

Kings Highway, Gills Neck master plan celebrated

Document to aid in future development, improvements in Lewes



Standing at the base of the Freeman Bridge to celebrate the completion of the Gills Neck Road/Kings Highway master plan are (l-r) Lewes Mayor Ted Becker; Gail van Gilder, chair of Historic Lewes Byways; Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach; Sen. Ernie Lopez, R-Lewes; Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton; Dave Stuart, chair of the Historic Lewes Byway logo committee; Michael Hahn, byway coordinator, Department of Transportation; and John Armstrong, senior manager of maintenance with the Delaware River and Bay Authority. NICK ROTH PHOTO

By Nick Roth - October 17, 2016

Lewes' Kings Highway and Gills Neck Road corridor has been much discussed in recent years, as approved and proposed development continues to change the look and feel of the roads.

Those hoping to save the area from overdevelopment and inharmonious road improvement projects may have a glimmer of hope with the completion of the Kings

Highway/Gills Neck Road landscape master plan. The 97-page plan is the result of a joint effort between the Historic Lewes Byway committee and the state's Department of Transportation.

"We are so fortunate to be in a position today to have DelDOT as a partner who we can work with upfront rather than us coming in at the 11th hour asking for changes," said Gail van Gilder, the byway committee chair.

The purpose of the master plan is to promote planning and policies that conserve or enhance the byway corridor while balancing the needs for preservation and tourism and accommodating new development, said Michael Hahn, the DelDOT byway coordinator.

"We do that through context-sensitive design to help retain or formulate byway character that is best suited to the area," he said.

The landscape master plan will now be a component in the planning process as DelDOT reviews and approves future road projects on Kings Highway and Gills Neck Road. The byway also includes all or parts of Savannah Road, New Road, Pilottown Road and Cape Henlopen Drive.

Design elements are intended to calm traffic, reduce sign clutter, promote alternative modes of transportation and offer a better overall experience that enhances the byway's historic, natural, cultural and scenic qualities.

State and local elected officials, volunteers and residents came together Oct. 25 to celebrate the newly renamed Historic Lewes Byway: Gateway to the Bayshore and the completion of the master plan for Gills Neck Road and Kings Highway.

Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton, said the plan is a great step, but it won't solve all of the area's problems.

"We have to continue to work on our end with the traffic," he said. "We are doing very well with the trails, and we're doing very well with the beauty of it, but we need to worry about the traffic on Kings Highway. This is only one step in a long journey."

Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, applauded Lewes' elected officials and volunteers who helped make the byway a reality.



A new name and logo were unveiled at the ceremony. NICK ROTH PHOTO



Lewes Mayor Ted Becker NICK ROTH PHOTO



Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton, speaks about the byway as Sen. Ernie Lopez, R-Lewes, looks on. NICK ROTH PHOTO



“It’s a perfect example of a community and a state agency working together to get things done,” he said. “That doesn’t always happen. It’s not always successful.”

To view the master plan, go to www.byways.deldot.gov (<http://www.byways.deldot.gov>).

Sharing a laugh together are (l-r) Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton; Sen. Ernie Lopez, R-Lewes; and Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach. NICK ROTH PHOTO



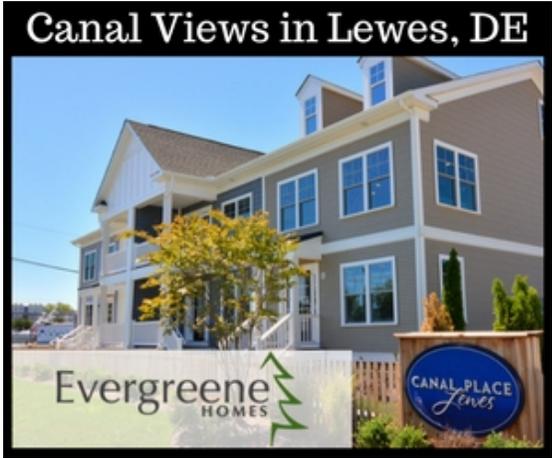
Historic Lewes Byway Chair Gail van Gilder is all smiles as she celebrates the completion of the Gills Neck Road/Kings Highway master plan. NICK ROTH PHOTO



Historic Lewes Byway Chair Gail van Gilder holds up a copy of the completed master plan. NICK ROTH PHOTO

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