



JOHNNIE WALKER BEACH SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, April 16, 2026, 5:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall
AGENDA

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City of Lewes
JOHNNIE WALKER BEACH SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, March 19, 2026
MINUTES

The Lewes African American Heritage Commission met on **Thursday, March 19, 2026 in Council Chambers at Lewes City Hall**, in accordance with proper notification, with the following members present: Acting Chair (Secretary) Kay Carnahan, Chair Cynthia Anderson Clay (attending virtually) Committee member Bill Collick, newly appointed Committee Member Calvin Jackson, and Ex-officio Parks & Marina Supervisor Giulia Kirsch.

A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Secretary Kay Carnahan called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. (Since Chair Anderson Clay was participating remotely, it was decided that Secretary Carnahan would run the meeting procedurally as Acting Chair.)

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Calvin Jackson newly appointed to JWB Sub-Committee

Acting Chair Carnahan welcomed Mr. Jackson to the subcommittee, noting that the group has had two primary goals: the interpretive sign about Mr. Johnnie Walker and his contributions (which will be unveiled May 30th) and the pavilion project. She emphasized the need for additional manpower to push the pavilion project through to completion.

Acting Chair Carnahan announced several upcoming events:

- Volunteer appreciation bonfire and dinner on Saturday, April 11th at 4:00 PM
- Both Savannah Beach and Johnny Walker Beach are being prepared for the season, with parking lots closed except Sundays through April 10th
- MobiMats scheduled for installation at Johnny Walker Beach by the community bonfire on April 11th
- City of Lewes' fifth annual Juneteenth celebration on Saturday, June 27th from 1-6 PM at George H.P. Smith Park
- Interpretive sign unveiling at Johnny Walker Beach on Saturday, May 30th at 10:00 AM as part of Delaware 250, Lewes 250, and America 250 celebrations

Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks announced that the city is developing a local historic marker program as an initiative of the African American Heritage Commission. She noted this would be less stringent than the state program and may include both physical and virtual markers. The African American Heritage Commission wants to ensure participation in this development process.

C. PRESENTATION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2026 02 19 Johnnie Walker Beach Subcommittee Minutes

Acting Chair Carnahan asked for any changes, corrections, or amendments to the February 19, 2026 minutes.

***Motion:** Committee Member Bill Collick moved to accept the minutes. Chair Cynthia Anderson Clay seconded. The motion passed.*

D. JOHNNIE WALKER / SAVANNAH BEACH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the DE250 grant award signage & other related updates
 - QR Code Material organization
 - Sign Unveiling Ceremony – May 30, 2026 (10:00am)

QR Code Material organization

Ms. Kirsch reported that the interpretive sign frame has been shipped and should arrive soon, with the interpretive narrative already in her office. Once both components arrive, work will begin on pouring a pad and installing the sign according to floodplain requirements with input from Jon Ward, the floodplain manager. The installation will be completed by a contract company.

Chair Anderson Clay acknowledged the extensive work that began in 2021, with Committee Member Collick particularly recognizing Chair Anderson Clay's dedication to the project. He shared his personal connection to Johnnie Walker Beach, having grown up in the community and understanding its significance for African American families who visited the beach.

Regarding the QR code material, Ms. Kirsch explained that additional photos, narratives, and poems that didn't fit on the physical sign would be available on the city website through the QR code. The committee had originally selected 16 photos, with the remaining materials now destined for the website. The QR code link is already active and can accommodate ongoing additions as new materials are found or contributed.

Chair Anderson Clay noted that accumulated links from various Johnnie Walker Beach Day activities covered by Coastal TV would be included. Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks offered to contribute her extensive collection of photographs from various beach celebrations over the years.

Mr. Darryl Daisy reported that he had sent all remaining pictures, including original photos from the sign, to Ms. Kirsch and the team. He is working to identify people in the photographs and provide dates and other information for the website organization. He emphasized the value of having content that can be updated over time to keep the sign from becoming stale.

The committee discussed the need for automotive expertise to help date some photographs based on cars visible in parking lot scenes. Ms. Kirsch mentioned having access to such expertise through her father.

Councilmember Brown-Hicks thanked all participants for their collaborative effort in creating the advertisement flyer for Lewes 250, noting it was a beautiful learning experience that resulted in an attractive final product.

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

Acting Chair Carnahan noted that May 30th would be an ideal date as the beach would be in full operation with lifeguards present. Ms. Kirsch reported that she has collected addresses for invitations from committee members and others, and city staff is preparing the invitation list. She indicated that formal requests have already been sent to state government officials through the proper online channels.

The committee discussed the need to structure the ceremony program. Chair Anderson Clay confirmed she would be comfortable taking the lead on developing the program structure. Committee Member Collick suggested that Chair Anderson Clay work with the committee to put the program together, which she accepted.

Ms. Kirsch noted that the committee has two more meetings (April and May) before the unveiling, providing opportunities to finalize details. Chair Anderson Clay requested that speaker discussions be added to the April meeting agenda, as they should know by then

who has expressed interest in participating.

The committee discussed the possibility of asking attending officials to speak, such as Senator Blunt Rochester if she attends. No specific time constraints were identified for the ceremony beyond the 10:00 AM start time.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding update on replica pavilion design and construction
 - Decision on recommended location of replica pavilion for LAAHC approval so that DNREC application can be submitted

Acting Chair Carnahan reported on budget hearing results from March 13th, indicating the city allocated \$15,000 for design work only, with the \$60,000 needed for construction deferred until the budget year beginning April 1st of next year. She emphasized her gratitude that the city is contributing any funding, as she had initially expected the project would require 100% fundraising.

The committee discussed the current status of the 2021 design, which needs updates to meet floodplain requirements. Ms. Kirsch explained the timeline of required steps:

1. Current plans have been sent to floodplain manager John Ward for review and recommendations
2. Plans go to GMB for design updates
3. Updated design returns to Johnny Walker Beach Subcommittee for recommendation to African American Heritage Commission
4. African American Heritage Commission recommends to Parks and Recreation Commission
5. Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to Mayor and Council for approval
6. Upon Mayor and Council approval, DNREC application can be submitted
7. Upon DNREC approval, project goes out to bid
8. Contractor selection and award
9. Construction begins

Ms. Kirsch noted that DNREC may have time restrictions for construction periods, though she was unsure about specific limitations since the project doesn't involve water work. She committed to contacting DNREC to clarify timeline requirements and permit expiration dates.

Chair Anderson Clay requested development of a project plan with clear steps and milestones to keep everyone aligned on progress. She clarified her background as a project manager while acknowledging they cannot assign specific completion dates to the various steps.

Committee Member Jackson asked about the nature of the DNREC application, with clarification that it seeks permission to build and determines where construction can occur. The application cost is \$4,500, though Ms. Kirsch could not definitively confirm budget availability for this expense.

Acting Chair Carnahan expressed her preference for conducting a public hearing early in the process to ensure community buy-in, particularly from owners of nearby condominiums. She emphasized the importance of the "Lewes way" of bringing people on board rather than proceeding without community input.

Chair Anderson Clay reinforced the community-focused approach, noting they have always emphasized cohesiveness and would ensure all stakeholders are considered as the project moves forward.

The committee discussed the recent pre-meeting with DNREC, which both Acting Chair Carnahan and Chair Anderson Clay found valuable for education and mutual understanding. They stressed to DNREC that this is a historic reproduction, not a profit center or residence, lacking utilities and representing something unique from their typical applications. They were able to provide photographs of at least three similar pavilions that historically existed at different beach locations.

Acting Chair Carnahan noted the proposed location is in a flood zone but at elevation 8, which she considered relatively favorable for its proximity to water. The VE zone designation was acknowledged as unavoidable given the beachfront location.

Acting Chair Carnahan disclosed that she will need to recuse herself from the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting due to conflict of interest, leaving the meeting during that agenda item and returning afterward if it's not the final item.

The meeting concluded with discussion of the various steps and acknowledgment that while the timeline is longer than initially hoped, the systematic approach ensures proper community engagement and regulatory compliance.

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

- F. ADJOURNMENT *Motion:*** *Committee Member Collick moved to adjourn. Chair Anderson Clay seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 5:45 PM.*

Minutes submitted by: Jeffery Coover, Administration Support Specialist
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