



Eyes on County Council – September 23, 2025

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Two Sussex County residents spoke to Council in support of Councilwoman Jane Gruenebaum's proposed targeted pause in development.**
 1. Alison White spoke about the work of the Land Use Reform Work Group, said that the recommendations would take time to implement, and urged Council to move forward with a targeted, time-limited pause as quickly as possible.
 2. J Dean Abbott thanked members of the council for addressing the issue of development through the Land Use group. He felt that impact fees should be enacted since they are already used in the other two counties, and spoke in favor of a pause in development while Council considers how to implement the Work Group's recommendations.
- **Gina Jennings** presented on the Broadkill Outdoor Parks and Recreation grant sought for 294 acres on Gravel Hill Rd.

Agenda Items:

- **Vince Robertson** introduced a proposed ordinance for changes in how marijuana stores are regulated: a) stores would be permitted in C2 business districts, and in C3 districts without a conditional use, and b) to reduce the required distance from municipal boundaries from its current 3 miles to ½ mile. It will be introduced first at Planning and Zoning, and on a future County Council agenda for discussion and a vote.
- **Gina Jennings** presented on the Broadkill Outdoor Parks and Trails grant sought for 294 acres on Gravel Hill Rd. It would be funded via a matching grant from DNREC of \$100,000. Sara Bloom then spoke of the plans for the property and said county is working with the Department of Forestry. A one-way entrance to the park will give the public access to the park, is ADA accessible and aligns with the state plan. Council was very much in favor of the project. Mr. Rieley commented "This is going to be a gem. One of the best things done with Land Trust." The resolution to submit the request to finance the Broadkill Preserve passed unanimously.
- **Andrea Wall** spoke about a federal payment received by the County, in Lieu of taxes, from federal Fish and Wildlife; for the Prime Hook National Refuge. The payment was

received under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act. Council voted in favor of allocating the funds to Cape Henlopen school district, Milford school district, Sussex Tech, Sussex County, and Sussex County libraries.

- **Hans Medlarz** spoke about ongoing sewer projects. Council voted unanimously to approve the change and purchase orders.

Old Business

- C/U #2503 to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for a solar energy facility on 33.69 acres in Seaford.
 - Approved by four Council members.
 - Mr. Lloyd voted against it.

Grant Requests Approved:

- Grant requests for Town of Delmar (\$5000), Delaware Manufacturing Homeowners Association (\$1500), and Laurel Lions Club Foundation (\$4000) were approved.

Introduction of Proposed Zoning/Conditional Use Ordinances:

- Change of Zone #2045 – zone change request, from MR Medium Density Residential District to B-2 Business Community district for a 5-acre parcel located on Plantation Rd near Cedar Grove Rd (Postal Lane)
- Change of Zone #2046 – zone change request, from AR-1 Agricultural Residential district to C-2 Medium Commercial district for 1.72 acres in Laurel
- Change of Zone #2051 – zone change request, from AR-1 Agricultural Residential district to C-2 Medium Commercial district for 8.99 acres on Route 13 in Bridgeville

Council Member Comments

There were no Council member comments.

Public Hearings

- Proposed Assessment Roll for Waterside Road Improvements passed unanimously. No public comments were made. Mr. Rieley commented on the strong public turnout when voting for the assessment, and the strong public support.
- **Conditional Use #2476** to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for a masonry business on Hardscrabble Road (Route 20) passed unanimously, after one condition placed by P&Z, regarding gate placement, was struck.
- **Conditional Use #2527** to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for a 95-unit independent care facility on King's Highway in Lewes, between Route 1 and Clay Road passed unanimously.

The landowner spoke in favor of the project, citing the difficulties her family experienced caring for elderly parents.

Attorney John Horner gave an extensive presentation. He said that this is the first use of the supported conditional use. He stressed that the project “checked many of the boxes” on the list of Land Use Reform Working Group recommendations and gave assurances about only removing younger trees (the parcel has some acres of mature trees).

Mr. McCarron spoke about stress on the local fire department and suggested that a per-bedroom assessment be implemented.

Ms. Gruenebaum expressed approval of the project, and asked whether any environmentally friendly building practices, such as permeable asphalt, would be used.

Horner: no permeable asphalt, but there will be a roof garden. Walking trails will be shared with the next door church, and there will be electric vehicle charging stations.

Council Meeting Schedule: Tuesdays – check agenda for timing and location

- Next meetings October 7, October 14

Council Meeting Broadcast

County Council Meeting - September 23, 2025 (12:00 PM Start Time)

Related Articles:

Ocean View council tackles water, impact fees and history:

https://www.coastalpoint.com/ocean-view-council-tackles-water-impact-fees-and-history/article_273a0b52-1a47-5ea4-a1d2-1617dc26b15a.html



Sussex eyes school, fire service fees:

<https://www.capec Gazette.com/article/sussex-eyes-school-fire-service-fees/296615>



Independent living housing plan backed by county P&Z:

<https://www.capegazette.com/article/independent-living-housing-plan-backed-county-pz/295817>



Sussex introduces amendments to marijuana retail store rules:

<https://www.capegazette.com/article/sussex-introduces-amendments-marijuana-retail-store-rules/296576>