

Sussex Preservation Coalition
General Meeting 12/8/2022 2:30-4:00 pm
(In person and on Zoom at Lewes Public Library)

Attendees: Christine Besche, Sergei Boboshko, Rich Borrasso, Bob Callahan, Julie Callahan, Michele Cavanaugh, Barry Denenberg, Denise Garner, Jane Gruenebaum, Jim Henry, Jill Hicks, Donna Hoyt, Marty Lamperer, Eul Lee, Maggie McLaughlin, Jennifer Pearsall, Susan Petze-Rosenblum, Neal Podolske, Theresa Ripley, Judy Rose Seibert, Donna Skibbe, Elaine Simmerman, Cheryl Siskin

Welcome: Jane Gruenebaum

Update on Cape Henlopen Park: Preserve Our Park Coalition, Elaine Simmerman

- Plans for Cape Henlopen State Park restaurant have been abandoned due to overwhelming response from Sussex County citizens
- For details of RFP and plans by La Vida Hospitality go to: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Vg6_rZMIObN64ZkZq1axqwjIZ-ioDsH9/view (see pages 32 -35)
- Preserve Our Park Coalition is committed to working with Cape Henlopen State Park and DNREC to secure funding for needed improvements that are in line with its stated mission (“Our mission is to provide Delaware's residents and visitors with safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities and open spaces, responsible stewardship of the lands and the cultural and natural resources that we have been entrusted to protect and manage, and resource-based interpretive and educational services.”.) and the Warner Grant Land Trust.
- Preserve Our Park Coalition will continue to monitor CHSP activity to stay aware and ready to respond to CHSP plans for changes to the park.

Update on Webpage: Jim Henry

- New domain name and website:
<https://www.sussexpreservationcoalition.org/>
- Features: Calendar with dates of important meetings and events; a list of allied groups; names, expertise, concerns of allied individuals (with opportunity for visitors to add their information); SPC's initiatives; suggestions of ways to get involved; our email address, and requests to be on our email list.
- Please send corrections/information to Jim Henry at spcde.org@gmail.com (put "webpage" in subject line)

Update on Public Integrity Commission: Judy Rose Seibert

- 3 Planning and Zoning commissioners will be up for re-election in 2023: Hopkins, Stevenson, Mears
- Sussex County has no Code of Conduct (unlike Kent and New Castle Counties) to hold members of the Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission accountable for ethics violations. (*Please read footnote at bottom of minutes)
- How to address ethics violations? Specifically, how to remove a commissioner if ethics violations occur?
- Concern: members of the Planning and Zoning Commission have conflicts of interest issues that *should* make them ineligible for their current roles on the P&Z.
 1. Robert Wheatly, Chairman, was president of business development for a general contracting and construction management company. He is now Chairman of the Public Policy Committee for the DE Assoc. of Realtors. He is a realtor who specializes in commercial properties and advertises on his website "As a land use consultant for the last 25 years, Bob knows how land use policy affects property values and how to keep you from getting blown up in the regulatory minefield."
 2. Bruce Mears owns a business "Bruce Mears Designer/Builder."
 3. Keller Hopkins owns Hopkins Construction in Bridgeville.
- Consider signing the petition on the Sussex2030 website
<https://sites.google.com/view/sussex2030-petitions/ethics-standards>

to demand that Sussex County adopts and implements a comprehensive code of ethics.

- Attend Sussex County Council meeting on 12/13/22 at 10:00 when Todd Lawson will lead a discussion on the code of ethics
<https://sussexcountyde.gov/sites/default/files/agendas/121322.pdf>
- Plan is to meet with Todd Lawson, after 12/13, to discuss concerns. Others are welcome to join her - contact Judy Rose.

Understanding How the County Council Sets Priorities: Sussex Alliance for Responsible Growth (SARG), Rich Borrasso

- SARG is focused on the implementation of the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, especially land use, conservation, open space, housing, utilities
- Efforts by SARG to get Council to share with the public their near-term priorities (as defined by the plan) have been unsuccessful as council persons (with the exception of Todd Lawson) do not have respect for the plan (unlike in other Delaware counties).
- Next step: meet with each council person to find out their priorities for the next 12-18 months, match priorities with plan (if possible), inform the public of priorities, and give credit when County acts according to the Comprehensive Plan.
- How to get elements of Comprehensive Plan into law:
 1. Find a council person who is interested
 2. Build a case for interested council person
 3. Council person gets support of 2 other council members.
 4. Vince Robertson drafts ordinance
 5. Council discusses proposed ordinance and votes
- SARG is currently working on a Forest/Woodland ordinance. If interested in joining the work, go to
<https://www.facebook.com/SARGCONNECT/>
- To read the Comprehensive plan, go to
<https://sussexcountyde.gov/2018-Comp-Plan>

Fall 2023 Rally: Sussex Preservation Group (SPC) Jill Hicks

- Big march/rally (500 people?) is being planned by SPC to take place in September 2023.
- March route will be one mile loop. Information tables for different environmental groups will provide public the opportunity to sign up for actions.
- Purpose: to increase public awareness and send message to County Council that public wants Council to take action on specific issues (ie, Forest/Woodland Ordinance).
- Needs: fundraising, outreach, publicity, and many other activities
- To help with the rally, contact Jill Hicks jhicks510@verizon.net

Storm Management Amendment: Denise Garner

- The Stormwater Management Amendment will remove the requirement for stormwater management ponds in residential developments in unincorporated areas of county. Only swales will be required to manage run-off.
- Amendment will decrease costs for developers
- Problems: swales do not filter pesticides and other contaminants; water goes off-site to cause flooding in lower areas; if swales are found to be inadequate, residents are burdened with cost of remediation
- Further information about proposed amendment will be presented by Hans Medlarz soon. **A vote on amendment is expected in Jan or Feb 2023**
- To view current stormwater management plan, go to <https://ecode360.com/8882414>

SPC Organizational Update: Jane Gruenebaum

- Update on progress toward 501(c)3:
Currently in process of obtaining status in order to be able to raise money. We hope that groups that are a part of Coalition can use Coalition's status to raise money for themselves.

- Board has been established and bylaws have been adopted . Board members are: Jane Gruenebaum, President; Jill Hicks, Vice President; Judy Rose Seibert, Treasurer; Maggie McLaughlin, Secretary; Jim Henry, Web Manager; Rich Borrasso, Member at Large. Bylaws allow for 9 members - if anyone wants to join, contact the Board.
- Budget/fundraising: Judy Rose is working on putting together a budget to cover operating expenses (ie WIX subscription, Constant Contact, 501(c)3 application. More information will be shared in next meeting.
- Help needed: Outreach Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, Fundraising Coordinator

*Footnote: Although Sussex County does not have its own Code of Conduct, the County Council's and the Planning and Zoning Commissioner's Rules of Procedure state that they are "...subject to the Delaware State Employees', Officers', and Officials' Code of Conduct as set forth in Title 29, Chapter 28, Subchapter 1 of the Delaware Code." Therefore, violations of the Code of Conduct can be filed with Delaware's Public Integrity Commission

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 12, 2023 2:30 pm at Unitarian Universalist Church, 30486 Lewes Georgetown Highway, Lewes