

**Town of South Bethany
Meeting Minutes for
Planning for Sustainability and Resiliency
Kickoff Meeting, May 15, 2025**

The first Planning for Sustainability and Resiliency Meeting was held May 15th at Town Hall at 12:30 pm. The meeting was held in partnership with the University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration and the Town of South Bethany. Mayor Dondero opened the meeting by introducing the presenters from the University: William (B.J.) DeCoursey, Dr. Jerome Lewis, Dr. Philip Barnes, Jennifer Reitz, Alex McClellan and Kylie Tugend. Brent Jett, PE, from George, Miles, and Buhr, LLC, was also present. Twenty-two residents were in attendance.

Mr. Jett began with a presentation on sea level rise and discussed its contributing factors. Two causes are the Gulf Stream slowing, which has resulted in less water being pulled off the coast, and more intense rainfall. Mr. Jett stated that Delaware is the lowest lying state in the United States, and Sussex County is the lowest lying county. He also indicated that for each \$1.00 spent on mitigation, \$13.00 is saved on clean-up. According to Mr. Jett, sea level rise is projected to increase between 1.18' and 1.73' by 2050. The intermediate scenario projects a sea level rise of 1.41' by 2050.

Dr. Barnes followed with a discussion on ways to protect the Town by use of "hard engineering" (i.e. raise roads), changing physical infrastructure (i.e. dikes), and altering existing assets (i.e. raise items such as air conditioning units, increasing freeboard, etc.). Dr. Barnes also suggested avoiding the placement of assets in flood prone areas, creating nature areas in flood zones (i.e. Bethany Beach Nature Center), and the relocating assets (i.e. buying lots where flooding occurs and turning them into low impact use).

Survey results were provided, but it was noted that the results are from April 30, and the survey was going to remain opened until more residents had an opportunity to participate. The survey received 292 responses as of the date of the meeting. Representatives from the University were impressed with the number of respondents to date. Some of the suggestions residents would like to see investigated are limiting impervious surfaces; planting more native plants; spending Town funds to mitigate; and constructing living seawalls and earthen berms. Surprisingly 15% of the responses found no issues in flooding.

The presentation provided at the meeting will be posted on the Town's website. A future meeting discussing the final outcome of the survey and 'next steps', will be provided at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Van Horn, Chair
Community Planning Advisory Group

Town of South Bethany
Meeting Minutes for
Planning for Sustainability and Resiliency
Second Meeting, June 3, 2025

The second Planning for Sustainability and Resiliency Meeting CPAG) was held, Tuesday, June 3rd at Town Hall at 9:30am. In attendance were Mayor Edie Dondero, Cindy Van Horn (chairwoman), Maureen Hartman, Bob Biciocchi, and Fred Reitzel via zoom.

Mayor Edie Dondero followed with an update of the most recent survey results. As of that date we have received 421 survey results, and discussed the following survey questions:

1. Question 1 (type of resident),
2. Question 5 (in your opinion how much of town is affected by coastal/back bay issues,
3. Question 6 (how often are you impacted by flooding that impedes roadways or access to your property),
4. Question 4, (what coastal/back bay issues are you dealing with)
5. Question 9, (on a scale of 1 to 5 how familiar you with the term “Coastal Resilience”)

We next discussed holding 3-5 working group meetings and what target groups to invite: attendees at first meeting, Planning Committee, Resiliency Committee.

The next meeting will be held Monday, June 23rd, from 1-3pm.

The presentation provided at the meeting will be posted on the Town’s website.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Van Horn, Chair

Community Planning Advisory Group