Mitigation Committee Meeting

BPW Meeting Room
107 Franklin Ave, Lewes, DE
Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2026, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson D. Preston Lee, P.E., called the meeting to order. He briefly outlined the purpose and anticipated scope of the committee, expressing hope that its work could be completed within four meetings.

2. ROLL CALL

Present:

D. Preston Lee, P.E., Chairperson, BPW Board Member
Robin Davis, BPW General Manager
Sharon Sexton, Assistant General Manager, BPW
Mark Proudy, Retired Professional Engineer
Danielle Swallow, Delaware Sea Grant, Coastal Hazards Specialist
Tracy Hancock, City Ex-Officio, Lewes EERC
Kristina Keller, Office Manager, Minutes

Absent:

Bob Heffernan

Note: Sharon Sexton's official appointment to the committee was pending confirmation at the Regular Board Meeting on June 24, 2026.

3. Review data and recommendations developed by the previous Mitigation Committee

Chairperson Preston Lee provided context for the committee's reconvening: a prior mitigation committee had met in 2022 but was operating on 2015 data. The current committee was formed to incorporate findings from the 2025 climate and sea level rise reports and to assess whether prior recommendations required updating. Reference was made to the approved BPW Board minutes from July 24th, which captured the previous committee's recommendations and the Board's approvals, serving as the baseline for this review.

4. Identify items requiring updating based on most recently available data

The committee discussed the previously adopted design year of 2050 and the sea level rise projection of 1.38 feet used in prior planning, both derived from 2015 reports. Chairperson Preston Lee noted that the most current projections indicate approximately 1.52–1.54 feet of sea level rise by 2050 under the high scenario — a difference of roughly two inches — and raised the question of whether an update was warranted.

Danielle Swallow clarified that observed sea level rise is currently tracking closer to the intermediate-low to intermediate range, with more significant acceleration expected after 2050. She noted that while the high scenario is less probable at present, planning to the high end remains prudent for critical infrastructure such as a wastewater treatment plant, given the long operational life of such facilities.

Danielle Swallow also suggested the committee consider extending the design year to 2060, noting that with the meeting taking place in 2026, a 2050 planning horizon represents fewer than 25 years — shorter than a standard 30-year planning cycle. The committee received this suggestion favorably. Chairperson Preston Lee indicated he would raise the question of adjusting the design year with the county and EERC at the next meetings.

Regarding the county's new wastewater treatment plant at the Wolfe Neck location, Chairperson Preston Lee confirmed that BPW recently executed an agreement with the county approximately three to four months prior. BPW will participate as a customer rather than as an owner. Robin Davis noted that the county will take over operation of pump stations 4 and 8, with BPW maintaining the remaining stations. The new plant is estimated to be five to seven years from completion.

Action Item: Chairperson Preston Lee to raise the potential adjustment of the design year from 2050 to 2060 at the upcoming county treatment plant design committee meeting.

5. Identify potential concerns related to impacts from hurricanes and other significant natural events related to Back Bay Flooding

This item was noted on the agenda for a future meeting. Danielle Swallow was identified as the subject matter expert who will present an update on back bay flooding issues at an upcoming session.

6. Identify other mitigation-related items that the Committee should consider going forward.

Chairperson Preston Lee noted that pad-mounted transformers were identified as an asset class not fully addressed by the previous committee and should be considered in future sessions, particularly with respect to protection requirements as sea level rise and storm surge increase.

7. Schedule next meeting.

August 12, 2026, at 1:00 pm and September 9, 2026, at 1:00 pm

8. ADJOURNMENT.

Meeting adjourned at 10:06, Motion made by Mark Prouty and seconded by Danielle Swallow. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Keller
Office Manager

10/28/20

D. Preston Lee, P.E., Secretary **Date**