

To the Voters of Dewey Beach,

The Delaware Coalition for Open Government, the leading “good government” group in Delaware, has pledged its support for reform to the citizens of Dewey Beach and has praised their Mayor, Diane Hanson, for her honesty and strength. They have issued the following statement:

Delaware Coalition for Open Government STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR REFORM Adopted September 12, 2011

The Delaware Coalition for Open Government is greatly concerned about the state of affairs in Dewey Beach. When one applicant for a building permit cannot get its way and six lawsuits as well as a complaint to the Public Integrity Commission result, there is an appearance that the courts are being used to coerce the government of this small town. When a mayor is accused of a conflict of interest while voting against her own personal and financial interest and trying to represent her constituents, it is time to ask what has gone wrong with the system. After our investigation into the circumstances, several aspects of the situation indicate to us an alarming failure of State law to protect the Town from the tyranny of a minority. Also, the Council apparently failed to adhere to the requirements of our open government laws.

In this state, wealth and influence have given some citizens more power than others. That power has been abused in the past, but that generally occurs when people are unaware of what is happening. In Dewey Beach, many people have been fighting to protect their town for years, and yet their government has been overwhelmed by powerful interests.

DelCOG believes the Governor or the Legislature should form a task force on local government to develop laws that will help small towns handle such demands. The courts are an expensive way to resolve disputes arising from government problems—too expensive. Legislative and qualified immunity were fashioned by common law and statute to allow elected officials to do their job. Nevertheless, the attorney for the Town of Dewey Beach seems to have been unable to rescue town officials from the quagmire of lawsuits creatively filed against them. Reacting to the fear they would lose insurance coverage, the Council caved in to a developer allowing him to violate the Dewey Zoning Code. Abuse of the state and town laws is unacceptable to many citizens of Dewey who believe the building permit obtained by violating laws is void. Most residents do not oppose development, but they oppose coercion that produces illegal development.

We trust the courts eventually will learn the truth. Meanwhile, reputations are being ruined. Mayor Diane Hanson is an honest woman and a fighter who has remained on the Council in spite of opponents' attempts to discredit her. We hope she will survive the coming election and be joined by new council members who understand if one bully gets his way, others will try the same thing.

Stand up for justice, Dewey Beach, and the DelCOG will stand with you for municipal code reform.

**Yours truly,
John Flaherty, Executive Director
Delaware Coalition for Open Government**

RESTORE RESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE OF DEWEY BEACH

**VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES YOU CAN TRUST:
DIANE HANSON, JOY HOWELL & ANNA LEGATES**