

BPW/City of Lewes Joint Meeting Minutes

October 27th, 2025

The Bonnie Osler Meeting Room located at the Margaret Rollins Center

1:00 pm

A. Welcome, call the meeting to order

Mayor Amy Marasco called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. She reminded everyone to please remember to speak into the microphone.

Roll Call

City Council Members,

Amy Marasco, Mayor
Khalil Saliba, Deputy Mayor
Joe Elder, Councilperson
Timothy Ritzert, Councilperson
Trina Brown-Hicks Councilperson

Lewes BPW Council Members

Thomas Panetta, President
Barbara Curtis, Vice President
D. Preston Lee, P.E., Secretary
Richard Nichols, Treasurer
Bob Heffernan, Assistant Treasurer

City Ex-Officio Members

Ellen Lorraine, City Manager
Janet Reeves, Deputy
Alex Burns, Legal Counsel

BPW Ex-Officio Members

Robin Davis, General Manager
Sharon Sexton, Assistant General Manager
Michael Hoffman, Legal Counsel- Zoom

Others

Sue Ellen Blackwood, Dark Sky Committee
Benjamin Hearn, GMB
Andrew Lyon, GMB

President Panetta informed every one of the success of the Household Hazardous Waste Takeback event and the City Shredding event on October 25th and advised the next one will be help in April. Also mentions the WWTF workshop on October 28th.

B. Agenda Review

C. Dark Sky Presentation.

Ms. Blackwood presented an overview of the city's Dark Sky pilot program to the City Council and the BPW Board. Ms. Blackwood reviewed the purpose of implementing Dark Sky Lighting. Ms. Blackwood highlighted environmental concerns and findings including light pollution, types of light pollution, and impact to human health and the disruption to

the ecosystem. Ms. Blackwood stated that 3-7 billion dollars are spent yearly on unneeded lighting.

Ms. Blackwood stated that dozens of the US towns have already received certifications as Dark Sky. The Lewes Environmental Subcommittee developed draft lighting code for town streets and commercial sites. A Night Sky citizen/council team is now studying locations for pilot project, working with BPW to select streetlights for testing, and having a lighting supplier audit existing lighting in potential pilot.

The intent of the pilot project is to:

- Use light only if needed
- Direct light only where needed
- Keep lights no brighter than necessary
- Use warmer colored lights

Next Steps:

- Suggest pilot sites to Council
- Project costs
- If approved, conduct pilots
- Report results

Ms. Curtis: Questioned if the city has passed this ordinance yet? Mayor Marasco responded, it has not been. It was presented to counsel under Mayor Williams where decision was to move forward on the pilot. Mayor Marasco asked Mr. Ritzert about the timing, he advised that the presentation should be ready by December/January. The manufacturer still must do an analysis on current lighting standards which can take several weeks.

Mr. Saliba: Questioned if there has been a type of audit completed to suggest Lewes has a lighting issue and how does it compare to other towns? Ms. Blackwood advised that there has not been an actual audit done and stated that parts of Lewes do seem to be in pretty good shape with lighting. There are a few places that need improvement and gave examples of Lewes Library, and DRBA warehouse. Mr. Saliba questioned if using Cedar Street was eligible for this program? Mr. Ritzert advised he believes they are due to the light infrastructure being maintained by the BPW and owned by the city and not aware of any requirement from DELDOT to have streetlights. Ms. McCabe agrees. Mayor Marasco advised it is topic to be discussed at next meeting with DELDOT.

Mayor Marasco: Requested for more information on the library lighting, Ms. Blackwood advised they are very bright but doesn't think that the city has control over the library lighting. Mayor Marasco advised they have raised the topic of timers and wants to know why the city has no control over library lighting. Mr. Ritzert advised that the way the lights are wired the controls are inside the building and only the library

grounds men have the responsibility for the lights. The city did not require the controls to be on the city domain even though the city pays for the lights. President Panetta advised the city does have jurisdiction over shielding and feels, regardless of where the controls are for library lighting, the city should have a say. Alex Burns, Legal Council for city, will review library lease for something specific on lighting, but as a tenant in general they must abide by all city laws. Mayor Amy Marasco requests to have follow up with library and DRBA.

President Panetta: Stated that 10 years ago the lighting issue did not receive support from city government at the time. Mayor Amy Marasco informs that this council now and under Mayor Williams are for this program they just wanted to have the pilot performed first. Mr. Ritzert also agreed that the pilot was necessary for public education.

Mr. Elder: Questioned if just working with one company will limit our options to all that is available. Ms. Blackwood advised the lighting supplier they are working with is the one who currently works with the BPW and the supplier has a wide variety to choose from, but Ms. Blackwood is not against more options. President Panetta advised of the very good reputation this company has with the BPW and isn't sure they will be able to get a better bid.

Mayor Marasco: Questioned what is the outcome of the pilot? Mr. Ritzert advised that the point of the pilot is to see if there is public support and if there is resistance then that could impact councils' decision.

Ms. Brown-Hicks: Requested confirmation that if there is no public support then this program will not move forward. Mr. Ritzert stated that the pilot will create an informed public, council, and BPW.

Mr. Saliba: Questioned is the Police Department involved in this program since they had concerns with the lighting and it being a deterrent to crime. Ms. Blackwood advised that Lieutenant Lazzato is on the Dark Sky committee and understands the goal is not to get rid of streetlights just to make them smarter.

Ms. Curtis: Questioned if the analysis that the vendor is conducting just for the pilot sites or the entire city. Ms. Blackwood advises solely on the pilot sites

Mayor Marasco: Recommended sharing the documentation from the presentation on what citizens can do be shared to the website.

D. Meeting Items:

Discussion on Economic, Environment, and Resiliency Commission Projects

Mr. Saliba provided an overview of Economic, Environment, and Resiliency Commission.

-Established in early September 2025

- Funded with 1.4 million dollars to have money for emergency weather events and needed resources to recover from event
- Funds for proactive projects
 - Ex: The 20 acres off New Rd that they are considering planting trees with the Delaware State Forestry Association that will be approximately \$8,000 and the city portion would be \$4,000.
- Community outreach on what resiliency means.
- Figure out ways to be back up and running within day/weeks in the event of an emergency
- Wanting to have a member of the BPW Counsel on the project, Mr. Lee, P.E. volunteered
- Would like to establish hazard mitigation subcommittee in a few months
- Reinstate a plan to be ready for an emergency, be as proactive as possible and best protect the community

Update and Discussion Regarding the 4th Street Water, Sewer, Stormwater and Street Project

Mr. Davis states there was some camera work done on existing sewer and stormwater lines on Fourth Street.

Mr. Hearn and Mr. Lyons from GMB presented:

-Sewer: CCTV indicated majority of main is good and will not need to be replaced, evaluation of some realignments as necessary, some water work required, but good news in regards to a cost saving.

-Stormwater: CCTV issues with pipe. Mains need to be upsized, working on the layouts and alignment improvements.

-Water: Working though the layout on the street and reviewing maintaining service during construction.

-Streets: Working with city subcommittee through design options. Narrowed down to 2 conceptual options of layout.

Burton Neighborhood Project

Mr. Hearn and Mr. Lyons from GMB presented additional options and cost per the request of the Board for the remainder of the Burton Neighborhood.

Project includes complete street rehabilitation inclusive of water, sewer, and stormwater.

Costs for streets if completed individually:

- Burton Ave. (Fourth St. to Johnson Ave.) \$1,856,200
- Paynter Ave. \$2,113,400
- DuPont Ave. \$3,545,000
- Johnson Ave. \$1,618,800
- Combined individual totals \$9,133,400

Combined as one large project for remainder of neighborhood:

- Conceptual estimate \$8,402,600
- Estimated BPW portion \$5,368,600
- Estimated City portion \$3,034,000

Mr. Elder: Stated that there are concerns on how street layout will affect homes, driveways, and sidewalks. Recommends having community involvement on the plans for the street

Mayor Marasco: Suggested holding a workshop for those communities particularly involved in project.

Mayor Marasco: Questioned the results of the wastewater impact cost and timeline? GMB responds with cost savings approximately \$750,000-\$1,000,000.00, not a significant time saving due to still having to open the streets.

Mayor Marasco: Questioned the next step from the BPW standpoint on the Burton neighborhood project? President Panetta advised the plan is to work on the SRF loan package to apply in January. There is no guarantee whether we will get it or not.

Mr. Elder: Is there anything that the citizens can do to help create leverage at the state level for funding? GMB advised that they do have a public comment section in their agenda and advised on attaching public letters to project proposal.

Mr. Lee, P.E.: What are the sewer conditions in the other streets, and will this help us financially? GMB advised they have not done any CCTV in these pipes but there is potential for some savings. They do not see a reason to upsize the pipes but pending the CCTV there might be some things that need to be fixed.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

President Panetta stated there will be a public workshop held on October 28, 5:30pm in the Bonnie Osler Meeting Room.

Mr. Elder: When are they going to start building the super structure for the water tower? Mr. Davis stated mid-November early December

E. Topics For Next Meeting

No additional comment

F. Call to the Public

Kerry W Tripp, 400 Park Ave: Wanted to thank the city and BPW for working together to provide clean water for all their streets. She stated that these meetings need to be used for action and as a result, respectfully asks that the combined group act in 1) Agree to replace aging water pipes due to the data that was collected requiring it. BPW advised that they need data to do this and they now have it. 2) For the city and BPW to agree on using existing funds to replace existing pipes now 3) Authorize and direct BPW employees to replace water pipes on remaining streets as part of the Fourth Street project. Residents were advised that if funding were available the BPW would “tack on additional streets” and it is believed that such funding is available for just the water pipes 4) Residents want to act now, they believe that the decision can no longer be made solely in finances. The community has been on the city and BPW 10-year plan for decades and cannot ignore the data provided and must value the decision that Burton residents cannot drink water from the tap.

Brenda Afzal, 418 Park Ave: Showed pictures of water from tap and wanted to remind everyone of what they are still facing. Also showed a picture of tap water from a neighbor on Burton Ave that 6-month prior had a \$5,000 water filter system installed in home. She acknowledges that the city and BPW are working towards a solution but wants everyone to know the severity.

Bill Schmidt, 423 Park Ave: Wanted to advise that he walked out to speak with a BPW employee who was working on a fire hydrant in front of his house and wants to acknowledge that we have great people working with the BPW. He also wants to point out the fire risk due to the feed on the fire hydrant being restricted and the housing being close together.

Mardi Thompson, Tree Commissioner for Lewes: Stated she looks forward to being involved in the project for reworking the streets especially Fourth Street and Market St and looks forward for the opportunity to plant trees.

President Panetta stated that while this is a public meeting, action cannot be taken.

G. Adjournment

ACTION:

Meeting adjourned 2:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Melissa Rowe

Executive Assistant

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Preston Lee", is written over a horizontal line.

D. Preston Lee, P.E., Secretary

Date