



# The Town of Fenwick Island

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## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 20, 2014**

### ***Members Present:***

**Audrey Serio, Gardner Bunting, Tim Collins, Diane Tingle, Gene Langan,  
Marc McFaul, Kristi Maravalli, Merritt Burke, Pat Schuchman**

***Absent:* Reid Tingle, Gabby Mancini**

***Public in Attendance:* Bill Weistling, Mike Houser, Roy Williams**

### **Flag Salute and Call to Order at 10:00 a.m.**

Mayor Serio began the meeting with thanking the AdHoc Parking Committee for all their work on parking issues. The committee will now be known as the Business Development Committee which will address concerns specific to the business community.

She continued her comments with the belief that Town Council should be pro-commercial and promote the business community. She added that she would like to see this committee work with the Charter & Ordinance committee in suggesting changes to the Town code that would encourage a prosperous business community and prevent vacancies in the commercial zone that currently exist.

She further commented that it is important that the business community be kept informed of any changes concerning the commercial zone and allow them the opportunity to offer their input in developing a flourishing business community.

Finally, Mayor Serio commented that it would be an asset to Town Council to have a commercial property and business owner register as a candidate for the next Town election.

Gene Langan stated the Town needs to look into developing an Economic Development Committee that would have input from the Business Development Committee and would further like to see a joint effort in this with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town.

Town Manager Merritt Burke stated the Business Development Committee should develop a mission statement that would include reviewing existing Town code as it pertains to the commercial zone, develop a distribution sheet with e-mail addresses for all business and commercial property owners, support a candidate for the next Town Council election to represent the interests of the business community and pursue an Economic Development Committee. Mr. Burke added that he has spoken with Diane Liard from Delaware Main Street and Melanie Booker with the Sussex County Economic Development group who offered to assist with other resources including workshops, training, funding, etc. He suggested the committee check [www.downtownmilford.org](http://www.downtownmilford.org) for ideas for the next meeting.

Tim Collins stated he would like to see better communication between the Town and business community with more Chamber of Commerce involvement. He felt that the proposed commercial amendment that had been considered at the last Town Council meeting had a negative impact on the business community with no business representation or involvement in the preliminary discussions.

Gene Langan added that he would like to see an Economic Development Committee work closely with the Charter & Ordinance Committee to encourage business development along the commercial district particularly those properties which have remained vacant and for sale.

Diane Tingle agrees there should be an open line of communication among the Town and business community and sees a need for the Town to be more flexible in commercial development. She would also like to see business representation at the Charter & Ordinance Committee meetings.

Mr. Burke mentioned that Ted Williams of Landmark Engineering will be present at a meeting scheduled for January 21, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., who has been retained to demonstrate different concepts of proposed development in the commercial district.

Marc McFaul mentioned simplifying Board of Adjustment hearings to allow for variances for minimal requests which could be on a case by case basis. Tim Collins stated there could be a first year exception for new businesses to advertise using flags or signage.

Bill Weistling stated that when the owner of the vacant lot located at Dagsboro Street and Coastal Highway requested a Board of Adjustment hearing several years ago and was turned down for all requests for variances, two of those proposed concepts were included in the proposed commercial amendment, i.e., setbacks and parking. Would like to see the business community give input to the Charter & Ordinance Committee on the changes they would like to see. *(Bill's suggested considerations for setbacks and parking in the commercial district are attached.)*

Gene Langan added that a handout could be given out for public input at the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting with Ted Williams of Landmark Engineering. Gardner Bunting asked that a notice be sent out to all business and commercial property owners informing them of the meeting.

The next Business Development Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.

Diane Tingle made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gene Langan. Meeting adjourned 11:10 a.m.

### **From Bill Weistling:**

I've comprised a list of possible setback options for the commercial zone. Please review and make any additions, changes, and comments. Feedback from anyone is appreciated. I'd like to get some consensus from Council, business owners, and residents. Once we can agree on some setbacks, Merritt will contact Ted Williams from Landmark Engineering who will coordinate a workshop comparing our existing ordinances with possible new changes. I feel this course may be the best way to proceed rather than drafting new readings for votes at Council meetings.

Please remember that any changes to the setbacks will NOT affect existing businesses. The changes are designed for new construction and hopefully will detail a plan for how we want our Town to look like in the future.

#### **FRONT SETBACK OPTIONS**

The current front setback is 25' for a structure. Our existing ordinance 160-5 C (4) does not allow parking in the front setback. The property line along Rt.1 is approximately 5-7' from the curb. Ropewalk's front property line is 6' from the curb.

1. Maintain the existing ordinance.
2. Reduce front setback from 25' to 15'. New building will be approximately 20' from the curb.
3. Require 5' sidewalk along Rt. 1 where driveways are not present.
4. Require an additional 5' from the back of sidewalk for a vegetative buffer.
5. Require that in an area 5' from the back of the sidewalk no structures, landscaping, etc. over 3' in height be allowed. (This improves visibility for cars entering Rt. 1 from the side streets).
6. Maintain 25' setback and allow parking. (Parking will start approximately 5' from curb).
7. New setback of 15'. Parking prohibited.

#### **REAR SETBACK OPTIONS**

Current rear setback is 10' for structures.

1. Maintain the existing ordinance.
2. Maintain the existing ordinance and require a 5' vegetative buffer adjacent to the property line.
3. Change rear setback to 20' and require a vegetative buffer.
4. Require a 6'-7' fence where no existing fence is present.

#### **SIDE SETBACKS**

The current side setback for a corner lot adjacent to the street is 15'. Our parking ordinance requires a 19' parking space. Most existing business have a concrete bumper 3'-4' from the building to prevent vehicle damage. Many businesses thus use some of the Town right-of-way (ROW) for parking. The ROW varies from street to street from approximately 5' to 14'. The Town has been trying to reclaim the right of way in the residential area. During street re-surfacing the Town has removed any existing concrete /asphalt driveways that extend into the ROW. C&O will be considering adding a new section on Drainage System Maintenance after a presentation from Merritt. This possible new ordinance may affect use of the ROW.

1. Maintain the current ordinance at 15'.
2. Maintain the current ordinance at 15' where no side parking is allowed.
3. Require all side parking to be compact only.
4. Add compact parking length of 16' to our parking requirements.
5. Require a side setback of 19' (16' parking and 3' away from the building for walking and concrete bumper protection) where parking is allowed. Parking will now be confined on the property and not the ROW.
6. Ban parking. (safety issue of backing up into side streets).

7. Require a 5' sidewalk from the front to rear property line in areas not designated as driveways.

Another consideration will concern the location of the building. If the building is constructed adjacent to Rt. 1 at a 15' setback for example, the front edge of the building will be approximately 26' from the curb along Rt.1. Parking along side the building here will be very close to Rt.1.

#### PARKING

Current parking requirements are 19' long for spaces and 25' wide aisles.

1. Maintain the existing code.
2. 18' long parking spaces and 24' aisles. (in most existing cases where there is one aisle and parking to the left and right, this change will add 3' to the buildable footprint of the lot).
3. Add compact parking of 16' for use in the side setback only.