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New Castle County Councilmember Jason Hoover Takes Oath of Office on Braiding Sweetgrass

The District 4 representative chose a book about reciprocity and the natural world to reflect his approach to public service.

WILMINGTON, Del. — On November 17, 2026, newly elected New Castle County Councilmember Jason Hoover took his oath of office on Braiding Sweetgrass, a book by Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist whose work brings together Indigenous teachings and scientific knowledge about our relationship with the natural world.

The choice reflected a commitment to reciprocity: the idea that we benefit from the people, places, and natural systems around us, and that we have responsibilities in return. Hoover, a scientist by training, trail runner, and longtime conservation advocate, sees that principle as a guide to public service.

"A forest isn't just a collection of trees. It's a collection of relationships," Hoover said in his prepared swearing-in remarks. "And our communities work much the same way. A community isn't just a collection of people. It's a collection of relationships."

For Hoover, the concept has practical implications for local government. Decisions about housing, development, infrastructure, and public spaces can benefit some people while placing costs on others. He argues that public officials should account for those wider effects, not just the most visible measures of economic success.

"Just because we fail to recognize a relationship doesn't mean that relationship goes away," he said.

Hoover's perspective is informed by years of community organizing. He founded Save the Valley, a grassroots group that worked with conservation partners to protect Beaver Valley from development. The property was secured for conservation in 2017 and added to First State National Historical Park in 2021.

In his remarks, Hoover also applied reciprocity to his relationships with fellow councilmembers, promising to approach disagreement with kindness, respect, and a genuine effort to understand other perspectives.

"We don't need to agree to have a good relationship," Hoover said. "But we do need to make the effort to understand one another."

For Hoover, the oath was a public expression of the responsibilities he intends to carry into office: to consider the full consequences of public decisions, strengthen the communities he serves, and build productive relationships even across differences.

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High-resolution ceremony photos and full remarks available upon request.

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