

City Of New Castle
Flood Resiliency Committee
Annual Report to City Council
April 2, 2026

In accordance with Ordinance 545, the New Castle Flood Resiliency Committee is providing this report of our activities in 2025.

The Flood Resiliency Committee was scheduled to meet 8 times during 2025. We met 7 times and had to cancel our June meeting due to the lack of a quorum. During the year, 3 members moved out of the Committee (Gail Seitz, Mike Smith, Melissa Pavone) and four members joined the Committee (Florence Smith, Melissa Pavone, Warren Flowers, and Bill Emory. In November, Alice Riehl stepped down as Committee Chair (pursuant to Committee rules). Fred Gallagher, our Trustee representative, was selected as our new Chair.

The committee has struggled a bit to find its footing with the near absence of Federal funding that followed the change of administration in Washington, DC. Many funding opportunities – including one we were in line for - were put on hold or simply deleted. We have tried to maintain contact with those in positions to help us as funding opportunities begin to resurface. Ms. Tantillo has been exceptionally helpful in finding possible opportunities and applying for them when possible. Some of our contacts are listed below:

- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - Stephen Rochette, Public Affairs Officer; Ed Voigt, Government Affairs Officer; Adrian Leary, Strategic Planner; Scott Sanderson, Chief, Project Development Branch. The flooding concerns for New Castle were shared and USACE representatives were encouraging, sharing that they have several programs that might be of help to us. The process is very lengthy and the Corps would probably only deal with our coastal flooding issues.
- Tony Pratt, a former DNREC Administrator, regarding his work to form the Bay Beach Association. As a result of this communication, Ms. Riehl learned that Gov. Myers new DNREC Director, Greg Patterson, is very interested in protecting coastal communities. This knowledge led to a face to face meeting in New Castle in November with Director Patterson, City officials, and Committee members later in the year to share our concerns and issues with the DNREC Director.
- At a Sea Grant meeting, we were made aware of the Coastal Resilience Design Studio, which runs a summer program with students in the Sea Grant's Landscape Architecture Program, to help coastal communities improve their resilience by addressing issues related to flooding. The studio head is Zack Hammaker. Ms.

Tantillo followed up on this and there is hope that we may benefit from this program at some point in the future.

- Danielle Swallow – Coastal Hazards Specialist, Delaware Sea Grant
- Emily Dhringa – AECOM Certified Flood Plain Manager, attended one of our meetings to discuss the HAZUS Report.
- Contact was made with personnel involved in flood resiliency in The Netherlands and as a result we learned about a publication outlining various flood mitigation project across the globe that highlight different ways of approaching this problem. *“Adaptation for All – How to Build Resiliency for Communities of Every Size”* is available from the American Flood Coalition website.
- DelDOT – Stephanie Johnson met with an FRC member to review work done on Rte. 9 in the Three Countries area.
- Kristen Travers, Watershed Stewardship Team Leader and Director of Conservation at The Delaware Nature Society, was contacted by an FRC member regarding the New Castle County Rain Barrel Program. Based on the information shared, the committee decided to pursue ways to bring rain barrels to the City for residents to purchase at a reduced cost. This will hopefully come to fruition in the Spring of 2026 to encourage residents to actively help with our flooding situation – small steps by a lot of people can make a big difference!

Additional education is helpful to Committee members since none of us has a background in what is required to mitigate our flooding issues. We take advantage of seminars and other learning opportunities as they arise. Regarding FOIA – Ms. Reihl, Ms. Gallagher, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Moore have all had the training. Mr. Flowers, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Emory may need the training.

Logistical support and guidance from Ms. Tantillo and the City staff are sufficient for our current needs. The support and guidance we receive from Ms. Tantillo is deeply appreciated.

We do interact with Ms. Emily Dhringa of AECOM when we need the assistance of a Professional Engineer to answer questions and guide decision-making.

After several moves of members in and out of the FRC in 2025, we are currently operating at full strength.

The committee has received some complaints/concerns from residents during our Public Comments time. Several have been about on-going flooding concerns in Buttonwood,

Jacquette Square, and William Penn Square areas. Members have visited the areas of concern and Ms. Tantillo has had City workers out to investigate. Some drains have been cleared as a result. A beaver dam was discovered that may have enhanced the flooding potential. It has been removed. This area continues to need attention.

In addition, at one point in 2025 a resident suggested our committee be disbanded until such time as federal funds become available. He later changed his opinion on that.

Plans/goals for 2026

1. Initiate the rain barrel program in the City of New Castle. Each barrel to be funded equally by the City, A Trustees Community Grant, and the resident buyer.
2. Continue to make ourselves visible to the State and Federal officials and agencies involved or with interest in flood mitigation.
3. Continue to educate ourselves regarding flooding, both inland and riverine. Attend educational seminars when available.
4. Continue to search for possible funding opportunities to meet all or part of our needs related to flood mitigation.

We hope to have a successful rain barrel program and to continue that effort so a Trustees Community Grant will certainly be considered again in 2027. Other grants opportunities, as they come up, are shared with us and requested through Ms. Tantillo for the City as appropriate.

Budget requests: Meeting room/stenographer - \$900.00; funds to support the rain barrel program for Spring, 2027 - \$1000.00; professional development and/or educational opportunities - \$400.00.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Gallagher
Flood Resiliency Committee

