

New Castle City
Flood Resiliency Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 16, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Alice Riehl, Chair
Tish Gallagher
Fred Gallagher
Florence Smith
Mellissa Pavone
Timothy Moore
Bill Emory
William Flowers

Also Present: Antonina Tantillo, City Administrator

Ms. Riehl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Ms. Riehl stated that pursuant to the Committee rules, she must step down as Chair. Ms. Tantillo recommended that appointment of a new Chair be discussed later in the meeting.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Gallagher to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2025 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gallagher and was unanimously passed. Committee members Moore, Pavone, Flowers, and Emory were not in attendance at the May 20th meeting and abstained from the vote.

Discussion of status of requests for funding

Ms. Riehl gave the background of the Committee's work in researching options and obtaining funding for flood mitigation for the benefit of new members. Ms. Tantillo stated that BRIC grants are still on hold, adding that funding may become available this fall and she is working to ensure everything is in order. She noted that the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) are obligated until next June of 2026. Ms. Tantillo sent three Letters of Intent to the Corps under three different types of funding and will follow-up with them to ensure the City is still in line for those grants.

Ms. Tantillo will meet with DNREC Secretary Greg Patterson later this fall to see how the City can partner with the State on flood mitigation efforts. She asked that one or two senior members of the Committee attend as well.

Ms. Tantillo stated that she will continue researching additional funding sources. Ms. Tantillo also stated that the work being done by the Committee is very relevant.

Ms. Tantillo recommended that the Committee meet quarterly or on an ad hoc basis until more information on funding is available, when meetings should be held more often. She added that when funding becomes available the City will probably have to move quickly.

Ms. Tantillo also noted that she would reach out to Danielle Swallow regarding the University of Delaware summer program to draft a plan to mitigate flooding.

Discussion of other efforts

Rt. 9

Mr. Moore updated the Committee on his investigation on the Broad Dike in April. He followed up with the engineer from Pennoni Associates in June and she advised him that there would be a Flood Study soon on Rt. 9. Thereafter, he reached out to DelDOT and was told that the Study has begun; adding that a Letter Noting the Right to Trespass was sent this week to citizens affected by inland flooding on Rt. 9 on the northern side. A survey will be sent out to affected citizens as well.

Mr. Moore also noted he was told the Rt. 9 roadway south of the city was lifted 9". He added that we are in storm season now and he will monitor the area to capture pictures during rain events to submit to DelDOT if the area still floods.

Ms. Tantillo added that in March or April the State did AI generated projections of where flooding would be in houses and on streets. She will follow up with Ms. Swallow to see if the pictures are completed. Mr. Flowers noted that he also has many pictures.

Rain Gardens / Rain Barrels

Ms. Riehl noted that Charleston, South Carolina, initiated the Charleston Rainproof program that provides monetary incentives to encourage citizens to create rain gardens and/or purchase rain barrels as a way to mitigate flooding. She made numerous attempts to contact Charleston administrators to get more information on the program, but to date they have not responded to her inquiries.

During discussion it was noted that the City of Newark has a program offering a free rain barrel to residents. Ms. Tantillo will reach out to the Newark City Administrator for additional information.

Ms. Gallagher noted the Clean Stream Rain Barrel fall program is now open for residents to sign up at <https://cleanstreamchampion.org> to purchase a rain barrel for \$50. She added that the cost is a 66% discount off the retail price.

Discussion of strategy going forward

Funding Sources

Ms. Tantillo stated that she will reach out to the Committee as soon as she has any information on available funding.

Committee Chair

Ms. Tantillo explained that Ms. Riehl will be stepping down as Chair of the Committee after this meeting, and requested that all members consider assuming the position of Chair. Any member willing to serve as the Chair should contact Ms. Tantillo. In response to a question from Mr. Moore, Ms. Tantillo explained the general role of the Chair.

Document Review

Ms. Riehl recommended that Committee members review documentation provided to them and bring any ideas to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next FRC meeting will be held in early November. Ms. Tantillo will send out several dates for consideration.

Comments by Committee members

Mr. Emory noted a number of potential funding sources that he researched and a discussion of those sources ensued. In response to a question from the assembly regarding states who sued for grant funding that was rescinded, it was noted that with regard to the NRCS Grant, the City had applied for funding and was informed it was eligible; but the City did not have a signed contract with NRCS whereas states who sued had received funding. One source Mr. Emory noted that had not previously been considered by the Committee was a HUD grant for mitigation for past disasters.

Public Comment

James Bowers – Jacquette Square

Mr. Bowers stated that the street in Jacquette Square that was redone 20 years ago was not graded properly and now the water runs to the houses and pools farther down the street, which leaves mud on both sides of the street. In the winter, the standing water on the roadway freezes. Mr. Bowers noted that the drain was cleaned recently and that helped, but during rain events the mud still washes down and remains. Ms. Tantillo stated that the City is working with the County to continue cleaning the drain pipe in an effort to resolve drain issues.

Mr. Bowers also noted his understanding that Jacquette Square would be getting the same street lights that were installed in William Penn. Ms. Tantillo stated that the City is looking into funding to extend the lights into Jacquette Square.

Mr. Bowers stated that mosquitos breed in the standing water. Ms. Tantillo stated that the State increased the number of times they sprayed for mosquitos this summer.

Aretha Brown – William Penn Court

Ms. Brown noted her concern with flooding issues at Buttonwood Avenue and Lincoln Street. She thanked Ms. Riehl for meeting her to inspect the area. Ms. Brown asked if the ditch on Buttonwood Avenue could be cleaned out. She noted there is a drain on Buttonwood Avenue that backs up to Lincoln and asked if there could be an extension of that pipe. Ms. Tantillo stated she would look into Ms. Brown's concerns.

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There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Riehl called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gallagher and seconded by Mr. Moore. The motion was unanimously passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer