

New Castle Climate & Environment Commission Minutes

October 16, 2025

Attendees: Chair Sharon Morris, Commissioner Ryan Deyarmond, Commissioner Julia Koch, Commissioner Kendall Bakich, and Commissioner Nancy Barnes

Chair Morris called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Council Retreat Update

Commissioner Leland shared a report on the Council Retreat, and the group discussed his key points emphasizing fire mitigation and water conservation. Commissioner Koch suggested highlighting an example of a home with defensible space and fire-wise landscaping, proposing a “Fire-Wise Home of the Year” recognition similar to the garden club awards. The commission supported launching a water-wise education program in 2026.

Community Trash Clean-Up Debrief

The clean-up event was held Friday, October 10th, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., in coordination with the town’s clean-up weekend. Volunteers covered Bruce Road near City Market and CR 335 from Grand River Park to Apple Tree Park. Working with Public Works Director John Wenzel the group identified key areas for trash collection. Public Works provided bags, grabbers, gloves, and safety vests, while Chair Morris supplied compost bags for recyclables. Volunteer registration was coordinated through Kelley Cox at the New Castle Recreation Center, and Commissioner Candrea organized lunch from City Market at a cost of approximately \$75. Commissioner Deyarmond transported 18 large trash bags to town dumpsters, and other volunteers handled three bags of recyclables. In addition to the trash and recyclables, the volunteers also cleaned up, three tires, and one television, receiving thanks from passing community members. Marketing included flyers, social media posts, and local business outreach. Volunteers included four CEC commissioners (Sharon, Ryan, Myrna, Nancy) and five community members.

Successes included scheduling alongside the town clean-up, strong coordination with Public Works and the Rec Center, good volunteer participation, timely lunch, and use of the library for lunch during rain. Improvements suggested include using larger recyclable bags, moving the event to a weekend to attract more volunteers, earlier marketing through the town newsletter and local businesses, and partnerships with community organizations like the Boy Scouts. Additional recommendations include requesting “Volunteers at Work” safety signage or cones from Public Works.

CEC Graphic Design Input

Chair Morris presented a design quote from a local graphic designer for logo, sticker, templates, and website design support.

Motion: Commissioner Bakich moved to approve moving forward with Kataplum Studio Graphic Design for logo, sticker, and flyer template design up to \$500. Commissioner Deyarmond seconded. The motion carried.

Motion: Commissioner Koch moved to make “Guardians of Nature” our tagline moving forward. Commissioner Deyarmond seconded. The motion carried.

Action: Chair Morris will reach out to Kataplum Studio Graphic Design to move forward with the design work.

Proposed Calendar of Events, 2026

Chair Morris presented a proposed 2026 events calendar. Mindy Andis recommended submitting budget requests in September next year. Commissioner Barnes suggested attending a Chamber networking event in January or February to promote business grants. Chair Morris also proposed hosting a summit for local municipal climate and environmental groups.

Action: Chair Morris will work with Commissioner Leland on getting the 2026 budget submitted.

CEC November Work Session Discussion

The commission will hold a two-hour work session on November 20 to discuss our mission and goals, event calendar for 2026, graphic design updates, and a budget report, including the bag fee budget. The regular meeting will follow from 6–7 p.m. Commissioner Bakich suggested sending a survey to CEC members to identify key climate and environmental concerns, goals, and priorities.

Action: Chair Morris will arrange snacks for the work session.

Approval of September Minutes

Motion: Chair Morris moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Bakich seconded. The motion carried.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Bakich attended the “Wild and Scenic” Film Festival and highlighted the fire mitigation film *Fire Forest*. Commissioner Koch appreciated the usefulness of the proposed events calendar. Chair Morris suggested inviting more expert guest speakers to regular CEC meetings.


Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Commissioner Nancy Barnes



Commission Chair Sharon Morris