



June 2019

1969 — 2019
Celebrating 50 Years of Service to Our
Members and Community

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, I want to welcome our new members and thank everyone who renewed their membership for 2019. Thanks also to everyone who included an extra contribution with your dues payment. Every additional contribution will better enable us to improve our organization efficiency and serve our members and community, to include providing some support for a few worthy causes, such as the Farmers' Market and Operation SEAS the Day.

Your all-volunteer Board of Directors is focused on monitoring new and continuing issues and developments; gathering information; keeping you informed; and presenting BBLA's views on those matters to the Town Council and Town Manager, as well as other government officials when appropriate. Right now, as you will see in the following articles, there's a lot to report.

One continuing issue Board members have recently reviewed and discussed in meetings with the Town Manager is how to protect the Town from ocean, tidal and rain storm flooding. One thing we have learned is that the best options to reduce our tidal flooding problem would involve construction of barriers outside the boundaries and jurisdiction of Bethany Beach. The major players in developing solutions are the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), the Delaware State Legislature and Governor, Sussex County and the Association of Coastal Towns. Our Town Council and Town Manager are well-informed on the issues and alert to them. We will continue to monitor developments and are prepared to add our voice in discussions at the Town, County, State and Federal levels when it will be effective.

Beach activity is ramping up. A sure sign summer is coming is seeing the parking meters and pay stations in operation and an increasing number of visitors. The Town continues to make improvements in the summer beach experience for everyone. For example, the public restrooms in the lifeguard building near the bandstand will be renovated; "porta potties" will be set up in mid-June at the ends of four additional streets at the beach; and more "Mobi Mats" have been put in place at beach access points to make walking easier, a welcome addition for seniors and handicapped citizens.

The Town has planned and organized a wide range of activities and programs for the summer, including weekly music performances at the bandstand and Movies On the Beach. Two good sources of information about the performance and schedules are the Town website and the latest Bethany Beach Calendar. Those sources provide other useful information, including: schedules of special events; Beach Patrol/lifeguard hours of coverage; trolley stops and schedules; important Town phone numbers; and trash pick-up schedules. The trash pick-up schedules are summarized in an item at the end of this newsletter for quick convenient reference.

One date to note on your calendars is Saturday, June 15, the date of the annual BBLA membership meeting. The meeting will be held in Town Hall, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Our guest speaker this year will be our Delaware State Senator, and Senate Minority Leader, Gerald Hocker. With all that's going on, it's going to be an interesting meeting. We plan to have coffee and donuts available to fuel your morning. We hope you'll be able to attend. See the following article for more details about the agenda.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer. We have a lot to be grateful for in Bethany Beach.

Patrick McGuire
BBLA President

BBLA ANNUAL MEETING

The BBLA annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday, June 15, in Town Hall, beginning at 10:00 a.m. All BBLA members are invited to attend. We are fortunate to have our Delaware State Senator and Senate Minority Leader, Gerald Hocker, as our guest speaker this year. Senator Hocker will discuss current issues in the State Legislature, and other issues that affect Bethany Beach. We understand that Senator Hocker will be available to answer questions after his remarks.

The agenda will include brief business reports to our members and election of officers and Board members who have volunteered to serve 2-year terms. Everyone who has paid membership dues for 2019 is eligible to vote in the election; and is also eligible to serve as an officer or Board member. Please plan on attending. We look forward to seeing you on June 15.

TOWN COUNCIL ELECTION

The deadline to file as a candidate for election to the Town Council will be a date in July, which should be announced in the near future. Check the Town website www.townofbethanybeach.com for the date. Three Council Members are up for reelection this year: Joe Healy, Jerry Morris and Patrick Sheplee. If there are more than three candidates, an election will be held in September.

CURRENT ISSUES

Construction Work on the Town Park to Begin This Year

Finally! After years of planning, beginning shortly after the land was acquired in 2004, extensive public input, preliminary work and unexpected significant delays, construction of the Town park is expected to begin sometime this summer. The park is the approximately six-acre property bounded by Route 26 (Garfield Parkway) on the south side, Route 1 (Coastal Highway) on the east, and Central Boulevard on the north.

On April 12, 2019, the Town Council approved a contract for \$1.114 million for construction of the park, to include the design features favored by a majority of property owner respondents in Town-wide surveys and approved by the Council.

In a follow-up inquiry and discussion with the Town Manager regarding concerns expressed at the meeting by two members of the public about the amount of the contract, BBLA Board members determined that the expenditure for the long-planned project would not hinder maintenance or protection of the Town's infrastructure and assets. They are separately provided for in maintenance and replacement schedules and the substantial reserves in the growing Storm Emergency Relief Fund (SERF) and various designated capital replacement and operating reserve funds. In addition, the funds needed for the park are currently available in reserves because revenues from building permits and transfer taxes have exceeded budgeted amounts. As confirmed by recent audits, the Town is in excellent financial condition.

On May 17, the Council approved a supplemental budget for the necessary amount for the project. A start date and schedule for construction will be determined in discussions with the contractor this month. Decisions remain to be made by the Council concerning the design and funding for a pavilion in the park.

Collins Street Pedestrian Safety Project

On February 15, 2019, the Town Council voted unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Town engineer for a traffic safety improvement project on Collins Street. The recommendations included construction of a 5-foot wide pedestrian walkway on part of the Town's right-of-way property on the south side of the street from Half Moon Drive to Kent Avenue. (The Town owns a ten-foot wide right-of-way on both sides of the street.)

In discussing the recommendations and public input, Council members noted that Collins Street has become a busy roadway with a high volume of vehicle, bike and pedestrian traffic. In reaching its decision, the Council emphasized the importance of pedestrian safety considerations and the fact that in providing for a walkway pedestrians would no longer have to walk in the street.

It was later determined that construction of the pathway would not begin until after the summer season. At the Council meeting on May 17, the Town Manager reported that the project will be rebid as part of the bid solicitation for the Town's annual street paving maintenance work. All such work would be done off-season.

Progress in Creating the Town Museum

As previously reported, the historic Dinker-Irvin Cottage on Garfield Parkway Extended will become the Town Museum. At the Town Council's monthly meeting on April 12 and a Special Meeting/Workshop on April 15, the Chair of the Cultural and Historical Affairs Committee (CHAC), Carol Olmstead, reported that necessary repairs, restoration and other work on the home has been substantially completed. Plans for the design and possible exhibits for the museum are in progress. It is anticipated that work will be completed in the Spring of 2020. It is possible that the renovated Cottage, which, thanks to the efforts of CHAC, is now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, may be open on a limited basis for visitors this summer.

Looking for Parking: Consider the Math

It's helpful to consider the seasonal complaints about parking in light of a few relevant facts. (Numbers are close approximations.)

- Bethany Beach population during the tourist season: 20,000 (up from about 1000 during the off-season)
- Parking spaces: 1900 (1130 pay-to-park and 770 permit parking spaces).
- Properties entitled to one parking permit: 2700 (A second permit may be purchased.)
- Residential parking permits issued/sold in 2018: 4605
- Business permits issued/sold in 2018: 595

The Town's efforts to address and reduce the problem to the extent possible include:

- Increasing the number of parking spaces in the downtown business district with the purchase of a lot in the 200 block of Garfield Parkway, renting part of the Christian Church property and arranging for the use of part of the Volunteer Fire Company property for parking;
- operating trolleys, which carry about 40,000 passengers within the Town limits during the summer; and
- establishing a bus stop on Garfield Parkway for buses which shuttle thousands of passengers back and forth from nearby communities.

Notwithstanding the Town's efforts, the numbers are controlling. There simply are not enough available parking spaces for the potential number of vehicles. That is unlikely to change. The good news is that the trolley fare is still only 25 cents.

Budget Approved for Fiscal Year 2020

On March 15, 2019, the Town Council approved a budget for the Town's Fiscal Year 2020, which began on April 1. After several public meetings at the Budget and Finance Committee level, a Public Hearing on March 11 and consideration of projected revenue, operating costs, capital projects, increased summer expenses and other factors, the Council decided, among other things, that increases in the following fees and taxes were necessary:

- business licenses, which have not been raised since 2008, increased from \$180 to \$250 per year;
- rental licenses, which have not been raised since 2002, increased from \$50 to \$100 per year;
- the parking permit fees for shuttle buses, which bring people from other communities, increased from \$500 to \$1000 per year (depending on the passenger capacity of the buses) with adjusted fees for single day permits; and
- property taxes, which were last raised in 2017 (by one cent/\$100), increased from 18.5 cents to 19.0 cents per \$100 of assessed value each year.

The increases reflect long-standing fundamental principles in the Town's conservative fiscal policy, specifically: that summer expenses should be paid for by summer revenue; and that expenses should be fairly paid by all who benefit and not just by Bethany Beach property owners.

Editor's Complaint File: Scantly Dressed Beachgoers

One note remaining in the very thin complaint file from last year started with these questions: "When did so many people stop wearing clothes at the beach?" and "Why doesn't the Town do something about it?" The questions related to an apparent emerging trend in beach attire, or lack thereof. For reasons of propriety, we are unable to provide a full description of the complainant's observations in this publication. We were advised that just looking around the beach, boardwalk and the downtown shopping area during the warmer summer weather would confirm the report. We were unable to do so before the days dwindled down when we reached September, the weather turned cooler and everyone was fully dressed again. We will await further reports this summer.

As to the second question, it is likely that if the Town sought to impose a dress code, it would generate a public controversy, if not a Constitutional crisis. (For example, remember Ocean City's recent experience.) If we were advising beachgoers about what to wear, which is really not our business, we'd probably just ask: "What would your mother say?"

SAFETY AND SECURITY TIPS

Umbrella Safety Tips

Throughout the summer, there will be hundreds of umbrellas on the beach. If not properly secured in the sand, they can be lifted and blown away in a strong wind, creating a hazard. While injuries are rare, even one is too many. To prevent such incidents, experienced individuals offer the following advice:

- Heavier, more sturdy wooden umbrella poles are better than the lighter and thinner aluminum poles.
- The pole should be secured in the sand by rocking it back and forth (rather than twisting it) until it is at least 18 inches into the sand.
- The canopy should be tilted toward the wind.
- Whenever the umbrella is left unattended, the canopy should be collapsed.

Security Tips

In a briefing for the BBLA Board last November on the Bethany Beach Police Department and law enforcement issues, Police Chief Michael Redmon also provided a few security tips for citizens. Those tips and advice from other sources include:

Home Security

- Lock your doors and windows when you go out.
- Cut back shrubs around windows.
- Provide adequate outside lighting.
- Consider security alarm and camera systems.

Vehicles

- Lock your vehicle doors when it's unattended. (First, make sure you have your keys.)
- Don't leave children or pets locked in a vehicle.
- Don't leave valuables in a vehicle overnight or in plain sight when you leave your vehicle unattended.

Bikes

- Secure your bike when it's parked.
- Register your bike with the BBPD.

You've probably heard all this before, but it's worth repeating to prevent theft. For police assistance, call 911 or the BBPD non-emergency number: (302) 539-1000.

SUMMER RULES: ANNUAL REMINDER

To avoid possible fines and the embarrassment of public criticism, property owners should be aware of and advise their renters and visitors of the following rules, some of which are in effect from May 15 to September 30 and others all year.

- Dogs must be leashed at all times. With the exception of law enforcement and service dogs under control, dogs are not permitted on the beach or boardwalk from May 15 to September 30. **Always clean up after your pet**. Note that because of the number of violations of the clean-up rule and the seriousness of the health and safety problem, fines for violations have been increased to \$100 for a first offense and \$200 for any subsequent offense in a 12-month period.
- Official notices have been posted to KEEP OFF THE DUNES, a prohibition imposed to preserve the protective dunes, as well as for safety reasons.
- Skateboards, roller skates and inline skates are prohibited at all times on the boardwalk, bandstand area and on all sidewalks on Garfield Parkway from Route 1 to the boardwalk.
- Bicycles are prohibited on the boardwalk and all approaches to the boardwalk, except between 6:00 AM and 9:00 AM. Bikes are never allowed on sidewalks.
- Smoking is prohibited on the beach, except in designated and clearly marked areas. Smoking is prohibited year-round on the bandstand plaza, the boardwalk, all public playgrounds and parks, the Nature Center and Town Hall.

Other beach rules for public health and safety and non-interference with others:

- Standard-size umbrellas no larger than 8-feet in diameter and so-called "baby tents" no larger than 3-feet high by 4-feet wide by 5-feet long (without grounding wires or ropes that extend beyond the tent) are the only shading devices permitted on the beach.
- No ball playing, kite flying or surf fishing on the beach during life guard hours;
- No digging large holes in the sand;
- No alcohol or glass containers;
- No fires; and
- No one is allowed on the beach from 1:00 AM to 5:00 AM

Trash Collection Schedule for May 1 – September 30

The Town has published the following schedule for trash collection for the season.

Regular trash (twice a week). For Zone 1, every Monday and Friday; for Zone 2, every Tuesday and Saturday. See the zone map on the Town website for exact boundary information <http://www.townofbethanybeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/97>

Residential dumpsters at townhomes will be picked up every Monday, Wednesday and Friday; and commercial dumpsters every day.

Recycle items (once a week). For Zone 1, every Wednesday; for Zone 2, every Thursday. For acceptable and unacceptable items for recycle pick up see <http://www.townofbethanybeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/2486>

Yard waste will be picked up every Tuesday from May 1 through December 31 with carryover to Wednesday morning as needed. Waste must be in heavy-duty paper yard waste bags or labeled containers. Limbs must be tied into bundles no larger than 5-feet in length and 2-feet in diameter. A minimum \$40 fine will be assessed for collections not properly prepared.

Free bulk collections of acceptable items are picked up the last two weeks in April and October, on days the Public Works Department schedule permits. Special collections of bulk items can also be arranged through PWD. Visit the town website for a list of acceptable bulk items.

See the Town website for other details. One other reminder on this subject. Public Works Department personnel would appreciate it if people put garbage and regular trash in trash bags and did not just dump the waste into their trash cans. It would also be appreciated if people did not put their regular trash in the recycle bins. Please be considerate of our hardworking PWD employees who handle the trash pick-up as just one of their many duties in our community.

FARMERS MARKET CELEBRATES 12TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, June 2, the popular Bethany Beach Farmers Market will reopen for its 12th season, and will continue operations every Sunday until September 1, from 8:00 AM until noon.

As in previous years, the Market will operate on the PNC Bank parking lot at the corner of Garfield Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue. Some free parking will be available in an adjacent lot.

For more information, or if you want to volunteer to help, contact the organization by e-mail at: www.bethanybeachfarmersmarket.com.

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

On Monday, May 27, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7234 conducted a ceremony at the bandstand to remember and honor all those who gave their lives while serving our nation in the armed forces. We live in freedom today because of their sacrifice.

For more information about VFW public events and activities see the Post website: www.vfw7234.com.

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