

**Minutes of Annual Membership Meeting  
Bethany Beach Landowners Association  
Saturday, June 27, 2015  
South Coastal Library**

Guest: Senator Tom Carper.

Board Present: Diane Fogash, Jerry Hardiman, Mike Horne, Pat McGuire, Jerry Morris, Doug Mowrey, Tracy Mulligan, Margaret Young, Robin Baxter.

Board not present: Martin Decre, Larry Fishel, John Himmelberg, Claire Loftus.

Other BBLA members and guests.

10:00 Call to Order by President Mike Horne

1. President's Welcome: Horne thanked members and guests for attending.

2. Nominations and Elections:

Tracy Mulligan, Nominating Committee Chair, reported that while the Bylaws specify that the Board shall be comprised of between 9 and 21 members, the Board considers 12 – 14 members to be an optimum size. He noted that three immediate past members would no longer be able to continue to serve: Leo Iliadis, John Schmidlein, and Steve Wode; and expressed the Board's appreciation for their service. Mulligan then put forward the following BBLA members in good standing, and who have made a commitment to serve the BBLA, to be elected to the BBLA Board of Directors for two year terms expiring in June 2017:

Currently serving Board members:

Jerry Hardiman

Claire Loftus

Patrick McGuire (and to be elected to continue as Treasurer)

New Board members: (all currently serving interim appointments to the Board)

Martin Decre

Larry Fishel

Diane Fogash

The floor was opened for additional nominations; there were none. A motion was made and seconded to elect the nominated directors and officer.

**VOTE: Unanimous election of the above directors and officer.**

Mulligan noted that those members interested in serving on the Board of Directors should make their interest known, as all are welcome.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2014 Annual Membership Meeting:

Approval of the 2014 Minutes was moved and seconded.

**VOTE: Unanimous approval of the Minutes of the 2014 Annual Membership Meeting.**

4. Membership Secretary's Report:

Jerry Morris reported that out of 2800 residential properties in the Town of Bethany Beach, owners of 1138 are now members of BBLA, representing 41% of the properties, 274 full-time

residents, and 2160 votes. This is a substantial increase over the membership's 1022 properties in 2014.

#### 5. Treasurer's Report:

According to Patrick McGuire, the BBLA's net asset value has been steadily increasing, and projected the end-of-year net assets to be close to \$40,000.00. As part of good financial stewardship, during the last 12 months when BBLA's two CDs matured, the assets they represented were moved to a Business Premium Money Market, which both allows liquidity and is interest bearing. The CD's rate of return had been extremely low, and carried fees, so this change is financially advantageous to BBLA. During the past year the booklet, *A Walk Through History*, was printed and distributed, and a copy is available to any member who did not yet receive one. Membership dues remain at \$15.00 annually, and McGuire thanked the many members who make an extra donation when joining or renewing their memberships. Thanks to their generosity, these donations make up more than a quarter of BBLA's revenue. He also highlighted one of the local charitable organizations which has received support from BBLA, Operation SEAs the Day. The group is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Ocean View which provides a beach week retreat in Bethany for 35 wounded veterans and their families. Much of the Bethany community participates in this event, and BBLA's donations of \$1,400.00 and \$2,000.00 in 2014 and 2015, respectively, have been of significant assistance in the group's annual budget of about \$8,000.00.

#### 6. Donations Policy Committee:

Committee Chair Doug Mowrey discussed BBLA's tradition of supporting local organizations that enhance Bethany and the wellbeing of Bethany's homeowners. He described the work of the Committee which applies policy guidelines and recommends charitable organizations for the Board to consider supporting. Recently the Board provided donations to Justin's Beach House, in addition to Operation SEAs the Day. Horne noted that in the past, BBLA has supported entities such as the South Coastal Library, the Bethany Beach Volunteer Fire Department, and the Fourth of July Parade Committee (the latter is now managed by the Town).

#### 7. Guest Speaker: Senator Tom Carper:

BBLA President Horne introduced Senator Carper, noting that he is well known and well-regarded in Bethany, and thanked him for his strong support for the Town. Senator Carper mentioned many of his connections to Bethany and recalled the recent ribbon-cutting celebration for the improvements to Garfield Parkway. One of his proudest achievements has been nurturing the economy in Delaware to strengthen job creation and job retention. He described three crucial sectors: agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, and for each provided a summary of developments, issues and ideas. He related transportation and infrastructure issues, and described the relationship of funding and investment. Specific local successes such as the Georgetown Air Park demonstrate his view of the private sector being aided by government to promote job growth. Senator Carper took questions from the audience on subjects including international aid to the Kurdish people, transportation funding, beach replenishment, tax reform, and the potential for a Wilmington airport. He was praised for his support of the Bethany Beach Volunteer Fire Department and his straight talk, and received an ovation in thanks for his time with BBLA and his efforts for Bethany and Delaware.

#### 8. Report on Advocacy Efforts:

One of BBLA's most important duties, Horne noted, is advocacy to the Town Council and other entities regarding members' views, which in turn requires keeping the members informed and learning the members' concerns and opinions. Horne summarized several areas of advocacy the BBLA engaged in during the past year:

- The purchase by the Town of the real estate parcel on Garfield Parkway adjacent to the PNC parking lot where the Farmers Market is held. The Board utilized the new ability to poll members electronically and was able to communicate members' views rapidly to the Council, which was well-received and effective.
- Proposals for a SERF (Storm Emergency Relief Fund) are being studied by the Town Council and the BBLA Board has supported the concept, is monitoring the discussions and will be providing information as it is forthcoming.
- The AT&T cellular tower controversy seems to have ended, and contrary to BBLA's efforts, it appears that judicial intervention will allow the permanent tower to be built.

#### 9. Newsletter Editor's Report:

Jerry Hardiman described the newsletter's purpose as gathering and disseminating information to members four times per year, with occasional surveys of the membership, and an issue dedicated to informing members about candidates for Town Council ahead of each election. Hardiman then opened the floor for members to suggest topics they would like to see covered in the newsletter. Suggestions included: Flood control, the new Neff property parkland, information and statistics regarding the Bethany Beach Volunteer Fire Department, SERF and fundraising ideas for such a fund, 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks safety, and issues relating to the new hotel, such as parking, congestion, and tax revenues. Hardiman thanked Claire Loftus and Doug Mowrey for their work creating the new promotional/informational BBLA brochure.

#### 10. Electronic Communications and Website Report:

Communication is a prime responsibility of the BBLA, and Mulligan reported that in the past year visitors to the BBLA website have increased by 50%. Recent efforts and improvements have allowed online access to newsletters and other current information. A new password-protected page for Board members allows electronic records-keeping for records preservation and for Board reference. BBLA uses a contractor to keep the website running and the information backed up and secure. The Board has the ability to send emails to the membership, which it intends to do on an infrequent basis so as to preserve the current 60-70% "open" rate for BBLA emails. The new electronic systems allows surveys of the membership, with one vote per member email address, and far easier and more rapid tallying of responses. Mulligan invited any member with an interest in the website and electronic records to speak with him, as participation is welcomed. A member praised the improvements in the website and communications.

#### 15. Adjournment:

After a motion was made and seconded, a **VOTE was unanimous to adjourn** and the BBLA 2015 Annual Meeting was adjourned at noon.

Attachments to these Minutes include: An Agenda, the attendance sign-in sheet, the Minutes from the 2014 Annual Meeting, the Treasurer's Report, and the Membership Report.