



## **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Citizen's Cafe — *Drafted Minutes***

### **DATE & TIME**

August 28, 2025 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

### **LOCATION**

#### **Option 1: In-person**

Delaware Center for the Inland Bays office  
39375 Inlet Road  
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971

#### **Option 2: Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83174379002>

Meeting ID: 831 7437 9002

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One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

Meeting ID: 831 7437 9002

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcEQnCJBLu>

**ATTENDEES** 18 (in-person - 14; virtual - 4)

- Meeting called to order by Claire Simmers
- CAC: 8
  - Present: in-person (7); virtual (1)  
Jay Headman, Irene Legiec, Tianyin (Tia) Ouyang, Cheryl Rehrig, Ken Silverstein, Claire Simmers, Richard Watson, Cheryl Winston
  - Absent: (6) Dennis Bartow, Lee Bunting, Gail Dubowe, Mary Kunst, Frank Piorko, Ken Sigvardson
- Public: 4 (In-Person 2; Virtual 2)
- Center staff: 6 (In-Person 5; Virtual 1).

### **AGENDA**

Topic: *Oysters at Work: Nature's Engineers for Healthy Bays*,  
Executive Summary

The meeting began with introductions and an icebreaker activity, presentations about oysters as nature's engineers, featuring speakers Jordan Nally and Morgan Krell. Next was time for public comments, and the meeting concluded with CAC business and Center announcements discussing coastal resilience and community engagement through upcoming public meetings. Jordan, co-founder of Nancy James Oysters, shared his journey from corporate banking to oyster farming in Delaware, discussing the farming process, challenges, and plans for the industry. Morgan, Science Technician, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, presented oyster restoration efforts in the Inland Bays, including construction of a large scale oyster reef, plans for another reef project, and various educational initiatives.

#### **6:00-6:10 pm — Welcome**

Icebreaker Introductions

*Claire Simmers, CAC Chair*

Introduced and welcomed Bryan Ochs, new Deputy Director, [bochs@inlandbays.org](mailto:bochs@inlandbays.org) (302) 226-8105 Ext: 705. Bryan expressed enthusiasm about his three-month tenure at the Center and looks forward to working with everyone there.

#### **6:10-6:40 pm — Guest Storytelling 1**

*Jordan Nally - Co-Founder, Nancy James Oysters*

- **Oyster Farming: From Corporate to Coast:** Jordan, co-founder of Nancy James Oysters, shared his journey from a corporate background at JPMorgan Chase to becoming an oyster farmer in Rehoboth Bay, Delaware. He described the process of starting an oyster farm, highlighting the support from Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the helpfulness of existing farmers. Jordan explained the parallels between his corporate experience and oyster farming, emphasizing the similarities in project management and product development. He also discussed the unique farming method used by Nancy James Oysters and their plans for the future in the Delaware oyster industry.
- **Oyster Farming Challenges and Insights:** Jordan shared his experience setting up an oyster farm, highlighting challenges and lessons learned. He explained the process of growing oysters using a floating long-line system and emphasized the importance of water quality and rapid growth in Rehoboth Bay. Jordan also discussed the need for constant monitoring and sorting of oysters as they grow and the impact of environmental factors on oyster growth and flavor.
- **Oyster Farming and Sustainability:** Jordan discussed the growth of oysters from April to August, highlighting their importance in water quality improvement and the role of the University of Delaware's hatchery in providing sustainable oysters. He explained the year-round nature of oyster farming, including winter ice-breaking, emphasizing the personal touch involved in the process, with each oyster being handled multiple times before reaching consumers. Jordan also described the farming process, including equipment maintenance, harvesting, and preparation, while noting improvements made to the system that have reduced costs.

- **Oyster Farming and Education Initiatives:** Jordan discussed the operations of their oyster farm and catering business, highlighting their involvement in farmers' markets, restaurant deliveries, and community events. He emphasized the importance of promoting aquaculture to the next generation and their efforts to educate young people about oysters and their environmental benefits. Jordan also addressed concerns about *Vibrio* contamination, explaining the strict regulations and safety measures in Delaware, contrasting them with the less stringent standards in Louisiana.
- **Delaware Inland Bay Oyster Farming:** Jordan explained the oyster farming industry in Delaware's Inland Bays, highlighting the four main oyster farms and the opportunity for growth. He discussed the various types of oysters, including wild and triploid varieties, and the effects of water quality and growing conditions on their taste. Jordan also touched on the challenges of importing oyster seeds from other states and the importance of water testing for disease. The conversation concluded with Jordan expressing gratitude for the hard work of oyster farmers and the efforts of organizations like the Center for the Inland Bays in improving water quality.

#### **6:40-7:10 pm — Guest Storytelling 2**

*Morgan Krell - Science Technician, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays*

- **Inland Bays Oyster Restoration Plan:** Morgan discussed the history and challenges of oyster restoration in the Inland Bays, highlighting the loss of wild oyster populations due to disease, overharvesting, and lack of suitable habitat. He explained the Center's efforts in phases one and two of their Shellfish Enhancement Plan, including the construction of pilot reefs and a recent large-scale reef at Pasture Point to protect the eroding shoreline and provide habitat for other marine life. These oysters are not for human consumption. Challenges such as limited habitat, recruitment issues, permitting constraints, and environmental factors were addressed, with plans to create a network of reefs to establish a self-sustaining oyster population.
- **Oyster Reef Construction Project:** Morgan described the construction of a large oyster reef project, which involved building four subunits using oyster shells collected through the Center's "Don't Chuck Your Shucks" program from local restaurants. The reef was designed with reinforced diamond structures and a concrete wall for protection against northeast winds and waves. Morgan detailed the logistics of moving 15 dump trucks' worth of shell and 120 "burritos" made of coconut fiber and shell, with the help of volunteers and specialized equipment. The project was completed with support from various partners, including George & Lynch for transportation, Sovereign Consulting for design, Northland Airboats for shell delivery, DE Sea Grant, and Bayshore Inc. for staging and access.
- **Oyster Production - Nursery Overview:** Morgan discussed the aquaculture process, highlighting the use of Rutgers and the University of Delaware hatcheries for sourcing Delaware Bay strain oysters. He explained the oyster's life cycle, from nursery to lease, and emphasized the importance of genetic strain selection for disease resistance. Aquaculture partnerships include Delaware Cultured Seafood, University of Delaware, Delaware Sea Grant, and Delaware Delicious Oysters. Morgan detailed the monitoring methods, including water quality measurements, oyster density, and recruitment; he

outlined plans to continue monitoring and the construction of the Old Basin Cove reef in fall 2026.

- Oyster Reef Restoration and Engagement: The meeting covered several topics related to oyster reef restoration and community engagement. Morgan discussed the funding for the project, including a grant from DNREC and a partnership with the Nature Conservancy. He highlighted the challenges faced in transporting materials. He outlined the efforts to communicate with stakeholders, addressing questions about the oyster reefs, including potential impacts on property values and aesthetics, and emphasized the benefits of the project for the environment and local communities.

### **7:10-7:25 pm — Public Comment**

No public comments were made at the meeting, and none were submitted via the [Citizens Advisory Committee](#) webpage.

### **7:25-8:00 pm — CAC Discussion & CIB Updates**

- Approval of CAC meeting minutes - April 17, 2025.
  - Unanimous approval of those present of the minutes as circulated with no comments or changes.
- Revised Tree Canopy Resolution Update.
  - Unanimous approval of those present of the revised Tree Canopy Resolution as circulated with no comments or changes.
  - The approved revised Tree Canopy Resolution will be forwarded to the Center's Executive Committee by Claire
  - Claire thanked the CAC working group (Frank Piorko, Irene Legiec, Claire Simmers, Christophe Tulou), the CAC members, and the Center's Board of Directors for their efforts on this resolution.
- CAC "Rare Earth" working group updates
  - Team reviewed and recommended Tree Canopy Resolution authored by Frank Piorko
  - Members supported:
    - Community educational programs at Discovery Bay at the James Farm Preserve
    - Irene Legiec shared photos and video with Jackie Knoll and Lisa Swanger for marketing purposes
    - Docent shifts at the James Farm Preserve
    - Tabling at the Juneteenth community fair in Lewes
    - Horseshoe crab tagging and surveys
    - Field trips at James Farm Preserve
    - Native plant sale
    - Coast Forward Summit
  - Ken Silverstein and team kept up to speed on pending developments in the region that may impact the watershed, shared information.
  - Laura Falvey Armstrong led a group of CAC members through a session on Forest Bathing at the James Farm Ecological Preserve
  - Irene Legiec developed a rough draft flyer/brochure and talking points for

communications with developers on how sustainable practices can increase the economic value of proposed developments'. The goal of the communication is to provide a financial argument that best practices like rain gardens and open space to ensure runoff control and protection of the marshlands will improve their ROI. The Rare Earth team is reviewing the document, and it will be discussed at the next meeting. Google invite to follow. Lisa mentioned she and leadership will review the document, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the Center's multiple efforts related to development, open space preservation and enhancement, and engagement with multiple stakeholders is aligned and impactful.

- Members will be attending the Sussex Preservation Coalition's seminar on Monday, 9/8 at 7 pm EDT
  - Members will attend virtual training sessions sponsored by the Delaware Nature Society, titled "Be an Environmental Advocate." There are 4 sessions to choose from (all the same) from 12-1 pm on 9/5, 9/19, 10/3, and 10/17 (<https://www.delawarenaturesociety.org/activities/education/program-calendar/>)
  - Members are supporting Coastal Resilience Outreach - Tabling (9/9, 9/24, 10/24) and Training (9/4)
  - Team members have signed up for the Annual Meeting of the Delaware Invasive Species Council. The meeting will be held at the Harvest Winery on October 21.
  - CAC members continue to support the Bays to Backyards program
  - Center Updates
    - Southern Delaware Coastal Resilience Project: Meghan Noe Fellows - Estuary Science and Restoration Director, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays. Meghan discussed the Southern Delaware Coastal Resilience Project, which aims to understand community perspectives on resilience and identify potential solutions. She highlighted challenges in engaging environmental justice communities and outlined upcoming public meetings in September and October.
    - Lisa mentioned a yoga event at the James Farm (Sep 18, 6:00 pm) and a volunteer appreciation event (Sep 25, 5:00 pm).
  - The group agreed to make coastal resilience the theme for the 2026 quarterly CAC meetings.
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## **2025 CAC Meeting Schedule**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**In person at the Center and Virtually via Zoom**

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Thursday, August 28, 2025

Thursday, October 23, 2025