with the county to take over Pumping Station No. 4, located at the base of Savannah Road, in connection with the regional treatment plant initiative. The county will lead modifications to the station for integration with the regional plant. Additionally, the BPW is restarting its mitigation committee to update data developed approximately three to four years prior, noting that sea level rise projections have changed and are advancing more rapidly than previously anticipated. Mr. Lee also reported that construction of the first new raised pumping station — designed in accordance with the mitigation committee's coastal flooding design considerations — is underway on Hoornkill Avenue, funded as part of utility upgrades tied to new residential annexation on that street.*

University of Delaware Coastal Resilience Design Studio (Commissioner Tracy Hancock): *Commissioner Hancock shared that she recently attended a University of Delaware presentation associated with the Coastal Resilience Design Studio, a program in which the university partners with local Delaware coastal communities, deploying undergraduate and graduate students to tackle coastal resilience challenges in a solution-driven, educational format. Commissioner Hancock noted that the program's services appear to be offered free of charge and suggested it could be explored on a project-by-project basis for the benefit of Lewes.*

Commissioner Rich Innes noted that this could align well with the city's ongoing comprehensive plan process. A meeting is scheduled the following week to finalize the Community Liaison Committee for the comprehensive plan, and involving University of Delaware students — from disciplines such as the Biden School of Public Policy, architecture and planning, and marine sciences — was identified as a priority. Commissioner Innes emphasized the cross-disciplinary value and the mutual benefit for both the city and the students. Commissioner Hancock expressed support for the idea.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

B.1. 2026 04 08 EERC Meeting Minutes

The April 8, 2026 meeting minutes were presented for approval. No edits or corrections were offered by members.

A motion to approve the April 8, 2026 EERC meeting minutes as written was made by Commissioner Innes and seconded by Commissioner Hancock. The motion carried unanimously.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Update from the Delaware Geological Survey's Dr. Robin Mattheus on research of Lewes Beach's coastal sand-transport system.

Dr. Robin Mattheus of the Delaware Geological Survey presented an update on the coastal camera monitoring pilot program deployed along the Lewes Beach shoreline. Dr. Mattheus described the program's regional scope, explaining that the goal is to supplement existing monitoring instruments — such as weather stations, tide gauges, and wave buoys — with consistent, repeat shoreline imagery to better understand when and where sand moves along the coast.

Dr. Mattheus reported that five cameras have been deployed in the Lewes area, positioned at high-vantage-point locations including balconies, port railings, lampposts, and roof gables. Camera locations include Savannah Beach, Johnnie Walker Beach, the Delaware River and Bay Authority ferry terminal area, and the Lewes Yacht Club. He noted that additional cameras are available and a list of citizen volunteers has been compiled to identify further deployment sites. The cameras are trail-type cameras capturing still images every half hour.

Dr. Mattheus explained that twice-yearly topographic beach profiles are already collected in Lewes, and the camera imagery is intended to complement this data by identifying which specific weather events are responsible for sand losses. Preliminary analytics being tested include the creation of time-averaged pixel images, which can reveal consistent wave-breaking patterns and potentially track changes in sandbar positions and shoreline advance or retreat over time. He noted that machine learning tools may eventually allow for automated beach-versus-water classification, greatly increasing the analytical power of the network.

Discussion regarding recent sand replenishment: Chair Saliba informed Dr. Mattheus that the City of Lewes had recently completed a sand replenishment project, placing approximately 255 truckloads of sand near the Children's Beach House and in the vicinity of Savannah Beach, with work conducted from approximately March 16 through the end of March 2026. Dr. Mattheus acknowledged that this kind of human intervention is precisely the type of event that camera imagery can and should document, and he requested that Deputy City Manager Reeves provide him with the specific volume of sand placed and the project dates. Deputy City Manager Reeves agreed to follow up. It was also noted that no before-and-after drone footage of the placement had been arranged.

Commissioner Hancock asked whether Dr. Mattheus had engaged the Delaware River and Bay Authority regarding potential camera deployment near the ferry terminal, given their interest in maintaining the navigation channel. Dr. Mattheus confirmed this had not yet occurred but was on the to-do list for the summer. Commissioner Hancock also inquired whether geomorphological benchmarks or comparable profiles exist to help interpret the imagery. Dr. Mattheus indicated that in-field surveys are planned for the summer to establish spatial benchmarks within camera view sheds, which would allow comparison against LiDAR and DNREC beach profiling data to ground-truth what is observed in the images.

Mr. Lee raised the question of how the sand placement might affect the broader

shoreline dynamics upstream of the deposit location, particularly near the Lewes Yacht Club camera. Dr. Mattheus agreed this is a relevant consideration and noted that the placement's effects on wave approach and shoreline development along the full beach would be a subject of interest.

Commissioner Innes acknowledged the significant policy value of this data, particularly in the context of DNREC's prior proposals for shared beach replenishment costs, and asked whether the data could ultimately support more efficient replenishment strategies and inform broader coastal resilience planning. Dr. Mattheus expressed optimism that the data could serve those purposes, though noted the program is still in an experimental stage.

Mr. Lee raised privacy considerations related to placing a camera at the Children's Beach House, given the special-needs population served there. Dr. Mattheus acknowledged that the cameras capture anyone within their view shed. Chair Saliba noted that the pilot period ran from January through April 30 — a period of limited beach activity — and indicated that any extension of the agreement would need to address this concern.

Tim Cooper, Sussex County Deputy Director of Public Safety-Emergency Management, asked whether the cameras provide real-time video accessible to emergency operations centers. Dr. Mattheus clarified that the current deployment captures still images only, but that select cameras are planned to be upgraded to streaming capability, which could support real-time access for emergency management purposes. Chair Saliba indicated this would be incorporated into discussions about extending the agreement.

Commissioner Marylou Wellbrock-Reeves asked whether Dr. Mattheus could assist the city in triaging resiliency priorities based on the data being collected over the summer. Dr. Mattheus confirmed he would welcome that dialogue and noted that the exchange of information is bidirectional — the city's knowledge of sand placement and maintenance activities is equally valuable to his research.

Chair Saliba noted that the pilot program agreement expired on April 30, 2026, and that extending the partnership would require updating the formal agreement with the Delaware Geological Survey.

2. **Presentation by Tim Cooper, Sussex County's Deputy Director of Public Safety-Emergency Management, on their Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. This is a training program that prepares community members to help themselves, their families and neighbors in the event of a disaster. CERT training will provide skills to our citizens to help emergency responders save lives and property.**

Tim Cooper, Sussex County Deputy Director of Public Safety-Emergency Management, presented on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program alongside his team: Judi Carter, CERT Program Manager; John Ferguson, Auxiliary Communication Leader and program representative; and Chip Stevenson, Volunteer Management Coordinator.

Mr. Cooper provided an overview of the CERT program, explaining that it was established before September 11, 2001, following the Northridge earthquake in California. The program is designed to prepare community members to support professional emergency responders when resources are strained, particularly during major disaster events. He referenced Hurricane Helene as a recent example of how

some communities waited hours before professional responders arrived.

Mr. Cooper reported that Sussex County has reached 300 statewide CERT members, with nearly 200 in Sussex County alone. There are currently two active community teams — one in Belle Terra (a community near Lewes, with approximately 20 members) and one associated with the Ocean View Police Department in the Bethany area — as well as a broader Sussex County team. Due to increased community interest, a third spring training session has been added this year. Participating homeowners' associations for the upcoming late-May class include Bethany West, Salt Pond, and Middlesex Beach.

CERT training is offered free of charge and covers disaster preparedness, basic first aid and "stop the bleed" techniques, mental health in disaster contexts, light fire suppression, utility shutoff procedures, and light search and rescue. The program consists of online coursework followed by a skills day and a final exercise. Three levels of CERT engagement were described: basic preparedness (self, family, and neighbors); community-level response (active deployment within the local area during a disaster); and the highest level, which involves deploying teams to other communities during catastrophic events, requiring additional Incident Command System training.

CERT members also support non-disaster activities, including special events, marathons, and points of distribution for commodities such as water and sandbags. A recently trained cohort has also been integrated into the county EOC to assist with call-taking during activations, with damage assessment training planned as a next step.

Discussion regarding a Lewes CERT class: Chair Saliba and Mr. Cooper discussed the feasibility of hosting a CERT training class in Lewes, tentatively targeting October 2026, following a planned September 14 business resilience training event. Mr. Cooper indicated that a minimum of 25 participants would be needed to hold a local class, and that approximately one month's notice with confirmed registrations would allow the county to bring the training to Lewes rather than Georgetown. It was noted that a large facility — such as an auditorium — and an outdoor area for exercises would be required. Chair Saliba expressed confidence that Lewes's engaged volunteer community could generate sufficient interest.

Chair Saliba indicated that next steps would include developing a marketing and outreach plan in coordination with Deputy City Manager Reeves, the Lewes Chamber of Commerce, and social media and press channels. He also noted the possibility of a Cape Gazette feature story to promote the program.

Commissioner Innes expressed strong support and asked whether Mr. Cooper could help draft language for the comprehensive plan to formalize a commitment to achieving community-level CERT status for Lewes. Mr. Cooper affirmed his willingness to assist, noting that Sussex County is on a similar comprehensive plan timeline and that he has been asked to participate in the county's process. He also noted that the county's hazard mitigation plan must be updated by the end of 2027 or early 2028, and that work on that is beginning as well.

Commissioner Hancock highlighted the value of aligning the city's master planning work with the county's emergency management planning, particularly given evolving disaster types such as wildfire risk. Mr. Lee noted that the Board of Public Works would welcome CERT training for city employees.

Mr. Ferguson noted that a group of approximately twelve GMB Engineering inspectors are being sent to a DEMA building damage assessment class, which would enhance the city's capacity for post-disaster building analysis independent of CERT.

D. UPDATE FROM THE MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

Chair Saliba reported that the Master Plan Implementation Task Force met earlier and that progress is continuing. He noted that the discovery of an eagle's nest has slowed certain aspects of the work, but that design development is proceeding on three separate bridge designs. The overall effort remains on track.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No unfinished business was raised.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment was received from those present in the chamber or participating remotely.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

*Prior to adjournment, Ex-Officio Brent Jett (GMB) noted that he will be presenting Lewes's resiliency efforts at a national conference in Milwaukee at the beginning of June and offered to present a summary of that presentation at the June meeting. Chair Saliba welcomed the offer. Chair Saliba noted that the next regular meeting of the EERC is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 10, 2026**. With no further business, Chair Saliba adjourned the meeting at 4:03 PM.*

Minutes submitted by: Jeffery Coover, Administrative Support Specialist

Minutes generated by HeyGov.ai

Transcripts available upon request



Save the Date

BUSINESS RESILIENCY TRAINING

FREE training for Lewes-area businesses.
Registration opens in August.

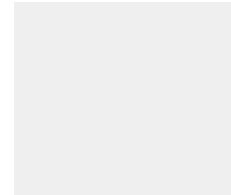
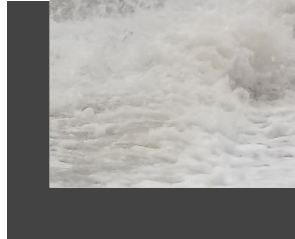
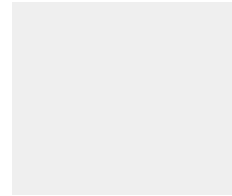
September 14, 2026

11:30am-1:00pm, UD Campus in Lewes

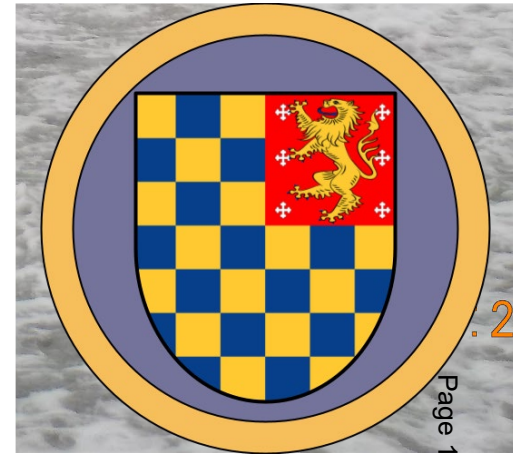
- ✓ Learn about common hazards in our area
- ✓ Identify your critical business functions and what is most at risk from these hazards
- ✓ Learn strategies for minimizing disruptions and maintaining continuity of operations

Sponsored by the Lewes Chamber of Commerce, the City of Lewes, Sussex County Division of Emergency Management, and Delaware Sea Grant

BUILDING RESILIENCY IN THE FIRST TOWN IN THE FIRST STATE



Lewes, Delaware



June 3, 2026

Brent R. Jett, P.E., CFM, CC-P, CSR

Background

- Associate/Coastal Resiliency Group Leader
- 25+ years professional experience
- Delmarva Peninsula native
- GMB has been the City engineers for Lewes for over 30 years
- Familiarity of working in municipalities on the shore that were founded in the 1600's and 1700's.
 - Understanding how and why things were built previously allows for mitigation techniques to be successful with guidance and experience



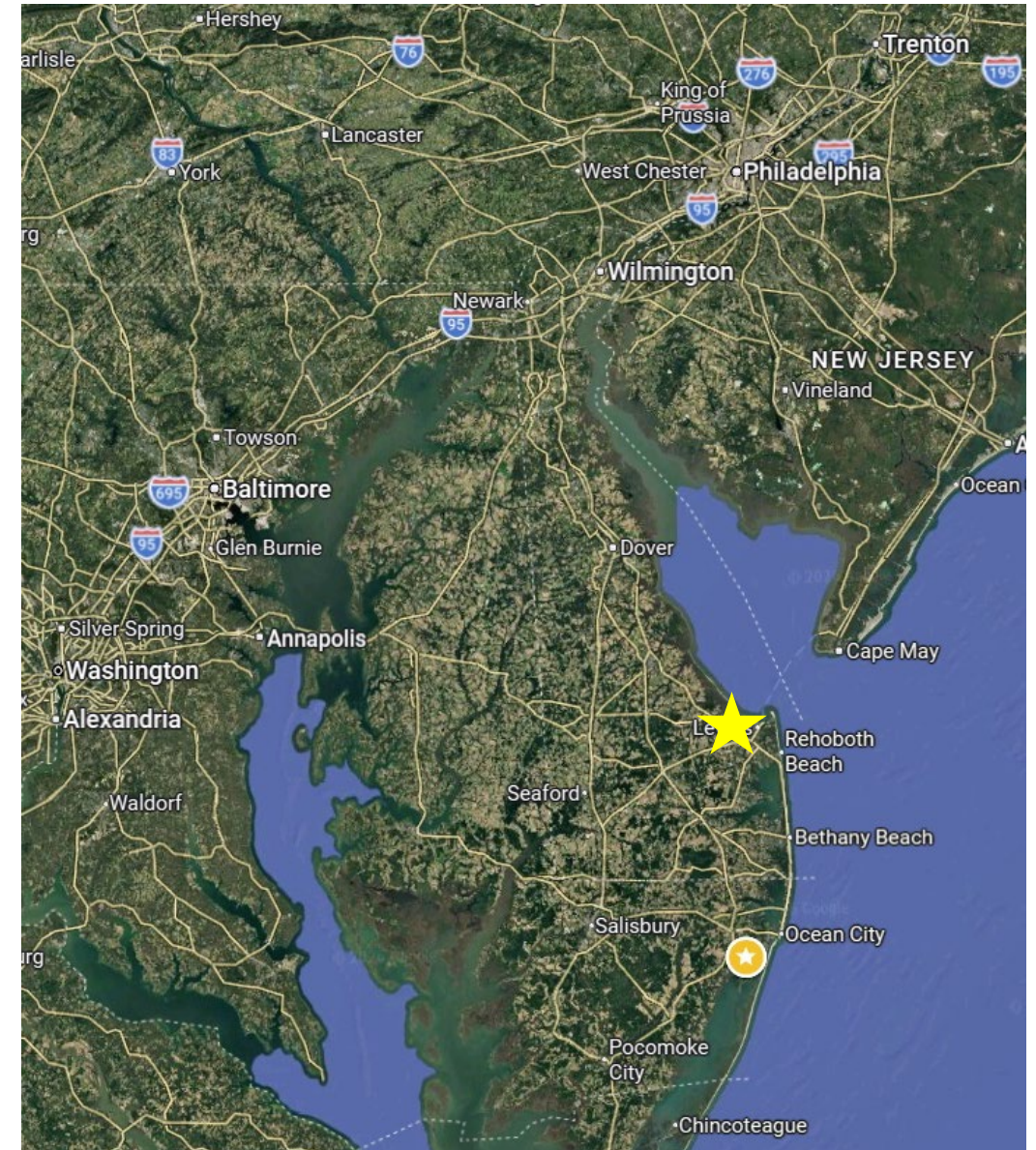
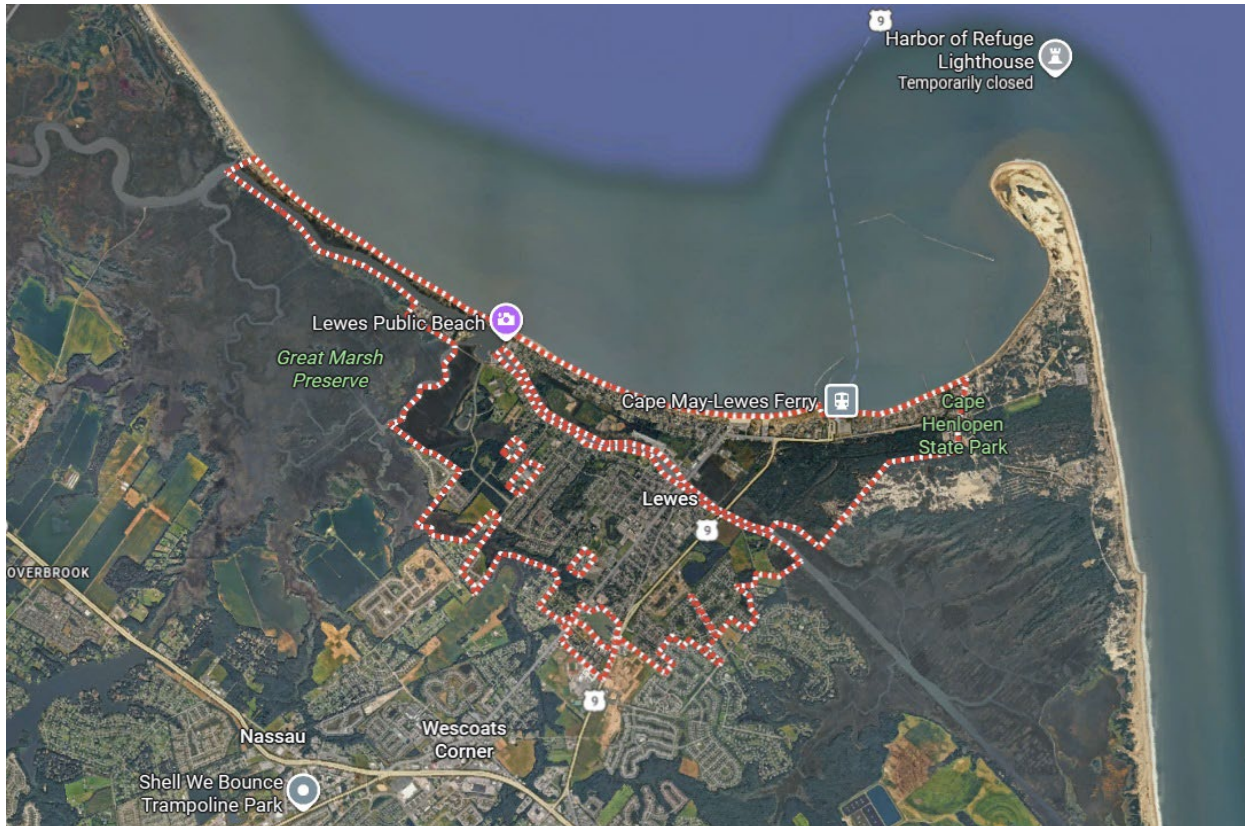
Zwaanendael (Swan Valley) 1631

- Founded by the Dutch, 3 years before Maryland was chartered
- Whaling and trading post on the Delaware Bay
- Cape Henlopen's original location
- Short lived due to a misunderstanding with the natives in 1632...
- Wash, rinse, repeat
 - Mennonites in 1662
 - Dutch in 1673
 - English 1680
- Bombarded in War of 1812 (cannon ball still embedded in a foundation wall.)



Water Water Everywhere

- On the Delaware Bay, just west of Cape Henlopen, around the hook from the Atlantic Ocean
- Lewes-Rehoboth Canal runs through the City



Vulnerable Location???

- Red = 1% chance
- Yellow = 0.2% chance
- Green = Safe, for now....

- ClimateCheck Ranks Delaware
 - #5 for storm risk
 - #7 for fire risk
- High risk of Sea Level Rise
 - Mean elevation of 60!

FEMA Map



What to do???

- Utilize the Tools available
 - SeaGrant
 - University Partners
 - Local Experts/Knowledge
- Champions of the effort!
 - Mayor Ted Becker, in memoriam
 - Mayor Amy Marasco
 - Dr. Phillip Barnes
 - Many others...



Starting Point

- University of Delaware, Biden School of Public Policy
 - Institute of Public Administration (IPA)
 - Dr. Phillip Barnes
- Resilient Communities Partnership 2021
 - Lewes Executive Committee on Resiliency
 - 11 members of community
 - Debate and recommend resiliency measures the City Council can adopt

Experience Matters

- Professional Guidance and Facilitation
- Mix of “believers and non-believers”
- 14 items identified
- 2 pushed forward to Council at conclusion of effort
- (Almost all 14 have been enacted!)
- <https://documents.dnrec.delaware.gov/coastal/resilient-communities/Lewes-Executive-Committee-on-Resiliency.pdf>

Study and Provide Data

Future Inundation

- Don't believe me, believe them
- Duplicate data when possible
- Utilize the partners available
- EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE again
 - Public outreach, workshops, committee meetings, planning commission, council meetings, other community's meetings, SeaGrant programs, State offerings

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

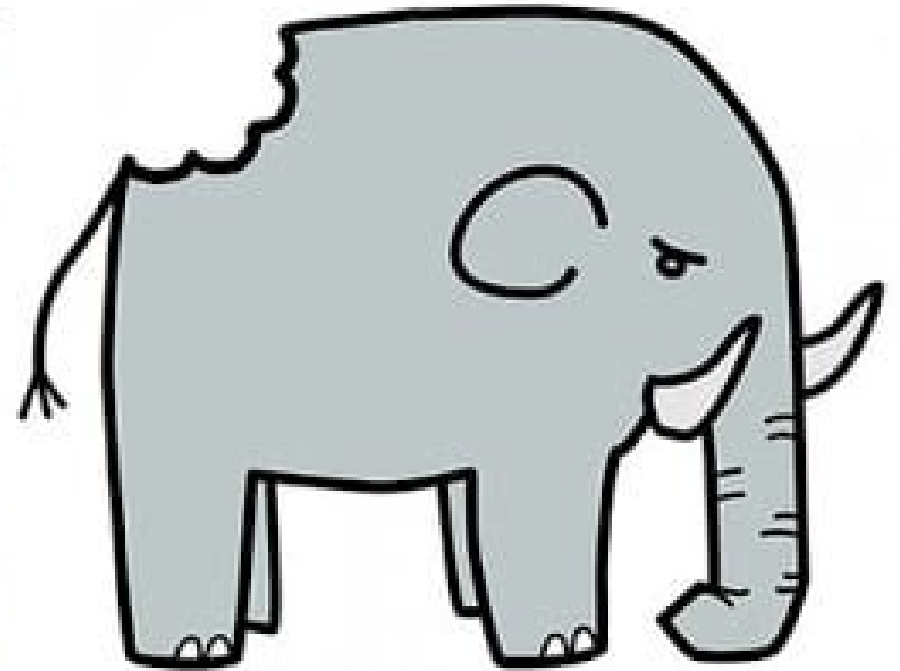


Stay Positive

You Can Do It!

- Seems impossible
- Won't be around to see the impacts
- Not in my lifetime
- How much is this going to cost us/me?
- We can't stop Mother Nature or Father Time
- It's going to ruin my view!

HOW DO YOU EAT
AN ELEPHANT?
ONE BITE
AT A TIME!



Itemize Options

- Increased freeboard
- Expand floodplain regs to 0.2%
- Lot coverage reductions
- Open space requirements for subdivisions
- Increase tree coverage
- Wetlands ordinance; increased buffers
- Stormwater utility fee
- Resiliency fund
- Real estate disclosure
- Green infrastructure protection



Cost of Implementing Code Changes

How much?

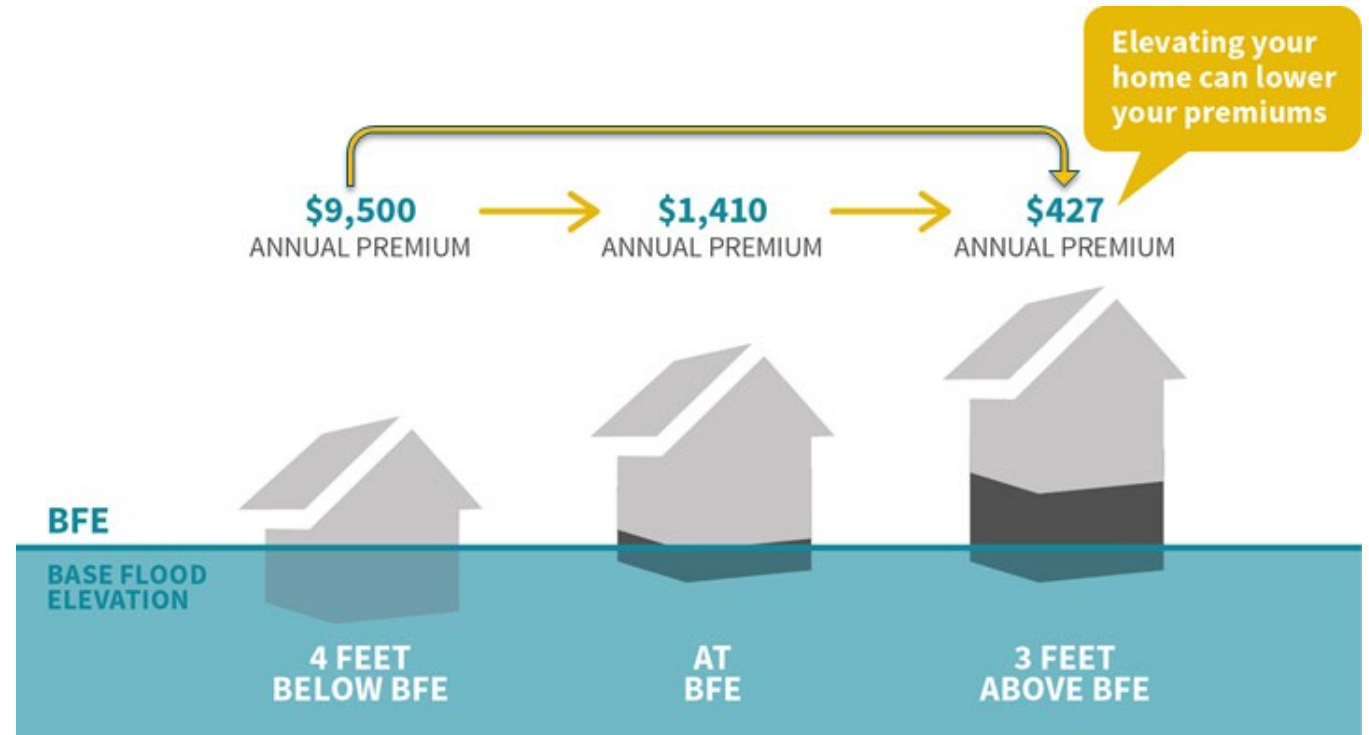
- Codes and Ordinance Changes are relatively free to the municipality
 - Some time for Counsel and Engineers
- Workshops, Meetings, Presentations are free to the public
- Education is invaluable
- \$1 of Disaster Prevention saves \$13 in Recovery
- Process, not an event. Educate over and over
- Not everyone has to agree, just understand to improve their community

ZERO COST

Increased Freeboard

- Include increased height at least 1:1
- Educate about lower insurance rates
- Better CRS rating
- More resilient community
- Acceptance of coastal building “feel”
- Migration of floodplain with SLR
- Support from FEMA, DEMA, other communities
- 18” -> 36” in 1%, +2’ in height
- 18” required in 0.2%

Higher is Better



Rising Tides, Rising Costs, CNYCN

Be Impactful

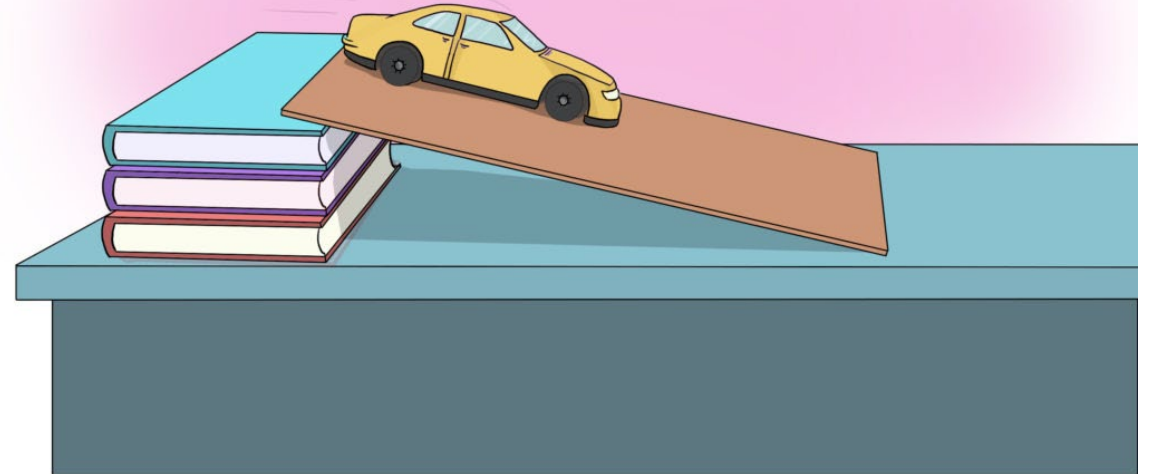
A Picture is worth...



Build on the Wins!

Momentum

- Take the win, and build on it
- Pay attention to previous discussions
- What item was brought up frequently?
- What other items are low cost/free?
- What item will be impactful?
- What item is timely?
- What has impacted other communities and can be prevented here?
- What needs to be done NOW?



Next...

Keep at it

- Paper street converted to open space
- Lot coverage reduction by 5% around City
- Incentive for Pervious Materials with 50% lot coverage reduction
- Open space requirement in major subdivisions
- Street tree requirement and supplement
- Wetlands ordinance in city (none in state...)
- Environmental Subcommittee creation
- Dedicated Resiliency Fund



And Next...

- Preservation of Open Space; passive park creation in vulnerable areas
- Tree planting grants and increased coverage
- Dark Skies ordinance for new subdivisions, conversion of city-owned lighting, and incentive to convert existing lighting in HOAs.
- Bike network; fewer cars
- Community garden; pride in Lewes
- Recycling program at the beach
- ADU acceptance
- Disaster Housing plan with state

Celebrate



Mitigation along lowest lands

Keep the water off...

- Creation of a mitigation berm along the canal
- Connections to existing dredge placement beds
- Utilization of dredge material in berm creation
 - Reduction of imported material
 - Beneficial reuse
 - Cost reduction
- Protection to elevation 5.0' along the coast
 - Existing roadway below elevation 4.0'
 - Lots around elevation 3.0'
- Protection of city infrastructure



Flood Mitigation

Before and After



- Mitigation berm; replacing a previous flood prevention technique along the canal.
- Keep tides and surges up to elevation 5.0' off the roadway and off private property.

- BCA over 4
- Leveraged funding
- Education, evidence from Sandy, protection of private property & City infrastructure



You can do it too!

- It's a process, not an event
- Prepare for the bad (not THE worst)
- Understand the vulnerabilities to the community
- Educate, Educate, Educate
- Support the community champion
- Build on the wins
- Bang your own drum; share

Code Revisions are FREE

Community Events are FREE

Understanding the Risks are FREE

Leveraging Funds for Grants \$

Doing Nothing \$\$\$\$\$

Thank you for this opportunity!

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GMB
ARCHITECTS / ENGINEERS

