

[Join Our Email List](#)

BBLA Newsletter Special Edition - 2024 TC Candidates Questionnaire - - August 2024



## BBLA Questionnaire for Town Council Candidates 2024



To Keep Members Informed  
of the Town Council  
Elections - 9/7/24 in Town  
Hall - **PLEASE NOTE THE  
FOLLOWING:**

- You do not need to be  
a Town Resident to  
VOTE

**Candidates for (4)  
Open Seats are as  
follows:**

1. Ron Calef (resident)
2. Russell Evans (non-  
resident)
3. Mickey Hinman  
(resident)
4. Rich McHugh (non-  
resident)
5. Bob Rush (resident)

(At least four (4) of the  
seven (7) members of the

- If you won't be in Town on 9/7 - read the other voting options [HERE](#)

Town Council must be residents of the Town, but all may be residents of the Town) [Read More](#)

## Opportunities to Meet the Candidates:

1. [BBLA Coffee Connection - 8/26](#)
2. [Coastal Point's Candidate Night - 8/30](#)

The Candidate responses are listed in alphabetical order - please scroll down to read each of the responses ...



**Below are BBLA's Questions and the Verbatim Answers Received From the (5) Candidates for the (4) Available 2-year Seats:**

### 1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact

What do you plan to do as a Town Council Member to make a significant impact?

### 2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan

The Town's comprehensive plan was completed in 2024. In implementing the plan, how do you propose seeking property owner input in areas of environmental concern, including regional growth issues?

### 3. Beach Replenishment

What are your thoughts on beach replenishment and possible cost sharing with DNREC?

### 4. Working with BBLA

With BBLA having over 1,000 BB property owner members, how do you envision working with the organization on matters affecting our community?

## **1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact**

I will remain active on Council supporting all pertinent issues from maintaining our solid finances, to pressing for safety and transportation improvements, flooding mitigation efforts, preserving wetlands and beach replenishment, as well as supporting businesses, the Fire Department and EMS. Planned projects for 2024/2025 include a new Route 26 north side sidewalk extension to Route 1 at the park with a controlled cross walk on Route 1, North side; as well as a new Rapid Flashing Beacon Cross walk at Difebo's on Route 26. Both should be able to be completed during the upcoming off season. Of course storm water flooding prevention efforts are of the utmost importance for Council and must be constantly pushed. As Chairman of the Stormwater & Flood Committee, we work with the town to implement Flood Prevention efforts including the Loop Canal Flap Dam, Loop Canal dredging and stabilization, wetlands preservation, and of course beach replenishment & protection. The Lake Bethany spit bulkheads and living shoreline are scheduled to be implemented during this upcoming off season. The Flap Dam effort has made significant advances this past year as adjacent community and legislative representative approval were both finally obtained. The project has now moved on to USACE and DNREC permitting, an unfortunately arduous process but one to be pushed hard.

## **2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan**

Being on the Stormwater & Flood Committee, we are continually involved in getting the environmental message out to our community and seeking feedback. Our committee meets every other month during the off season where we have a regional flooding/environmental expert present to discuss pertinent issues to our home owners. These are widely advertised and we normally have a significant in person attendance as well as an online audience. We have had media coverage to include TV and coastal publications coverage. In the past year our committee instituted the "Help Bethany Beach Fight Flooding" initiative where by we promote efforts our citizens can implement on their property to mitigate runoff flooding. We have "A" frame signs and a pamphlet which has been widely distributed since September of 2023 and will continue this effort after the tourist season on weekends and at town events. It is available at town hall and at the museum anytime.

## **3. Beach Replenishment**

My thoughts are that we need beach replenishment regularly in accordance with the current 50 year agreement with the USACE. As for cost sharing, it has been proven and demonstrated to the Delaware Legislature through the efforts of all the Coastal Town's Mayors and through a University of Delaware Sea Grant study that the economy of the coastal towns has truly become the largest economic engine in the state supporting jobs and the economy throughout the state. The cost split is in the process of being adjusted from a 65/35 split to an 80/20 federal/state split through the current "Water Resources Development Act of 2024" initiated by Senator Carper. State funding of the local portion is supported by the Delaware Legislature as it should be. I support state coverage of the local portion as it always has been. Our local budget can not support such costs.

## **4. Working with BBLA**

I am a member of the BBLA and highly respect the work that it does. Being Vice Mayor I regularly attend BBLA events. I also take part with our Mayor and others on Council in open discussions with BBLA members of Town efforts, challenges, and areas needing more attention. We seek BBLA input

## **RUSSELL EVANS**

### **1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact**

Work on improved safety throughout town. Having Police direct traffic at the 2 main intersections downtown on weekends would be a first step.

Understand the Wind farm project and impact to the town, I have heard many disturbing things about meetings that have been held without being transparent to the landowners, not sure what the truth is. I am not an advocate of the wind farm as proposed.

Really work to keep Bethany Beach the Quiet Resort I have been part of the last 66 years.

I will make sure the town is very transparent to the property owners.

### **2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan**

I have reviewed the Comprehensive 2023 plan, and it really needs to have a summary of the key issues facing the town to be shared with all the landowners.

The roads are not keeping up with the visitor growth and all the new homes built in the area – I am not one to want to expand the roads, but something must be done, if we were to have to evacuate there would be issues. This I feel is a state issue, along with our input.

### **3. Beach Replenishment**

I believe the Federal Government pays 65% and the State 35% of the cost currently, with the state exploring to have towns along the coast pay some of the states 35% share. With many visitors coming from all over the state and many other states the current plan is equitable, exploring cost sharing with the town seems to be out of line with the use by all. I would be against cost sharing unless all towns in DE share, not just coastal towns.

I grew up at the beach every summer for the last 66 years, since the dune was put in it is hard for me to enjoy a boardwalk where you can't see the beach or ocean. I understand the dune being needed to protect the town, but it really changed the purpose of a boardwalk visit. Rehoboth has done the same replenishment, but you can still enjoy the view there. Not sure why Bethany's dune is so much higher?

### **4. Working with BBLA**

I will be very transparent with all issues facing the Bethany Beach landowners and really look forward to their input. We as town Council members are working for the landowners and we must make sure all are heard.

I also want to explore having districts in town, so all areas are represented by those who live there, most of the current council live west of Route 1, I would envision having 3 districts, 2 east of Route 1 (North & South of Garfield) and 1 west of Route 1, this way we would have 2 council members in each district and 1 at large.

## **MICKEY HINMAN**

### **1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact**

I think one of the most important ways to have impact in our community as an individual Councilperson is to constantly seek the ideas and viewpoints of our residents, guests, and business owners, typically through one-on-one conversations. I have had many wide-ranging discussions with folks as I walk around town that are typically insightful and thought provoking. They share very openly what they like, what they would like to see maintained, as well as thoughts for improvement. The beauty of this small oasis of beauty that we call Bethany Beach is that being so small really promotes this level of engagement and discussion. I also try to take these learnings back to Council as a pulse check from the community.

More specifically from an initiative perspective, areas of contribution would be:

- Advance the Steel Dam Project for the Loop Canal to help mitigate the flooding issues that are becoming more severe and common.
- Progress on completing the walkway on the north side of the Route 1 and Route 26 intersection and its integration with the south side of Central Park
- Continued leadership on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee as we advance our efforts to promote both infrastructure changes and behavioral modifications through WAVE 3.0 (Wait/Watch, Access, Verify, Enter/Engage)
- Strengthen the partnerships with our neighboring towns/communities. These common bonds and united fronts are critical as we engage with our respective state and county legislatures.

### **2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan that was recently completed by Bethany Beach and eventually approved by Governor Carney is a great tool to help us guide our forward-looking steps as a community, but it is an under-utilized document. While numerous citizens partnered with Town Council on the upgrades and revisions to the current iteration of the Plan, the concern is that it inadvertently gets moved to the “back burner” until a time for a new Strategic Plan is required by the State of Delaware. From my own experience, I did not know a Strategic Plan for Bethany Beach even existed until I joined the Council two years ago and we began working on the current version. I firmly believe that at a minimum, the Executive Summaries of the Strategic Plan are something we can be more effective in sharing and communicating to the residents. The beauty of this upgraded process would allow it to be more of an evergreen effort rather than just a 10-year review statutory requirement.

Given the many challenges (environmental, infrastructure, quality of life, etc.) that are presented by the significant levels of growth that Sussex County has

and will probably continue to experience, it is critical that we partner with all of the surrounding communities and legislatures to try to find a healthy balance between positive aspects of growth and nurturing our “Quiet Resort” vision in Bethany Beach.

### 3. Beach Replenishment

DNREC has initiated a study to look at the increasing costs of beach replenishment along the Delaware coastal communities as well as to try to quantitatively determine the commensurate benefits that are produced because of that investment. Historically the Federal government has funded 65% and the state of Delaware 35%. As a lifelong resident of Delaware, I am not opposed to the efforts by DNREC to understand the cost/benefit relationship of beach replenishment. That is, I believe, a good and responsible governance practice. My concern is that the process that being used by DNREC will be too heavily weighted on the direct benefits portion of the equation and will not fully include the indirect benefits that accrue to having a fully usable and attractive Atlantic beach, really for all of Sussex County. As we discussed in the earlier question, our growth in Sussex County west of Bethany Beach is clearly driven by having access to a vibrant and usable beach.

Based on the currently proposed legislation at the Federal level, there appears to be growing consensus to raise the Federal contribution to the beach replenishment efforts. This is driven by the realization that the whole state receives great benefit from having flourishing and vibrant beach communities. It also recognizes that these required investments are too large to be fiscally born by the small beach communities. Our Delaware State legislators, both in the Senate and House of Representatives, have shared as well on several occasions that they fully understand and support this broader view of benefits derived. My firm belief is that reason will prevail and that the costs of beach replenishment will not be funded by beach communities.

### 4. Working with BBLA

The BBLA is an active and engaged organization that promotes the interests of Bethany Beach, particularly from an owner’s perspective. I would certainly be completely open to having more opportunities to engage with the BBLA in a collaborative manner, both formally and informally. A great positive of our current state is that we have a significant number of BBLA members that also serve on the many committees that are sponsored by the Bethany Beach Town Council.

While the Bethany Beach Town Council has formal responsibilities and commitments to the community, both of our organizations fully champion the concept of enhancing the level of engagement and participation by all in the community. This type of approach is what truly makes Bethany Beach such a special place to either call home or live part time.

**RICH McHUGH**

#### 1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact



I would like to begin by thanking the BBLA and its board for giving me this opportunity to correspond with its membership about the common issues we face within our Bethany Beach community both now and in the years to come. As a former BBLA board member and officer, I am well aware of the many contributions to our community that the BBLA has made and will continue to make in the future. In fact, I still am a BBLA member even if I am mindful of the line from Groucho Marx that he would never agree to be a member of an organization that would accept him as a member! My time on the Bethany town council so far has only deepened my view that we all are stronger working together for the common good of our community. In that vein, I want to address the questions posed to me by the BBLA:

If I am elected to a full term on the Bethany town council, I plan to focus my attention on several projects that are in the planning stage. I think that moving forward with the retractable dam project is of particular importance. The opportunity to greatly reduce nuisance flooding in our community would greatly improve the lives of our residents and even enhance the economic value of our homes. Moreover, moving successfully to lessen this problem would provide a significant advantage to our business community. It will be a classic win-win situation. Another project that I believe is important is the extended sidewalk and crosswalk along the north side of Rt. 26 and at the intersection with Rt. 1. I believe this project would greatly improve safety along that corridor. I plan to work with our incredibly dedicated staff on both of those projects so that we can move forward as quickly as possible.

I would like to point out that recent Census materials suggest Bethany's permanent population is likely to increase over the next decades. That trend will require our town to continue to operate in an efficient yet respectful manner. We are quite fortunate that our town is so well run but the need to maintain that reality is crucial. Our council will need to focus on meeting the needs of an evolving population. Moving forward the town council also needs to focus on making sure our local businesses thrive. To that end, I believe the council and town staff will need to focus on improving our modes of communication among our residents and our businesses (including a continuing reliance on technology). We have made strides in this area already but there always is room for improvement. I believe the town needs to focus on ways to streamline our town webpage to make it more user friendly.

## **2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan**

As the town council and town staff work to implement our recently-adopted Comprehensive Plan, there will be areas for which resident input will be crucial. Areas of environmental concern perhaps are the most pressing and correspondingly probably the most complicated. Our committee structure within the Bethany government, principally the Stormwater and Flooding Committee, present an excellent way to seek property owner input in that area. Of course, all property owners are encouraged to join our committees, attend committee meetings and review town communications on these matters. If situations warrant, open hearings can be held. We need to give folks ample opportunities to present their concerns and their ideas for resolving those concerns. This of course is true for a wide range of town issues. No one has a monopoly on good ideas!

With respect to regional growth issues, affecting growth outside our town borders certainly can be challenging. The town can and should continue to

collaborate with our representatives in the state and country legislative bodies to encourage the adoption of adequate county and/or state policies for neighborhood buffer zones, standards for clearcutting and facility standards (e.g., schools, sewer systems and fire and police protection) to sustain new neighborhoods. Lastly, I think continuing improving and user friendly communications procedures, as discussed above, will help our residents become more knowledgeable and thus more proactive on these issues. Informed residents are more powerful residents.

### **3. Beach Replenishment**

I strongly believe that the town needs to oppose proposals being considered currently by DNREC to impose a local contribution obligation on the beach communities related to beach replenishment. In that regard, the town will continue to collaborate with allies both in Washington D.C. and in Dover to oppose such local contribution proposals and to seek alternative financing alternatives. Even now there is a prospect that federal and/or state legislation could sideline the DNREC study. In my view, the DNREC approach does not adequately consider the economic and social benefits of our beautiful beaches. The many benefits of replenishment initiatives are not just felt locally. Instead, our beaches deliver huge economic benefits to the statewide economy and even to the federal economy in many areas, including tax revenue, business profits and employment. The current cost sharing approach rests on this economic reality and needs to be retained.

### **4. Working with BBLA**

I have been on both sides of a continuing and mutually beneficial dialogue between the town council and the BBLA and as a result believe that we can achieve real benefits for our community by ensuring that this dialogue remains active. I am mindful that a big part of the BBLA mission is to educate its membership and advocate for their interests. Members of the BBLA routinely serve on town committees and BBLA representatives regularly attend town council meetings. Members of the town council and other town staff have appeared in programs sponsored by the BBLA and remain available for these sessions as helpful. Moreover, members of the town council periodically meet with BBLA board members to exchange information and to discuss concerns. I will work to expand those opportunities to meet and discuss common issues that affect our community so that the town council can hear your concerns and vice versa and that we gain mutual benefit from that dialogue.

## **BOB RUSH**

### **1. Plans to Make a Significant Impact**

I plan to work with my fellow council members and town management to ensure we are focused on the issues of most importance and highest impact to the residents, non-residents, and business owners of Bethany Beach. I believe to be the most impactful town council member you must first engage the people you represent or support to gain the awareness of the issues or concerns that are of most importance. It is also essential to share what matters most to you, ask questions to facilitate healthy discussion to ensure common understanding of any varying points of view, and, most importantly, be transparent when making decisions as to why you believe your decision is in the best interest of those you represent or support.

### **2. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan**



Building off my response to the first question, this comes down to making sure that I, as a Town Council member, am comfortable that the existing communication channels and forums put in place by the Town continue to provide the opportunity for property owners' points of view to be heard, discussed, and understood.

### 3. Beach Replenishment

I fully support beach replenishment given the importance it has in protecting and growing the economic standing of Bethany Beach, the county, neighboring towns and the State. DNREC's cost sharing proposal is just flat out wrong, and I do not support it. Given Bethany's broad economic impact and considering the substantial annual investment that the Town makes to provide infrastructure and management of the excellent public services it does, I believe DNREC should be requesting Federal, State, or County for the funding to solve the beach replenishment issue instead of unfairly burdening the property owners, businesses, and visitors of Bethany Beach.

### 4. Working with BBLA

As a Council Member and BBLA Member, I plan on leveraging existing formal and informal channels in place for opportunities to work collaboratively to address current and future challenges of Bethany Beach.



**The BBLA Board of Directors thanks the Candidates for participating in the BBLA Questionnaire - Having Informed Voters is Our Goal!**

Bethany Beach Landowners Association | PO Box 401, Bethany Beach, DE 19930

[Unsubscribe chrislorence68@gmail.com](mailto:unsubscribe_chrislorence68@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [info@bbla.us](mailto:info@bbla.us) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!