



SUSSEX COUNTY
D E L A W A R E

Eyes on County Council – June 23, 2026

Highlight Events:

- P&Z Director, Jamie Whitehouse, reviewed the highlights of the annual report of recent progress related to Sussex County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Full report below, including a link to the report. The comp plan lays out the desired objectives for land use for a ten year period – a critical guidepost. We urge the public to engage in the upcoming 2028 comp plan activities. EoCC will provide information regarding the upcoming public hearings as they unfold.
- Seven students from Sussex Central High School's FFA (Future Farmers of America) group presented a trial run of their "skit" to Council. They are competing in a state contest for possible national recognition. They chose a relevant topic and created a discussion of pros and cons debating the matter. "Is the rapid development in Sussex affecting the Inland Bays?" was their question. Students adopted a role or character (developer, environmentalist, aquaculture farmer, etc.) and made their case. Council members applauded their hard work and performance – providing encouragement for the contest. This was a positive reflection of our young men and women.

Public Comments:

- Caller **Fern Goodhart** raised the question of what metrics are considered by Council for cycling routes while reviewing development plans. Her experience on Rt. 1 and 9 and other roads has been that areas for cyclists are insufficient. Mr. Rieley responded later that these matters are under DelDOT's purview and the PLUS process.

Old Business: *Note: these three conditional use applications were deferred from last week due to the technical difficulties with the broadcast system, they were all voted on this meeting.*

- **CU No. 2053 filed on behalf of Seaside at Lewes & Derrickson Properties** – request change from AR-1 to C-2 Medium Density for commercial use of a 30 acre parcel at the Rt.1 (northbound side) and Cave Neck Road location. This site is adjacent to the future grade separated intersection planned for completion in fall 2029. Gruenebaum had questioned what growth was factored into the traffic conditions, did it include Northstar, etc. The DelDOT representative had not provided the information for this meeting.
Council approved with a 5-0 vote, though Council member Gruenebaum expressed concern that the traffic analysis did not include Northstar, and therefore questions the adequacy of the

plans for the various roundabouts and grade level and improvements; she said that she hopes Council will see DeIDOT address the issue in the future.

- **CU No. 2540 filed on behalf of La Dolce Far Niente** – request for offices, self-storage facilities and boat/RV storage on a seven acre parcel on Rt. 113 and East Piney Grove Rd. David Hutt presented as lawyer for the owner. Currently an AR-1 property. Project would be phased over several years, parcel would be fenced with gated access.
Council approved with a 5-0 vote.
- **CU No. 2604 filed on behalf of Alvaro e. Perez Roblero** – request for usage of the five acre parcel for storage for his landscaping business. Opposition had been made to this request by neighbors, citing safety issues plus complaints of trash/burning waste.
Council denied with a 5-0 vote.

Presentations:

Mr. Whitehouse provided his Comprehensive Land Use Plan Annual Report.

This very thorough report is available online on the County website. (link :[Sussex County Comp Plan Annual Report 2026](#)). Mr. Whitehouse presented to the Council an overview of a document that the County submitted to the State.

We have highlighted some of the important sections of the document.

- Page 2 – **Mobility/Transportation** – the Capital Transportation Program (CTP) that is developed by the state and is updated every two years identifying anticipated capital investments for the transportation network in Delaware. After public input from the public, the County submitted recommendations. The plan was adopted in February 2026. [Capital Transportation Program \(CTP\) - Delaware Department of Transportation](#)
- Page 3 – **Coastal Corridors Study and Monitoring Committee** – This study is focused on identifying transportation solutions for east-west routes in Sussex County... Rte. 16 and Routes 404/9 and between US 113 and SR 1, as well as Redden Road and other local roads in the area. For more information: [Coastal Corridors Study - Delaware Department of Transportation](#) .
- Page 4-6 – This section focuses on the **Transportation Improvement Districts (TID)** in the County that are in effect or proposed. It also mentions the US 9 Corridor Master Plan Study. The state has mandated a planning effort between Sussex County and the Office of State Planning Coordination to define a land use plan for the Corridor Planning Areas before the development of the County's Comprehensive Plan update. Currently there is a survey that people can complete. [US Route 9 Corridor Master Plan Survey | Sussex County](#)
- Page 9 - **Land Use Reform Working Group Final Report**
- Page 11 – **Land Use Applications** by years, which report shows a drop in the number of applications for change of Zone and Conditional Use for the last several years and

another chart on the total number of applications for major subdivisions. They point out that there is a drop in the number of lots proposed this year to last.

- Page 13 – **Economic Development**
- Page 18 – **Stormwater Management Ordinance Updates**
- Page 19 – **Housing**. In this section they summarize the Sussex County Rental Program (SCRPP) and the Sussex County Housing Trust Fund.
- Page 22- **Protection of Lands through the Subdivision Code** - In this section they discuss all the open spaces that have been created by this Code (charts are provided).
- Page 24 – **Legislative Changes Impacting Comprehensive Planning** - the new County Comprehensive Plan must contain strategies to increase community resiliency and address impact on climate change, forests, habitat areas, and wildlife corridors and that the housing element consider anticipated growth areas and encourage new housing growth away from vulnerable areas.

Captioned below is the conclusion section of the report:

The 2025-2026 reporting period has seen solid progress toward the implementation of the Strategies contained within the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The County looks forward to continuing to implement the Comprehensive Plan during the 2026-2027 reporting period.

Work for the 10-year update is due to commence in the 2026-2027 reporting period, with public workshops before both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the County Council anticipated to follow in the 2026-2027, and 2027-2028 reporting periods. Public Hearings on the next Comprehensive Plan Update, along with submittals to the State of Delaware for review by the Office of State Planning and Coordination, are then expected to follow in the 2027-2028 reporting period, to enable the County to be ready for submittal to the Governor for certification ahead of the 10-year anniversary of the current Comprehensive Plan on December 4, 2028.

To further this objective, in June 2026, the Sussex County Council selected consultants to assist staff and Council in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Mike Harmer, County Engineer – requested approval for contracts for various phases of sewer projects. The Slaughter Beach Septic Elimination Program (totaling \$8.1 million) and continuation of engineering support for South Coastal WRF Treatment Process Upgrade and Rehoboth Beach WTP capital Improvement Project (\$238,000). All approved unanimously. [Information regarding the Slaughter Beach Septic Elimination Plan is available in this link: [slaughter beach septic elimination - Search](#)]

John Ashman, Director of Utility Planning & Design Review – requested permission to post notices for Lilyvale Annexation into the Sussex County Unified Sanitary Sewer District – approved 5-0.

Bob Bryant, Airport Manager - requested approval to submit the grant application to the FAA for the new Taxiway Bravo project. The total cost of this bid package 3 (phases 5, 6, 7) is \$6.8 million and the grant request is for \$6.5 million. Approved 5-0.

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Council denied with a 5-0 vote.

Public Hearings:

- Requests for the annexation into the Sussex County Unified Sanitary Sewer Districts for two areas (Northstar and Swan Lake – Fenwick) were approved.
- **Conditional Use No.2577 filed on behalf of Soltage DE Devco – to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for a solar array on ~33 acres on Route 24 west of Millsboro**
This request for solar arrays will provide power to Delmarva Electric in a State Community Energy project, where local residents can receive solar credits on their bills of 10%. 20 acres of the property would be used for the solar arrays and internal roads. They are willing to make a contribution to the Land Trust for the 19 acres of deforestation they will create. Council's main concerns centered on screening issues - the tree buffer and the type of fence used. Two amendments to the request were suggested by Council - allow a fixed knot farm style fence, without fabric screen, and to require a 50-foot buffer on the road side of the project. One resident opposed this Conditional use due to the amount of traffic. The project, with amendments, was approved unanimously.

- **Conditional Use No. 2592 filed on behalf of Soltage DE Devco – to grant a Conditional Use in an MR Medium Residential district for a solar array on 85 acres between Indiantown and Radish Roads in Millsboro**

Similar discussion to the last CU – same developer and same concerns. The owner of the land, currently used for farming, supports this project. There was an amendment to have interwoven fence on the road side of the project for the first five years, allowing for the tree buffer to grow. One neighbor voiced his complaint for the solar arrays affecting his view. This project, with amendment, was also unanimously approved.

- **Conditional Use No. 2550 filed on behalf of Milton DE Solar CSS – to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for a solar array on 30.55 acres of land in on the southwest side of Harbeson Road near Diamond Farm Road**

This plan was revised to accommodate the neighboring property owner's request. The actual solar array equipment was moved to provide a 700 foot setback and an opaque fence on the adjacent side – including the tree buffer. The neighbor is the Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding Center (SDTR). A representative of SDTR, Kelly Boyer, was extremely appreciative of the changes that the company made. [I suggest reading about this organization who seeks to help people with disabilities through riding a horse! [Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding](#)] Council did request using evergreen type trees in the buffer as they will provide screening for all seasons (for all the solar array CU's).

Council approved unanimously.

- **Change of Zone No. 2032 filed on behalf of ELU DeLuca Mid-Atlantic (Tide Pines) – request to grant a zone change from a GR General Residential district to a GR-RPC General Residential – Residential Planned Community (181 units) for ~63 acres southeast of Route 24 and Oak Orchard Road.**

Attorney for the applicant provided arguments in support of the project including: located in a growth area (investment level 2/coastal area), open space of 24 acres provided, 20'- 30' buffers, etc. Council questioned the traffic concerns at the nearby intersection of Rt. 24 and Legion Rd. (American Legion building). Attorney informed Council that a signal light is scheduled for installation in 2027. Gruenebaum made comment that there is no inclusion of affordable housing – which is not required. Council chose to defer a decision at this time.

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

- No meetings scheduled for June 30 or July 7
- Future meetings scheduled for July 14, 21 and 28

Council Meeting Broadcast

- [County Council Meeting - June 23, 2026 AV](#)

Related Articles:

[Solar project approved after accommodating therapeutic riding center | Cape Gazette](#)

[Sussex P&Z approves four residential developments | Cape Gazette](#)

[Shopping center coming to Route 24 | Cape Gazette](#)

[New Route 1 traffic light goes online June 26 | Cape Gazette](#)

[DeIDOT seeks public input on Route 16 report | Cape Gazette](#)

[Huxtable housing bill passes; heads to Meyer | Cape Gazette](#)

Note: Eyes on County Council makes every effort to render events at public meetings accurately. It either explicitly quotes speakers, or paraphrases their statements as accurately as possible. If any representation in these notes is inaccurate, please contact us.