



Bethany Beach

Landowners Association

March 2012

Message from BBLA President, John Himmelberg

This is BBLA's first newsletter of 2012. I hope you will renew your membership for 2012 or perhaps join BBLA for the first time. Please use the sign-up coupon on page 3. Membership last year reached nearly 1,000 Bethany households, a high for recent years, and 1,236 Bethany residents participated in our 2011 survey. Thank you for record-setting citizen involvement.

This year's survey can be found on a separate page inside and is devoted to policy questions about BBLA itself, in part occasioned by Town Government's decision last year to involve itself more directly in the mechanics of local elections by sponsoring a Candidates Night of its own, in partnership with Coastal Point newspaper. This direct competition with BBLA's Candidates Night, suggests to the BBLA Board that it may want to end its 40 or so years of a BBLA Candidates Night and instead urge everyone to attend and actively participate in the town-sponsored Candidates Night.

Our readers know that BBLA has always encouraged its members to communicate with Town Council members. Our chief reason for being is to provide our members with information about pending issues in Bethany, Sussex County, or Delaware state agencies. You can use admin@townofbethanybeach.com to speak your mind, ask questions, or seek information.

BBLA believes that communication with government, to be effective, has to take place early, be continuous, substantive, interactive and honest. If we, as citizens, do not let the Council know how we feel about issues on a regular basis, we jeopardize our right to commend them, when their decisions are good. When we do not agree, we can contact the Council with our comments which will, hopefully, improve their decisions.

Please help us with this serious reexamination of BBLA's civic role in Bethany Beach by responding to the questions, sending in your answers, your opinions on what is important to you, and of course your 2012 membership dues in the enclosed envelope. As members, your views have to be a central part of our deliberations.

BETHANY'S BEACH SAND REPLENISHMENT COMPLETED

The pumping of an enormous amount of sand (over 450,000 cubic yards) onto Bethany's beach by the Army Corps of Engineers is complete. The last phase of the replenishment project will be implemented by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and includes restoration of dunes and repairs to beach access walkways. Extra sand, already pumped onto the beach, will be used by the state to return the entire length of the dune to the height set by the 2009 replenishment.

BETHANY NEWS AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY FROM THE COASTAL POINT

There are two ways to access Bethany Beach news stories electronically from the Coastal Point newspaper. The paper's website www.coastalpoint.com lists communities in a column on the left side. Just click and get recent news stories dealing with Bethany Beach. You can also continue down that left column, looking for PointMail. By signing up for this free service, Bethany residents can obtain periodic email messages from Coastal Point with stories from the paper. You can pick the stories of interest to you, read them in the comfort of your home, and then comment on them to us and/or town government, if you wish.

BETHANY COUNCIL DENIES SPACE FOR AT&T ATOP WATER TOWER

At its January 20, 2012 meeting, Bethany Town Council voted unanimously to end its discussion with AT&T respecting the communications giant's proposal to attach cell phone equipment atop Bethany's water tower, as an alternative to the proposed new, ugly and intrusive cell tower behind the Arby's on Coastal Highway.

Council members earlier had pledged to consider AT&T's proposal, as part of a community effort to prevent the cell tower's construction on Coastal Highway, but the Council was unable to overcome a series of misgivings about safety, security, and alternate uses of land at our water department's property. In many other Delaware communities, water departments raise revenue by locating cell equipment at the tops of their standpipes.

AT&T will probably use the Council's decision to break off negotiations over the water tower site to press ahead for approval of the Coastal Highway site. BBLA's Board had appealed to the town to make an alternative site available and is disappointed with the decision to end negotiations. BBLA's Board wishes to thank Mike Horne, one of its members, for his professional and tireless efforts to keep Coastal Highway free of ugly and intrusive cell towers.

ASSAWOMAN CANAL TRAIL RECEIVES CAUTIOUS COUNCIL NOD

Bethany's Town Council substantially amended and then approved unanimously a resolution supporting the concept of a recreational trail running the length of the Assawoman Canal. Council members Killmer, Young, Dorfman, and Healy each expressed reservations about the substance of the resolution, including Bethany's potential financial commitment for trail costs, policing, maintenance, safety, and security issues. Privacy impacts on homes adjacent to the trail were also raised. The resolution which the Council ended up approving read more like a simple approval of more planning for the proposed trail. It appeared as though a majority of council members want clear answers to the above concerns earlier rather than later in the trail planning process.

REVENUE INCREASES ARE PART OF UPCOMING BETHANY BEACH BUDGET

Citing cost increases for items within the General Fund (everything but sanitation and water) to keep competitive salaries for police, life guards, and the parking enforcement team, Town Council is looking to raise additional revenues from four separate sources: (1) a 25 cent fee for each pay station transaction, (2) an increase in the fee for a second residential parking permit to \$35, (3) an increase in business parking permits to \$50, and (4) a property tax increase from the present 16.5 cents to 17 cents. This approximately 3% property tax increase will amount to about \$15 per year for a majority of Bethany's residential properties. Budget preparers opted for the additional revenue rather than making service reductions.

BETHANY COUNCIL APPROVES FUNDING FOR FLOOD FEASIBILITY STUDY

Town Council, by a vote of six in favor and one opposed, approved a cash expenditure of \$55,000 as the Town's allotted share of the costs of the next phase of the Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study of ways to ease or end flood damage in lower lying portions of Bethany. Both Mayor McClenny and the Town Manager spoke eloquently in favor of continuing the work of the feasibility study, noting that it would build on valuable information already gathered by the Corps of Engineers with its financial resources and with active participation of town employees. BBLA applauds town government for its encouragement of the study.

BBLA strongly supports this joint venture with the Army Corps of Engineers. It is a logical and promising continuation of work the town and the Corps have been doing. It will build on and not replicate the results and recommendations of several feasibility studies conducted with town financial resources over the years.

It's not just a Pennsylvania Ave study. The study area is the entire northern half of town. It is a goal oriented effort to find a feasible, cost effective project or series of projects that qualify for a beneficial cost sharing arrangement between local sponsors and the Corps of Engineers. Should Bethany conclude, at the end of the feasibility study, that no feasible, cost-effective project(s) can be devised, that decision will conclude the matter. Once the results of the study are fully examined, the Corps of Engineers may also conclude that flood mitigation work on its part in Bethany Beach does not qualify for any of its construction programs.

BBLA hopes to be able to participate in the work of the study and to keep its members fully informed of developments and possibilities - promising ones as well as unpromising ones. This is the best flood mitigation deal the town has ever been offered, and the Council's continuing support for it is greatly appreciated. Don't forget to thank Council members and the Town Manager when you see them.

SIGN ME UP AS A DUES PAYING SUPPORTER OF THE
BETHANY BEACH LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Name and address are on the reverse side of this coupon (please make any corrections)

Bethany Beach Address _____

Best Telephone Number _____

E-Mail Address -----

(If you would like news and alerts in this format)

____ Enclosed is our \$15 for 2012 Dues _____ We are also enclosing a contribution
to help with BBLA's expenses

Comments and Concerns

BETHANY BEACH FARMERS MARKET PREPARES FOR ITS SIXTH SEASON

The farmers' market team reports that the 2012 market season will begin on Sunday, July 1st and finish up, as it has before, on the Sunday before Labor Day, September 2nd. The market's relatively short season is determined by its dependence on lots of produce from local farms, most of them only a few miles from Bethany Beach, and by the dramatic decline in shoppers after Labor Day. Market policy requires its farmers to sell only what they themselves grow, and abundant supplies of most fresh fruits and vegetables from Delmarva farms begin to dwindle after Labor Day.

The PNC Bank parking lot, at the very center of town, has again generously been made available to the market by both the bank and by town government which leases the lot from PNC on weekends. Without the enthusiastic support of PNC and town government, the market could not function as successfully as it has over the years.

Readers who want to help promote attendance at the market and who rent residences during the Summer season can obtain the market's tasteful and unobtrusive refrigerator magnets by contacting Dan Costello at DanCostello2@verizon.net. Dan will send you a magnet(s) later in the Spring. The market is patronized by a great mix of local residents and visiting vacationers. Rental agencies do a terrific job by letting our visitors know about the availability of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. Their helpful support is critical to market success.

Bethany Beach Landowners Association
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Help Bethany Beach
- 2012 Membership Drive Underway
- Annual Membership Survey