

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – Draft

DATE & TIME: Thursday November 13, 2025 at 4 pm

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

Remote: [Use google calendar link](#)

Meeting called by: Jerry Esposito, Chair

Attendees: Jerry Esposito, Aimee Isaac, Patti Drago, Nicole Ashton, David Keil, Richard Mais

AGENDA ITEMS

Call to Order 4:02 pm

Meeting Review

Approval of Previous Minutes

20250814 Minutes Development Committee.pdf

D. Keil moved for approval of the minutes; P. Drago seconded; motion carried.

Old Business

Development Reports

C. Tulou

August 2025 Development Report - (Presentation (169) (1).pdf

September 2025 Development Report - (Presentation (169) (1).pdf

October 2025 Development Report - (Presentation (169).pdf

Annual FY2025 Development Report - (Presentation (169) (1).pdf

C. Tulou presented fundraising reports for August, September and October 2025 as well as the annual fundraising summary for FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025).

Events Update

C.Tulou

Susie Center Dedication

C. Tulou indicated the Dedication event was a welcome and well attended event generating about \$19,000 of donations

Horseshoe Crab Hustle

C. Tulou noted that the Horseshoe Crab Hustle, hosted by Bethany Brewing in Ocean View on November 9, 2025, drew about 350 participants. The Center is the beneficiary of this event and we anticipate a generous contribution from Bethany Brewing/Seashore Striders, who organized the event.

New Business

With staff turnover, seeking Committee advice on managing future development activities, e.g. 3rd party service, Jr.-level replacement, Sr.-level replacement, etc. The Committee shared many ideas and perspectives, but there was no consensus on how best to proceed. The answer is dependent on the Center's needs based on its Strategic Plan (under development) and a development plan which, combined, will clarify the most important skill sets required to meet the Center's goals.

Whether or not to do Decked Out in 2026?

The Committee agrees that further analysis—specifically, a review and cost-benefit assessment of the past several years to determine whether an event redesign or venue change could make a meaningful difference. The Committee also considered the suggestion of one or more smaller events, or multiple events, as a possible alternative approach. That approach could represent a lighter lift for Center staff and potentially yield good returns. There was consensus that at least a subset of Committee members should meet again soon to hash out some of these details and work with Center staff to plan the upcoming calendar year's events.

- If "Yes" for Decked out, what style? e.g. casual at the Susie, or more formal at a higher end establishment

- Preplanning for Native Plant Sale

C. Tulou noted that work is underway among staff from the Center and DNREC to plan for the May 2, 2026 Family Water Fest and Native Plant Sale at the James Farm.

- Expanding the role of Committee Members

There was consensus among Committee members that development strategy should come from Center staff – with advice of the Development Committee. The Committee is also committed to assist on development activities as requested by Center staff taking advantage of members' many capabilities. The Committee strongly recommends that the Center revert to an annual appeal letter in lieu of the calendar annual report and appeal of the past couple of years - and P. Drago offered to pull together a draft letter to help as year end is fast approaching. The Committee also discussed moving to monthly meetings from the current bimonthly schedule. Center staff will send revised calendar invitations reflecting this change for meetings following the upcoming December 10 meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING:

Proposed for Thursday, December 10, 2025 / 4:00 PM

Adjourn 5:30 pm

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.