



The Town of Fenwick Island

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SIDEWALK COMMITTEE AUGUST 18, 2017 AT 10:00 AM

MINUTES

In Attendance

Gardner Bunting, Vicki Carmean, Gene Langan, Mary Ellen Langan, Julie Lee, Richard Mais, Bernie Merritt, Pat Schuchman, Terry Tieman, Bill Weistling

From DelDOT: Anthony Aglio, Maria Fantini

Council Member Carmean called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Council Member Carmean addressed the Committee and DelDOT about safety being the main concern on repairing and replacing the sidewalks. The south side of Town has chipped sidewalks, existing sidewalks are sporadic throughout the rest of the town, and there are currently ADA ramps that lead to nowhere. The current conditions are an "accident waiting to happen" with both pedestrians and vehicles.

Mayor Langan alerted everyone that a study was completed 15 years ago, but due to lack of DelDOT and government funding, no action was every taken.

Mr. Aglio confirmed that the study completed 15 years ago put the cost of the sidewalk project at over \$8 million, so the project was never initiated. However, DelDOT did complete the median project to eliminate some of the Town's safety concerns. He also stated that he has no control of the funding and where available funds are distributed, but he can reinstate the study.

Town Manager Tieman then questioned how DelDOT prioritizes projects. Mr. Aglio responded that they have access to \$3.5 million a year for the whole state of Delaware and prioritize by special needs and issues.

Town Manager Tieman then asked about how the sidewalks are replaced and if utilities will have to be moved. Mr. Aglio stated on certain cases a minor relocation is needed but most of the times they can go around the utilities. There is a state right-of-way that allows 7' on both sides of the road, and most residential properties allow for construction easements in the front of the properties.

Council Member Carmean then commented that Fenwick Island is the only coastal town in the state of Delaware that does not have a connecting sidewalk. Council Member Lee added that Fenwick Island is a family town that use strollers, and it is hard to maneuver around town since you have to cross at crosswalks and most do not have ramps that allow for strollers to get down and cross Route 1, so most families have to walk out of their way to go to another crosswalk that has a ramp. Mary Langan also commented that aiding pedestrian traffic will also free up vehicular traffic.

Town Manager Tieman questioned if the Town could partner with DNREC for aid on the sidewalk project. Mr. Aglio responded that he would check.

Secretary Merritt suggested that the business end of town be the first priority. Council Member Carmean then added that we should do the Town in phases, starting with phase 1 being the business district up to James Street. Treasurer Bunting commented that maybe we should at least fill in the blocks of sidewalk first that are not currently there.

Council Member Carmean asked Mr. Aglio with his experience what should be done with properties that object a new sidewalk being installed in front of their home or business. Mr. Aglio suggested in contacting the property owners either in person or by letter and let them know of the project in advance.

Bill Weistling questioned about those businesses that have concrete parking lots up to the curb on the road if that would be allowed to stay or will they lose parking spaces. Mr. Aglio responded that due to current ADA compliance laws, the parking lots would have to be redone. Town Manager Tieman asked if the walking path in South Bethany is considered compliant. Mr. Aglio responded that those areas were done years ago when the sidewalk standards were not in effect like today.

Town Manager Tieman stated the Town is open on looking into a mechanism to push this project forward. Mr. Aglio mentioned that there is a cap of \$1 million, but if there is a \$200,000 commitment from the Town, the Federal Government could pick up the rest of the costs through CTF funds.

Town Manager Tieman asked Mr. Aglio how we should move forward with the project. He responded that we should write a letter to Jeff Niezgoda, Executive Director of Planning at DelDOT. The next step then would be to get a formal survey completed since that is where we stumbled before on the sidewalk project since there was no survey done. Bill Weistling then questioned if a survey would be a waste of time and money. Mr. Aglio responded that no, it would actually aid in the study and funding of the project. Also, the monitoring of pedestrian traffic would be a good idea. Treasurer Bunting commented the weekends especially are busy in the season, and Vice Mayor Mais added Memorial Day and 4th of July as well.

Vice Mayor Mais told DelDOT about the Comp Plan recently submitted to Sussex County and the sidewalk repair in the Plan. Council Member Carmean said she has not seen the newest version of the Comp Plan, but the previous plan did mention pedestrian safety.

Mary Langan asked Mr. Aglio if he thought getting the property owners approval first would be a good suggestion. He responded that we should promote that with the addition of sidewalks the businesses would benefit with an increase of people in their front door, and for residential owners promote the safety of the Town. Alerting the owners would be a good idea.

Council Member Carmean then asked if we require a business to redo their parking lots based on the new sidewalks, who would absorb those costs. Mr. Aglio responded that they could help with the geometrics. Bill Weistling asked about the effects the new sidewalks will have on businesses that have existing sidewalks and a curb already in place. Mr. Aglio responded that all sidewalks and parking lots would have to be regraded and have ADA compliant ramps. Vice Mayor Mais then commented about trying to provide an ingress/egress on parking lots that exit on Route 1 that they are not pulling out in the middle of the block. Bill Weistling then questioned if DelDOT would

honor existing entrances on Route 1. Mr. Aglio said in most cases yes, but some of them would need to close off areas and lose parking spaces, but they would encourage the owners to close off the entrances for safety reasons.

Mr. Aglio stated that the first step should be writing a letter to his superiors stressing the need for the sidewalk project. He would also like to look at the previous study, which Town Manager Tieman agreed to give to him. Mary Langan said the Committee should also write letters to all the businesses and residents on the potential sidewalk repair and replacement. Town Manager Tieman asked Mr. Aglio if he could assist us on drafting the letters and he agreed.

Bill Weistling asked Mr. Aglio what is the typical width of a sidewalk and Mr. Aglio responded a minimum of 5', but he suggests bigger for the commercial areas. Bill then asked Mr. Aglio if there is typically a buffer zone behind the sidewalk and Mr. Aglio responded that DelDOT prefers at least 2' (if not grass, then a vacant area between the sidewalks and parking lot) for the maintenance of the sidewalks. Council Member Carmean then questioned who would be responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalks once they are installed. Mr. Aglio responded that the Town would have to maintain the sidewalks.

Treasurer Bunting asked about the utility poles being a consideration since he is concerned about the pedestrian safety and hates to see strollers going around the current poles and going off the curb to get around town. Mr. Aglio commented that the minimum distance around the utility poles is 36".

Vice Mayor Mais thanked Mr. Aglio for his department's efforts in the synchronization of the traffic lights in Town. Mr. Aglio stated that it was not his department but the traffic department, but they will be involved as well with our sidewalk project.

Mr. Aglio encouraged us to keep on this project and if we don't hear back from himself or Ms. Fantini within the next month to contact them.

The meeting ended at 10:41 AM.