

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes



DELAWARE
CENTER FOR THE
INLAND BAYS
preserve • protect • restore

DATE & TIME: Thurs., June 12, 2025 at 4 pm

LOCATION: Center for the Inland Bays,
39375 Inlet Rd
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971

Remote: Google Meet joining info: <https://meet.google.com/qji-qzet-pcw>

Meeting called by: Jerry Esposito, Chair

Attendees: Richard M., Dave K., Jerry E., Ken S., Aimee I., Nicole A., Bryan O., Marina F., Christophe T.

AGENDA ITEMS

Call to Order

Jerry called meeting to order at 4:03 pm

Meeting Agenda Review

Agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

Approval of Previous [Meeting Minutes](#)

Previous meeting's minutes were approved - Dave motioned to approve, Richard seconded, vote was unanimous.

Old Business

Development Reports: [April](#), [May](#)

M. Feeser

Marina went over the April and May development reports, noting high single donor donations in April, a new quarterly donation option for donors and that we are tracking processing fees that donors are covering when they donate online. Also went over the beach cleanup which was well attended, with 36 volunteers and a \$520 donation check from Big Chill. Bryan gave details about the Governor's Wade In which is taking place Friday, June 13 at 10:30 am. Bryan will be doing the wade in (not the governor :) and Caitlin will submit a press release after the event to publicize. Upcoming development outreach events include tabling/outreach event at Sea Colony, the Millville Boardwalk Shoey's Adventure event on June 19 (11 am - 1 pm), and the July 9 Bay Banter at Ocean View Brewing Co. (tickets on sale soon).

James Farm Ribbon Cutting

C. Tulou

CT reviewed the event, we had 60 or so attendees to let the public know the building construction is complete, education programs will start to utilize the building, deck, and amphitheatre. Working on a business plan for building use. Speakers included: County Council, Aimee spoke for the board, Christophe for the Center, Gerald Hocker, Ron Gray, EPA. Terrific event overall. Great media coverage on the event.

[License Plate Revenue Over the Years](#)

B. Ochs

Statement of Purpose: The Development Committee of the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a network of Board members, loyal donors, business and community leaders working to achieve the philanthropic goals of the Center through a collaborative effort with the Board and the Center's staff.

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays mission is to preserve, protect and restore Delaware's Inland Bays and their watershed.

Bryan shared the revenue over the years from the license plate program. Last few years ranged from \$10,000-\$15,000 per year. Has been a great, low effort source of revenue over the years.

Cape Water Taxi Tours

C. Tulou

Oyster Week tour (about 40 people), oysters and wine Oyster & Wine Cruise, Monday, Aug. 4, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Cape Water Tours & Taxi — Sauvignon blanc and Inland Bays oysters (Center is beneficiary from this tour) Book on Cape Water Taxi Tours website. Inland Bays Oyster Paddle with EcoBay at James Farm Preserve noon - 1:30 pm, call EcoBay to book (302) 562-4217: (Center is beneficiary, 10% of tour cost)

New Business

Organizing fund raising activities catering to and targeting major donors J. Esposito

CT gave an update on this idea's backstory: identifying large donors who would be willing to host events with their friends to bring in donations to the Center in the midst of uncertain federal funding. Federal funding seems more stable than it has in months prior, still some uncertainty (but more targeted at diversity programs) so our core funding may be about the same amount for next year, our BIL funding approval pending any day now. Need a strategy to explain to donors how we are no longer in survival mode but in order to do the projects to accomplish the Center's goals we still need support. Building resilience in coastal communities may be the target messaging.

Question from Jerry: Do we do ONE major fundraiser at a venue? Or do we target major donors one at a time with smaller events? Do we know who we would invite to this invite? Do all the major donors get along?

Jerry explained Lewes Yacht Club idea - they were excited about helping, could do a big dinner, with a band but still would have event expenses. Ken brought up expenses and we haven't netted much in those type of large events recently. Dave brought up the distance that Lewes may be too far from the watershed. Rehoboth Yacht Club may be a more realistic option for a week night event.

Nicole brought up the fact that not only are nonprofits suffering in the current situation, but everyone is, all business is down, so it's hard for folks to donate/discount venue spaces, hard for businesses to donate as much as they have in the past. Maybe it is more reasonable/profitable to target one on one events for larger donors (coffee, lunch, etc.). More intimate one-on-one conversations. Can go to where the donors are, have a nice lunch/dinner. Ken was on board with the smaller, more intimate events. Maybe the yacht club could donate a luncheon? Jerry will ask. Nicole will sponsor one luncheon also (thank you!). Jerry sent a list of "heavy hitters" that we need to go through and start to get in touch with these donors. CT mentioned needing a compelling story, need to see where we can push the envelope and make the larger asks (\$10-15k). Sustaining funding over the years should come from federal, state, county levels. We were nearly looking at a loss of \$1.6 million/year that we would have had to make up. Nicole mentions we can do these things simultaneously. We can target smaller donations and larger donations at the same time. If we can provide Inland Bays stationary or notecards with a targeted message, committee members can write notes.

Staff action items: need to send curated donor list and messaging to committee members, and follow up with Cap't Dave for fundraising opportunities.

NEXT MEETING:

Proposed for Thursday, August 14, 2025 / 4:00 PM

Next meeting should be sooner than August to go over donor list and who can contact who and get materials for letter writing and give an update on the storytelling piece.

DRAFT

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:01 pm