



JOHNNIE WALKER BEACH SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, May 21, 2026, 5:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall
AGENDA

	Page
A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL	
B. ANNOUNCEMENTS	
C. PRESENTATION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
1. 2026 04 16 Johnnie Walker Beach Subcommittee Minutes	3 - 6
D. OLD BUSINESS:	
1. Continued discussion and possible action regarding the Johnnie Walker Beach kiosk unveiling.	
E. JOHNNIE WALKER / SAVANNAH BEACH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION	
F. OTHER / PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS / NEXT MTG DATE	
G. ADJOURNMENT	

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Agenda Posted: May 14, 2026 Posted By: BJ

City of Lewes
JOHNNIE WALKER BEACH SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, April 16, 2026
MINUTES

The Johnnie Walker Beach Subcommittee met on **Thursday, April 16, 2026** in **Council Chambers at Lewes City Hall**, in accordance with proper notification, with the following members present: Acting Chair (Secretary) Kay Carnahan, Committee Members Bill Collick, Calvin Jackson, Ex-officio Deputy Mayor Khalil Saliba, and Ex-officio Parks & Marina Supervisor Giulia Kirsch.

A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Kay Carnahan called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM, substituting for Chair Cynthia Clay Anderson who was absent.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acting Chair Kay Carnahan presented several community announcements, expressing appreciation for Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks' organizational efforts. The unveiling of the Johnnie Walker interpretive sign is scheduled for 10 AM to noon on Saturday, May 30th, with everyone welcome to attend. That evening will feature the Blue Moon event celebrating the historic Happy Day Club from 6-10 PM at the American Legion near Lewes Beach, including live music, food, complimentary beverages, and shared memories with tickets available.

The City of Lewes Juneteenth celebration will take place on Saturday, June 27th, organized by Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks with no entry or vendor fees for participating nonprofits and organizations. Johnnie Walker Beach Day is planned for Saturday, September 19th in the fall, organized by Cynthia Anderson-Clay to celebrate Mr. Walker's significance, contributions, segregated beaches, and community impact.

Additional upcoming events include the Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park's Johnnie Walker Beach cleanup on Tuesday, April 22nd as part of their Earth Day activities, typically drawing around 40 volunteers. On Saturday, April 25th, the Board of Public Works, City of Lewes, and Lewes Police Department will host three public events: a spring shredding event from 10-1 PM (first come, first served, two box limit), DEA National Take Back from 10-2 PM, and a household hazardous waste and electronics collection event from 10-2 PM.

Acting Chair Carnahan announced there will be no election for the Lewes BPW this year, with Preston Lee and Barbara Curtis returning to their seats. The City of Lewes municipal election is scheduled for Saturday, May 9th with polls open from 8 AM to 6 PM. Acting Chair Carnahan disclosed she will be working the election and looks forward to seeing everyone there.

C. PRESENTATION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2026 03 19 Johnnie Walker Beach Subcommittee Minutes

Acting Chair Carnahan asked if everyone had reviewed the March 19, 2026 meeting minutes and requested any suggested changes. No changes were requested.

***Motion:** Committee Member Bill Collick moved to approve the March 19, 2026 meeting minutes. Committee Member Calvin Jackson seconded and the carried unanimously.*

D. JOHNNIE WALKER / SAVANNAH BEACH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Acting Chair Carnahan reported on the lovely gathering held the previous weekend at Johnnie Walker Beach, noting the beach looks beautiful and is ready for the season. The main Mobi-mat is deployed, the parking lot looks great, the bathhouse was open for the event, and volleyball nets are up.

Parks & Marina Administrator Giulia Kirsch provided updates on Savannah Beach,

anticipating completion of work this week. The beach replenishment has been completed, but leveling off, snow fence installation, and parking blocks still need attention. She clarified that Johnnie Walker Beach bathroom will officially open on May 1st, while it was only open for the recent event. Other bathrooms at Savannah Beach and throughout town are currently operational.

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the DE250 grant award signage & other related updates

- **Sign Unveiling Ceremony – May 30, 2026 (10:00am)**
- **Proposed program for Unveiling Ceremony**

Sign Unveiling Ceremony – May 30, 2026 (10:00am)

Ms. Kirsch reported they are waiting for overnight temperatures to reach 50 degrees or more before concrete can be poured for the sign installation. A contractor has already assessed the site and is preparing a proposal for the concrete pad installation, working through Building Official Jon Ward for the proper permits. The contractor is confident the sign will be installed by May 30th, though Ms. Kirsch hopes for earlier completion given the time-sensitive nature.

The committee discussed the installation method, with options including a full concrete pad versus individual feet. Mr. Ward suggested making the installation removable using a sleeve system that could be screwed in and capped, allowing for sign removal during severe storms. The cleared area to the right of the Mobi-mat (as facing the water) has been identified as the intended location, ensuring visibility for beachgoers walking toward the water.

Regarding the unveiling ceremony program, invitations have not yet been sent as Ms. Kirsch waited until after the community bonfire. She has compiled invitation lists from Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks, committee members, and city management for elected officials. Senator Chris Coons will not be attending, while Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester is confirmed as a yes pending schedule availability. An official process for inviting federal officials has already been completed through detailed online forms.

The committee discussed the possibility of actually unveiling the sign during the ceremony rather than having it visible beforehand. Ms. Kirsch indicated this might be feasible if the sign board arrives separately from the post structure, allowing for installation of the informational panel on the day of the ceremony. The committee agreed this would add dramatic effect to the event.

Proposed program for Unveiling Ceremony

The committee engaged in detailed planning for the May 30th ceremony program. They discussed having welcome remarks from current committee chairs, with suggestions that Chair Cynthia Anderson-Clay and African American Heritage Commission Chair Darryl Daisey should provide the welcome and acknowledge previous contributors rather than having multiple individual speakers to avoid lengthy ceremonies and potential oversight of participants.

For the benediction, the committee considered asking Reverend McCafferty if she is capable of participating, given his involvement in the original planning. They also discussed inviting the current minister of Friendship Baptist, Reverend Bibbens, as a welcoming gesture to continue the work, though he wasn't involved in the planning process.

The committee discussed the sequence of events: welcome remarks, pledge of allegiance (requiring a flag arrangement despite wind concerns), benediction, review of project history, and speakers. Councilmember Brown-Hicks was identified as instrumental in making the original Johnnie Walker Beach Day happen as a private citizen before joining the subcommittee. The committee agreed she would be most appropriate to provide the historical context, with opportunities for others to share memories of Mr. Walker or beach experiences.

Discussion of speakers included federal representatives if available, with the committee agreeing to invite all relevant officials including Senator Russ Huxtable, and State Representative Alonna Berry, understanding that confirmations often come last minute and require flexibility. The committee decided against a formal printed program, instead relying on the existing flyer with historical narrative on the back and maintaining flexibility for speaker adjustments.

The timing discussion revealed concerns about ceremony length, with suggestions to keep it to 30 minutes to an hour maximum given the standing-room setting and Saturday beach season timing. The committee discussed blocking some parking spaces for speaker access as a special event requirement. They noted this is the Saturday after Memorial Day weekend, which typically sees a brief slowdown before the busy summer season begins.

For the actual unveiling sequence, the committee debated timing - whether to unveil before or after speakers. They ultimately decided to have all speakers present first, then unveil the sign with all past and present African American Heritage Commission and Johnnie Walker Beach Subcommittee members participating, followed by brief closing remarks from federal representatives for photo opportunities with the sign.

Additional considerations included providing water if the weather is hot, ensuring Delaware 250 representatives are invited and potentially speak since they provided the grant funding, and arranging for photography to capture the event and any historical materials attendees might bring to share.

The committee discussed inviting former Mayor Joe Stewart, recognizing former Mayor Becker's significant support for the project, though he has passed away. They acknowledged Becker's crucial role in getting the pavilion design approved and his consistent advocacy for the project despite not universal support at the time.

The committee also planned to invite media coverage, with Acting Chair Carnahan offering to compile press contacts from the extensive coverage received during the beach renaming, including outlets from Philadelphia, Georgia, and Kansas City that showed interest in how a small community addressed historical segregation issues.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding update on replica pavilion design and construction

- **Update on design revision**
- **Discussion of approval process and public hearing**

Update on design revision

Ms. Kirsch provided an update on the pavilion design process. After their previous meeting, she sent the discussed plans to Jon Ward, who determined that full construction plans need to be developed. City Engineer Andrew Lyons is working on

these comprehensive plans after being contacted by both Ms. Kirsch and city management. Once the construction plans are completed, they must be submitted to Jon Ward for approval or modifications before proceeding.

Discussion of approval process and public hearing

The committee reviewed the approval process sequence: from the subcommittee to the Lewes African American Heritage Commission, then to Parks and Recreation, and finally to Mayor and City Council, which will hold a public hearing before making any decision. At any point, the proposal could circle back for revisions rather than proceeding in a straight line.

Acting Chair Carnahan suggested that the African American Heritage Commission or subcommittee should host a public hearing once they have the design to show, arguing this would strengthen their application by allowing them to address any concerns early and demonstrate community engagement. She expressed concern that waiting until the Mayor and Council workshop stage might result in unexpected opposition that could have been addressed earlier in the process.

The committee discussed the wisdom of proactive outreach to the residents of the nearby condominium building, which has four privately-owned units. They agreed it would be beneficial to reach out to the owners through the HOA to explain the project rather than waiting for potential objections at the end of the process. This approach could turn residents into supporters who see the historical pavilion as adding value to their property.

Deputy Mayor Khalil Saliba suggested asking City Solicitor Alex Burns about whether a formal public hearing is required or if a workshop format would suffice. The committee agreed that having the condo owners' support would be valuable and that early engagement is preferable to late-stage surprises.

The discussion concluded with agreement to have Ms. Kirsch consult with city management about the public hearing requirements and to invite the condominium owners to review the plans once they're complete, fostering a collaborative rather than adversarial approach to the approval process.

E. OTHER / PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS / NEXT MTG DATE

No public comments were offered.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: *Committee Member Collick moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jackson and the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 PM.*

Minutes generated by: Jeffery Coover, Administrative Support Specialist

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Transcripts available upon request