



January 2017

BBLA Board Note: Due to page limitations for the January membership solicitation mailing, this is an abbreviated newsletter. It provides information on a few developments since the November newsletter.

Beach Replenishment Efforts Continue

As previously reported, Bethany Beach has been scheduled for replenishment by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in 2017, for the purpose of “flood and coastal storm damage reduction.” However, the project is dependent upon the Federal budget and funding process. Among other necessary steps in that process, allocation of sufficient funds in the USACE “workplan” for the year is essential for implementation. On October 3, 2016, the Delaware Congressional delegation, in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, strongly supported the allocation of \$12.5 million for Delaware beach and coastal projects in the 2017 work plan, to include \$6.65 million for Bethany Beach.

Since this is a vital issue for beach communities and the state, elected officials and staff of Bethany Beach, South Bethany, Fenwick Island and Dewey Beach met in November 2016 with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control manager for beach replenishment matters to discuss possible combined efforts to secure the necessary funding.

In November 2016, the Town Council approved a joint effort with South Bethany to reinforce the request of the Congressional delegation. By letter dated November 16, to the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Bethany Beach Mayor Jack Gordon and South Bethany Mayor Pat Voveris described the condition of the beach and dunes and emphasized the vital need for replenishment this year for the protection of citizens and infrastructure, and preservation of the local and state economy. The response of the Assistant Secretary, dated December 8, 2016, was noncommittal, stating, in part: “the Bethany Beach project will be considered for future funding, along with many other programs, projects and activities across the Nation in competition for available Federal resources.” (A separate similar letter was sent to South Bethany.)

In a further development, the Mayors of Bethany Beach, South Bethany and Fenwick Island, in a letter dated January 6, 2017, to elected officials in Lewes, Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach, raised the possibility of reactivating the Association of Coastal Towns. The purpose would be to more effectively address important issues of common interest, including beach replenishment. A meeting to explore that possibility has been tentatively scheduled for early February.

The BBLA Board of Directors has established an ad hoc committee to focus on the beach replenishment funding issue and to recommend appropriate steps that might be taken to support and supplement the efforts described in order to ensure the necessary funding for replenishment this year. The Board has offered to assist the Town in its efforts when it would be helpful to do so. The Board will continue to monitor this high priority issue and will keep our members informed of future developments.

Bethany Beach Continues Excellent Record for Safe Drinking Water

On December 14, 2016, USA Today reported that millions of Americans in small communities were at risk because of drinking water contaminated with lead. The reasons cited were old and deteriorated water systems; failure to properly treat and test water; lax inspection and enforcement; and failure to correct problems when identified. The article raised a question for some Bethany Beach residents: How about the safety of our drinking water?

According to Ron Foreman, Director of the Town Water Department, the Department currently monitors for lead and copper on a triennial basis, as required by the State. The reason for the triennial test period is because the Town water supply has never shown elevated levels of either metal. The most recent samples collected in July 2016 are well below Federal and State limits and consistent with the Town's low level test results over the years. The new water plant will facilitate the Department's efforts to continue to provide a safe water supply.

Seismic Survey Applications Denied

In March 2016, the Town Council adopted a resolution opposing airgun seismic surveys, as well as offshore drilling activities, along the Atlantic coast. In doing so, Bethany Beach joined other coastal municipalities and the State of Delaware in opposition to the activities. The seismic surveys in question are conducted by vessels towing an array of airguns that emit acoustic energy pulses over long durations and large areas. On January 6, 2017, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) of the U.S. Department of the Interior denied applications for permits to conduct such surveys in part because the areas in question had been removed from the 2017-2022 oil and gas leasing program.

Reminder for Construction and Renovation Planning

As reported in the November 2016 Newsletter, the Town Council adopted a new ordinance on October 21, 2016, that will affect architectural plans for new residential construction and major renovation projects in certain zoning districts submitted after October 21, 2017. The ordinance, Section 425-26 of Chapter 425 of the town Code, is entitled: Regulation of Residential Bulk Density in the R-1 and R-1B Zoning Districts. It is posted on the Town website at: <http://www.townofbethanybeach.com/360/Recently-Approved-Ordinances>. Interested individuals may also contact the Town Building Inspector for further information.

Future Newsletters. Reports on new developments and updates on matters of interest, such as the Town budget, a possible new residential lighting regulation, plans for the Town park, and relocation of the Dinker Cottage and conversion to a Town museum, will be provided in future newsletters to members.