



Eyes on County Council – December 16, 2025

HIGHLIGHTS:

- In the first major test of the 2024 election mandate for the three new County Council members, two of the three new Council members voted in favor of the Belle Mead development application. In favor: Chris McCarron, Matt Lloyd, Doug Hudson. Opposed: Jane Greunebaum, John Rieley. **All five Council members made statements.** Jane Greunebaum, in particular, made a strong, well-reasoned and well-documented argument against approval. **To hear what our Council members said, go to 1:01:33 in the council chambers broadcast:**
[County Council Meeting - December 16, 2025](#)
- After the Executive Session, Council voted for Sussex County to join with Fenwick Island in the lawsuit to contest SB159 and SB199.

Public Comment:

- **Garrett Forshot** (sp?) spoke about his concern that the procedures laid out by the Council are not always followed by the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Department. He gave an example of this lack of alignment with Council motions. He asked that Council make ensure that in the future the Planning and Zoning Department adheres to what the County Council has decided.
- **Kevin Goldsboro** spoke, representing a group called the Citizens Against Solar Pollution. He asked the Council to join the town of Fenwick Island in the law suit led by Jane Brady to contest SB159.
- **Jen Pulaski** also spoke against the US Wind Project and SB 159. She gave reasons that Delaware should not permit US Wind to lay cable and build wind turbines off Fenwick Island. She stated that Council should challenge the bill along with Fenwick Island. She believes that US Wind will not lower energy costs.

Agenda Items:

There were a few items related to Sussex County's ongoing program to eliminate septic systems. Council unanimously approved the following requests:

- **Mike Harmer, County Engineer**, said that he had reviewed the ongoing projects and said the major ongoing jobs are the Ocean outfall and the Kent Avenue pipe re-lining projects in Bethany Beach which resulted in multiple sinkholes requiring emergency work. He requested Council to authorize \$2.5M to cover costs.
- **Mark Parker** asked County to approve \$290,033 for the Love Creek Mobile Home community septic elimination project.
- **Hans Medlarz, Project Engineer** spoke about three sewer projects:
 1. He asked Council to authorize \$28,902 for subcontractor claims related to construction delays on the Wolfe Neck Regional Wastewater Facility Electrical work.
 2. He asked Council to authorize \$33,619 for electrical work on the Wolfe Neck Regional Wastewater Facility.
 3. He asked Council for two approvals in connection with the South Coastal Wastewater Regional Facility Inland Bays Extension:
 - \$1.8M for constructing the pump building.
 - \$2,227,6 00 for constructing the oil piping.
- Bob Bryant, Delaware Coastal Airport Manager, asked County to approve \$32,033 for the unexpected expense of trucking in extra topsoil for the project, a FAA requirement.

Old Business:

- Change of Zone #2001 (**Belle Meade Farm**) – A request to change zoning from AR-1 Agricultural Residential to a C-4 Planned Commercial district for 39.22 acres on Route 24, just south of Mulberry Knoll Road, across from Saddle Ridge subdivision.

Council member **Jane Greunebaum** proposed six amendments to the application, which were unanimously approved by Council.

- Three of the amendments dealt with rental units:
 - 15% of units are restricted for affordable rental units.
 - the 15% must be rented to tenants with income less than or equal to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Sussex County.
 - In the event that more than 85% are rented at more than market rate because fewer than 15% of the units are leased to qualified tenants, the developer or property owner must pay to Sussex County the excess profit, to be used for housing by the Sussex County Office of Community Development & Housing.

- Two more amendments addressed environmental concerns:
 - At least 50% of the forested area must be preserved and maintained by an arborist according to a licensed forester's prescription to maintain understory, native plants and healthy forest.
 - An enhanced sediment capture plan must be prepared and submitted to Sussex Conservation District and Sussex County Engineering Department.
- Another amendment created phasing requirements for infrastructure: the developer must coordinate with DelDOT and provide a phasing schedule establishing the time frame and phasing of the commercial, mixed-use, residential and commercial buildings with construction of off-site road improvements that DelDOT requires as a result of the development. The developer must coordinate with DelDOT such that the required signalized entrance is constructed prior to first Certificate of Occupancy for any residential unit. The phasing plans must be submitted as part of the final site plan.

Next, Council voted on the application.

Jane Greunebaum voted **NO**, citing concerns around infrastructure, safety and precedent. She made the following points:

- She noted that this is the first C-4 development to come before Council for approval, and that minimum requirements defined in County code for a C-4 development state that "the land shall be served by adequate existing or planned infrastructure". Reasons given for approval or disapproval of Belle Mead will be a foundation for future requests, and Council must find that adequate infrastructure exists.
- She stated that testimony by expert witnesses, state agencies and residents convincingly point to Belle Mead's failure to meet this code requirement as it pertains to roads:
 - The Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) submitted by the developer failed to include traffic impacts from large developments, and failed to address traffic impacts at several major intersections.
 - DelDOT has stated that its Capital Transportation Plan for 2026-2030 doesn't include estimated start or completion dates for Route 24 road improvements between Love Creek Bridge and Indian Mission Road. Love Creek Bridge is a major choke point for all traffic on Route 24. Without those dates, the road will remain inadequate for an unknown length of time.
 - The traffic projection for Route 24 if Belle Mead were built is 18,000 daily vehicle trips, which exceeds the capacity per the Highway Capacity Manual. DelDOT's Coastal Corridors Study shows Route 24 already at capacity during off-season times. This data does not support a decision that the roads are or will be adequate to handle the increased traffic.
- She stated that school infrastructure is similarly insufficient with regard to capacity and safety. Two schools are near the proposed development; Cape Henlopen School

District opposes any growth at this time because the two schools are at or over capacity. The school district also raised concerns about safety during drop-off and pickup.

- She raised environmental concerns: the site drains to the Rehoboth Bay watershed. She stated that impervious surfaces introduced by Belle Mead would increase polluting runoff into Dorman's Branch which leads to Love Creek and Rehoboth Bay, and noted that keeping the bays and waterways healthy is imperative to the health and economic well-being of Sussex County.
- She closed with the statement: "At this time, in this place, Belle Mead dangerously burdens an already-stressed road infrastructure, adds to existing threats to our waterways, imperils the safety of schoolchildren, and thus sets a poor precedent for future C-4 applications."

Steve McCarron voted **YES**, stating that Council must consider workforce housing. He made the following points:

- One of the main recommendations of the Land Use Reform Working Group was to address the shortage of affordable and workforce housing by permitting "missing middle" housing types such as apartments and townhomes, which Belle Mead does.
- He stated that mixed use developments reduce traffic by offering the ability to shop and get services without leaving the property.
- He stated that Belle Mead will not be a community where retirees will live, but rather will serve to provide housing for current residents of Sussex County and allow more opportunities to live where they work. He said that the east side of the county should not be shut down to working-class residents.
- Regarding infrastructure, he said that Belle Mead is proposed in a planned growth area as identified by the state and county, and will help fund road improvements by contributing to the Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (TID).

Matt Lloyd voted **YES**, stating that he ran for election in order to stop development in farmland. He made these points:

- The project location is sensible, located on a major collector with direct access to arterial roads; with schools, hospitals, police, and EMS services having the capacity to meet the needs of the community.
- The project is located in a growth area as per the Comprehensive Plan.
- DelDOT has plans to improve the roads in the area: their Capital Improvement Plan (2027-2032) includes improvement in this area and the entrance to the development must be completed before an occupancy permit is granted in the proposed 2028-2029 time period.

- The project provides critically needed affordable housing, and because of this will actually reduce traffic.

John Rieley voted **NO**. He stated that Ms. Greunebaum had done a good job of summarizing the arguments, though he doesn't agree with her environmental concerns and believes the Sussex Conservation District can mitigate any environmental issues.

However, he said that if anything, the traffic problems had been understated. He noted that the project is difficult because applicant has checked all the boxes by doing what they were asked to do where they were asked to do it, but the box that can't be checked by a developer is road capacity- a DelDOT responsibility.

He closed with the statement that he "can't support a project that would overburden even further roads that are already at or above capacity".

Doug Hudson voted **YES**, and began by saying that this development is exactly what the Land Use Reform Working Group asked for: it is in a TID and will have transportation improvements immediately. It is located in State Investment Level 2, and the developer has agreed to save the forest.

He said that he agreed with Mr. McCarron and Mr. Lloyds' comments.

Introduction of new Zoning/Conditional Use requests:

- **Conditional Use #2622** – to grant a Conditional Use in a C-1 General Commercial district to amend an earlier C/U #2563 to allow storage on property used as a campground for the homeless just south of Tokyo Steakhouse on Route 1.

Afternoon Session

After the Executive Session, Council voted for Sussex County to join with Fenwick Island in the lawsuit to contest SB159 and SB199. The vote:

- Jane Greunebaum: NO
- Matt Lloyd: ABSTAIN (he stated that he didn't have enough information to make an informed decision)
- Steve McCarron, Doug Hudson, John Rieley: YES

Public Hearings

- **Conditional Use #2531**, a request to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for an auto repair business on Marshall Street in Milford. There were no public comments for or against. The request was unanimously approved.

- **Conditional Use #2562**, a request to grant a Conditional Use in an AR-1 Agricultural Residential district for 3 multi-family dwellings on Central Avenue, 2 miles due east of Bethany Beach. There were no public comments for or against. The request was unanimously approved.

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

- Next meeting is **January 6, 2026**.

Council Meeting Broadcast

[County Council Meeting - December 16, 2025](#)

Related Articles:

[Sussex County greenlights controversial Belle Mead development](#)

[Belle Mead rezoning approved by Sussex council](#)

[BREAKING: Sussex County approves rezoning of Belle Mead Farm to commercial](#)

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.