

Barbee Kiker Comments for Fishers Cove Public Hearing

Lewes Planning Commission 8/21/19

I'd like to begin by thanking you for your service to Lewes. I'm certain the time and study we've devoted to trying to better understand issues related to the proposed Fishers Cove development don't compare to what you do with so many topics on a regular basis.

I live at 608 Pilottown and see the Fishers Cove property from my home. I'm concerned about the potential flooding of 2" to over 6" along the Pilottown edge of the property shown by the AECOM Flood Study in the simulation of a 2-year coastal and 100-year rainfall event (page 27). We have a French drain. I'm concerned the additional water will adversely impact its operation. The proposed development blocks the normal storm water flow away from our home and other adjoining properties. I hope the Flood Study findings that show the potential for increased flooding caused by the Fishers Cove development will be a factor in your final decision.

Currently the city of Lewes has minimum floodplain standards. The National Flood Insurance Program encourages communities to exceed minimum standards for floodplain management. I was alarmed to learn Lewes has the lowest possible score in their rating system, a dubious distinction that we have held since 1992. There are many higher regulatory standards that would help Lewes achieve a better rating. For example standards limiting the number of new buildings in a floodplain as well as standards regulating fill in a floodplain.

When we built our house in 2017 I did not know what I do now. We are at a low point on the west end of Pilottown Road. Our neighbor's yard drained into ours. I remember saying to my neighbor I can keep our water in our yard but I can't keep your water from flooding your yard. (This could be an issue since her water could no longer drain into our yard.) I wish I had known about the detrimental effect of so much impervious surface. I was an example of the traditional mindset. I thought each homeowner was responsible for their own storm water management systems and should contain their own water. As long as I managed to keep the water in my yard all was good. Now I realize how short-sighted that thinking was. Today we are at a point that calls for us to think beyond our own yards and neighborhood. My brother, who is a commercial realtor in TN asked if I was a NIMBY (not in my backyard). I told him NO. Storm water management is the business of the entire community, the entire city of Lewes.

I believe people considering the purchase of a lot in Fishers Cove would want to know the issues we are talking about at this meeting. They have a right to know their home could be in a flood plain and could negatively impact their neighbors. They have a right to know the storm surge from a major storm could come right over their bulkhead and potentially wash out their road. They have a right to know they should expect major costs to maintain their storm water system over time if one can even be developed for the area.

I believe we are at a crossroads in the history of Lewes. One path sees Lewes prosper and deal constructively with sea level rise, storm surge and increasingly ferocious storms. The other path sees Lewes with regular flooding, traffic nightmares, skyrocketing taxes to pay for infrastructure repair projects and no evacuation route.

We want desperately to take that first path and are asking that you please use science and the successful experiences of other similar communities in your recommendations to the Mayor and Lewes City Council regarding the proposed Fishers Cove development. We also urge you to make needed revisions to the Lewes City Code an immediate priority in order to protect and sustain the quality of life that makes Lewes such a special place.

Thank you –

Barbee Kiker

608 Pilottown Rd.