

Joan Strathern. Candidate for OBVTA Director At Large Position

My name is Joan Strathern and I am a retired educator. My husband George and I have lived full-time in Ortley since 2005, but my roots in Ortley go back much further than that.

My parents built a home in Ortley Beach in 1963 and I grew up spending my summers here. When my parents became full-time residents in 1986, my father was active in the Ortley Beach Voters and Taxpayers Association and played a big part in getting legislation written to allow Ortley to secede from Toms River. While they were not successful in passing that legislation, he inspired me to follow in his footsteps and dedicate my efforts to improving our community today. That is what I hoped to achieve by joining the OBVTA and why I have taken leadership roles in working to build and nurture OBVTA's relationship with Tom's River--so that our beach community can be the best that it can be.

I have served as President, Vice President and in At-Large positions in OBVTA since 2006. I was Vice President during Hurricane Sandy and spent many hours communicating with Toms River, FEMA and the state of NJ to get vital information to our members and aid in the recovery of Ortley Beach. As you all know, it was an emotional time and I worked to calm the fears of our residents and get them the information they needed. The OBVTA then-President and I spearheaded a drive to work with beach front property owners, not just in Ortley but all along the barrier island, to secure the necessary documents so that the Army Core of Engineers could begin beach and dune replenishment. Every time I step on the beach I feel proud at having been a part of the process that led to the dune and beach replenishment we now enjoy.

I have worked and continue to work on many other projects for OBVTA, including the process toward acquisition of the Surf Club property, beach and boardwalk maintenance and improvement, holiday lighting on Rt 35, social events, and Beach Jam, to name a few. I am now the head of the committee working on Ortley Beach Street Scapes. My committee helped Toms River win a \$1.2 million grant from the state of NJ dedicated to beautifying Rt. 35 North, with the hope that it will promote community pride, economic revitalization, and expand the business district in Ortley Beach. This project began in 2014 and we are just now getting to the stage of selecting decorative pedestrian lighting, custom planters, street furniture, etc. I hope to have the opportunity to continue in my At-Large position so I can see this project through to fruition.

I also feel that the experience and knowledge that I have gained working for OBVTA, through building relationships with township officials, learning about town policies and processes and communicating with Ortley residents to understand their concerns, makes me an asset on your board.

Please vote for me for an At-Large position. Thank you.