

MEETING OF A.C.T. (ASSOCIATION OF COASTAL TOWNS)
FEBRUARY 23, 2018 AT 10:00 AM AT THE LEWES TOWN HALL

In attendance at the meeting table were Lewes Mayor Ted Becker, Bethany Beach Vice Mayor Lew Killmer, Fenwick Island Mayor Gene Langan, South Bethany Mayor Pat Voveris, and CIB Executive Director Chris Bason.

Audience attendance included Liz Keller from the former DEDO – Department of State Division of Small Business, Development and Tourism, Michael Powell from DNREC, Sussex County Councilmember I. G. Burton, Fenwick Island Town Council Member Bernie Merritt, Town Managers Kristy Rogers from Milton, Ann Marie Townshend from Lewes, Terry Tieman from Fenwick Island, Cliff Graviet from Bethany Beach, Tom Roth from Henlopen Acres, Councilman & Mayor Pro Tem Tim Shaw from South Bethany, U of D Sea Grant Coordinator Danielle Swallow, Broadkill Beach Preservation Association President Jim Bailey, Richard Kirschner, a Lewes resident and member of the Lewes Planning Commission who is working on a project to better define the Lewes Marine Commercial District, and U of D Consultant Bonnie Ram who is Associate Director and Senior Researcher for the Center for Carbon-free Power Integration.

Mayor Becker called the meeting to order at 10:05, announced the absences of Mayors Jack Gordon from Bethany Beach, Paul Kuhns from Rehoboth, Dave Lyons from Henlopen Acres, TJ Redefer from Dewey Beach, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming, and acknowledged attendees Liz Keller, I.G. Burton, Bonnie Ram, Danielle Swallow, and Jim Bailey.

Minutes from the January meeting were approved by all after a motion from Mayor Voveris, a second from Mayor Langan, and amendments from Vice Mayor Killmer.

A discussion took place about formalizing A.C.T. Mayor Becker referenced the original charter of A.C.T. that Mayor Gordon had supplied to everyone. Vice Mayor Killmer asked why \$50.00 would be needed per town and noted articles V and VII of the original charter were redundant. Discussion took place about not needing to initially fund A.C.T. with the \$50.00. Mayor Becker said he would make changes to the document in regard to money and redundancy and get back to the group. Councilman & Mayor Pro Tem Shaw proposed developing a mission statement for A.C.T. and bringing that to S.C.A.T. when presenting A.C.T. to them and looking for their support. Mayor Voveris suggested all the Mayors put together their idea for a mission statement and submit this to Mayor Becker in advance of the next meeting. Mayor Becker said he felt the S.C.A.T. legislative breakfast meeting would be an opportune time to address S.C.A.T. about A.C.T. Vice Mayor Killmer stated the issues unique to coastal towns should be emphasized in the mission statement. Town Manager Townshend mentioned the accommodation tax and the fact that coastal towns should address concerns the DLLG did not voice a position. Town Manager Graviet agreed utilizing targeted items would be key to garner support for A.C.T.

Mayor Becker reported on recently attending a Delaware Alliance of Bay Communities (A.B.C.) meeting at the invitation of President Jim Bailey. These communities front on the Bay only. He invited Jim to say a few words to the group. Jim said the association was looking to promote the beneficial use of dredged material and to protect ecosystems and the Bay itself from pollutants inland and would present their initiative to The Bond Bill Committee on May 17. The association would like to ride with A.C.T. and have their support. Jim further spoke to the value of the Bay beaches increasing annually and protecting the ecosystem was very important to crabs, birds, and the economy. Mayor Becker suggested A.B.C. and A.C.T. consider producing visuals for affect.

Liz Keller spoke to the 2016 summary recently completed on the value of tourism, the 4th largest employer in the state. Tourism is preceded by agriculture and government in employment numbers. Liz spoke of DEDO being dissolved in July and now part of cultural affairs with Linda Parkowski heading up the effort.

Mayor Becker asked Chris Bason about the use of dredging material particularly at White's Creek and Massey's Landing where there is a constant need to remark the channel because of movement. Chris said the Inland Bays land on which to place dredging material is decreasing and an operational plan and funding is needed to bolster activity. Mayor Langan pointed out Fenwick Island lost an island and could use dredging material to recreate it. Chris agreed that a plan to reestablish Seal Island was needed to address time and cost. Mayor Becker pointed out ecosystem and tourism were synergistic. Chris said he had a meeting with Representative Gray to learn if legislation is needed to address concerns. Mayor Becker said he felt visuals were needed to identify land in preservations as well as other areas and asked Town Manager Townshend to follow up with her contact on developing visuals.

Mayor Becker spoke to Lewes having to dredge regularly every 2 or 3 years with a cost to the city of \$60,000. The most recent dredging of 7 properties, 1300 linear feet and the Yacht Club, resulted in a total cost of \$220,000 which is quite expensive. The dredging resulted in just under 13000 cubic yardage. A more comprehensive plan is needed to address the magnitude of expense. Lewes has been using a firm out of Maryland and three Army Corps sites for the dredging material and the Yacht Club has been using a site at the University. Hydraulic pumping is used to transfer the dredging material to the site. Mayor Becker said the viability of boating demands dredging. Danielle Swallow suggested a possible partnering with Tourism to develop a plan and Rockport Analytics would be a good contact starting point. Town Manager Graviet suggested a look to the University of Delaware for a macroeconomic look, though he appreciates ecotourism. Mayor Langan said it was important to get to Senator Carper's people with an impact that could result in action.

Chris Bason spoke to the beginning of the CIB process to update their plan which was last done in 2012. He looks for input from all the coastal towns on their interests, intentions, and initiatives. Michelle Schmidt will be overseeing the plan update and would be our contact person to relay information.

Mayor Becker then asked Sussex County Councilmember I.G. Burton about A.C.T. contributing to the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan and I.G. freely offered very good advice saying the timing is perfect because the Council is now beginning updating "The Land Use" portion of the Comprehensive Plan. Mayor Becker said our input ties into our needed mission statement. I.G. said bringing Chris Bason into our mission statement would be important and consider how spoil sites tie into our land use. Chris suggested the County could contribute to the much-needed operational plan. I.G. said we need to educate the County's consultants working on the Comprehensive Plan so they can better focus on meeting our needs.

Mayor Becker then handed out a map put out by the Climate Mayors to repeal clean power and encouraged A.C.T. Mayors to sign on as Lewes and Rehoboth have. Mayors throughout the country have signed on and many are not coastal towns.

Mike Powell updated the group on beach replenishment for Bethany Beach, South Bethany, and Fenwick Island and indicated the work will not start until mid May and he did not have an exact location of where the beginning of the work would take place. There will be a meeting with the Army Corps and DNREC on Monday and he urged the three towns to send representation. Mayor Voveris questioned the timing of the 240 day performance period and Town Manager Tieman said it would end at the end of July or the end of August, depending on the initial date of the contract. Mike further spoke to the dune grass planting in the fall or winter. Mayor Becker asked Mike about the Cape Shores project that was scheduled for fall since the state permit has been issued but not the DNREC permit. Mike said that Cape Shores or Lewes would not be topics of discussion at Monday's meeting.

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 6 at 1:00 pm in Lewes. Mayor Voveris will email all Mayors to learn if that date works for everyone to attend.

The meeting ended at 11:05 am with a motion by Mayor Voveris, a second by Mayor Becker with unanimous support at the table.